

# Lesson Five – The Church

## The Importance of Active Membership in a Bible Believing Church

God has established three major institutions on this earth: the family, civil government, and the local church. It is the local church which has been commissioned by God to carry out his purposes in reaching the lost and perfecting the saved. Therefore, God's plan for a Christian will always be fulfilled best when connected with the local church. The Bible teaches that every Christian should belong to a local independent church.

*The purpose of this lesson is to impress upon the individual the central role which the church plays in his everyday life.*

### I. The Local Church

#### A. What is a local New Testament church?

- 1) It is NOT a building, nor a denominational group of congregations
- 2) The Local Church is a body of men and women who have been saved and called by God to serve in a specific area. This assembly of believers was started by the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Matthew 16:18*)
- 3) With what did Christ purchase the church (*Acts 20:28*)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ***Ephesians 2:18-22*** tells us that God's church has its foundations way back with the prophets.
- 5) ***Matthew 4:18*** states, "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers."

*The Local Church (continued)*

- 6) **Matthew 4:19**, “And He saith unto them, \_\_\_\_\_, and I will make you fishers of men.”
- 7) This called out assembly is called out of the world of unbelief to unite together with a common profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 8) **Matthew 16:18** says, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon \_\_\_\_\_ I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
- 9) “The Church” is the body of Christ, the saved multitudes from every nation. **I Corinthians 12:14-27**
- 10) The Local Church mentioned in **Matthew 16:18** is not yet the spiritual body of Christ but a group of called out individuals.

Who established the church? \_\_\_\_\_

Two Churches mentioned in the Bible: a local physical group of called out members, and then, after Acts 2, the spiritual body of Christ composed of saved believers called “The Church”.

**Ephesians 1:22-23** states, “And hath put all [things] under His feet and gave Him [to be] the head over all [things] to the church. Which is \_\_\_\_\_, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

## II. What is the Function of the Local Church?

- A. The purpose of the church, as found in **Matthew 28:19-20** it to “Go ye therefore and \_\_\_\_\_ all nations, \_\_\_\_\_ them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to \_\_\_\_\_ all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.”

*What is the Function of the Local Church (continued)*

- B.** The local church provides a place of fellowship and identification with Christ, and with other believers. Church membership is a testimony of separation and identification. We want to identify with the people, church, work and Spirit of God. The Spirit works through the local New Testament church which the Lord instituted and for which He called leaders.

*Acts 5:13-14, "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And \_\_\_\_\_ were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."*

*II Corinthians 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with \_\_\_\_\_ for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?"*

Who is the head of the church as found in *Ephesians 5:23*? \_\_\_\_\_

Who deserves the head position in the church as found in *Colossians 1:18*? \_\_\_\_\_

- C.** The Local church also provides an opportunity to be obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ. Church membership is also a picture of your obedience to Christ, and you also go to get closer to God. And it provided the opportunity to serve Christ under the authority that He has chosen.

*Hebrews 10:25, 13:7; I Timothy 5:17*

How long ago did God plan to build His church (*Ephesians 1:4*)?

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### III. Church Attendance

#### A. Why is church attendance so important to a Christian?

- 1) Church attendance is a must if you want to grow in Christ and become a mature Christian. Learn to give God your whole Sunday. Giving God the first day of the week is like making Him your **top** priority. God will bless you for your faithfulness.
- 2) One of the most important elements in the life of a new Christian is getting to know and connecting with other believers. And church is the best way to do this as well as learning essential Bible truths through the preaching and teaching. You will also receive instruction and encouragement on how to live a joy-filled Christian life.

#### **Acts 2:41-47**

- 3) Your local church offers Sunday School classes or small groups. Find a class or group to attend every week. This is where you will establish strong relationships, ask pressing questions, and study the Bible.
- 4) According to **Jeremiah 1:15**, God has given pastors to the church who will feed you in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) God has warned us to “...not \_\_\_\_\_ of ourselves together...” as in **Hebrews 10:25**.

*Church Attendance (continued)*

- B.** Your function in the local church body of believers.
- 1)** During your Christian life, you should grow through three broad and general stages.
    - a)** Observe and learn (childhood stage) – Your first priority should be to submit to the teaching of the Word of God to learn to be the man or woman God wants you to be. **Matthew 11:28-30**
    - b)** Participate (teenage stage) – In time, you will naturally grow to the point where you can begin to serve and take on some basic functions through the already established ministry of your church. **James 1:22-25**
    - c)** Ministry (adult stage) – As your growth continues, you should reach the point where you can begin to minister to others in the same way that you have been ministered to.

**BE PATIENT!!** This process takes time. Just be sure to remain faithful to God's establishment institution, the Local Church.

**Basic Question:**

- 1.** How do I find the particular local church that God wants me to serve through?

**Answer:**

Pray about it! Ask God to show you which church to associate yourself with.

**Questions & Answers**

***Lesson 5 – The Church***

- 1.** What is the most important priority of a local church?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2.** What is the local church?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3.** Define the term “the Church”  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4.** List some things that a church is NOT.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5.** What are the three institutions God has established on Earth?
  - A.**
  - B.**
  - C.**
- 6.** There is a proper order for you to follow in participating in the church body. List the three general stages connected with spiritual growth.
  - A.**
  - B.**
  - C.**

**Key Memory Verses:**

***Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 28:19-20***

**NOTE: *Many churches today are not fulfilling God’s plan because their primary attitudes are:***

- 1.** In order to really learn the Bible, you need to go to Bible College.
- 2.** The primary purpose of a local church is to be a social or political organization.
- 3.** The local church is primarily for weddings, funerals and religious holidays.
- 4.** Only the “leadership” of the church is charged with any responsibility of meeting people’s spiritual needs.

From the Bible principles taught in this lesson, you should understand that these attributes are wrong and why.

**Write any questions you may have concerning the subjects of this lesson.**