What's So Important About Your Local Church?

Scripture: Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:24–25
Code: B130103

What's so important about your local church? At a time when there's more Bible teaching than you could ever consume available through radio, television, and the Internet, why should it matter where and how you're taking in God's truth? What's wrong with virtual, web-based congregations for the digital-age church? Why can't your iPod be your worship leader, your tablet be your pastor, and your friends your fellowship and accountability?

The answer is simple: that's not the way God designed it.

The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the importance of local assemblies. In fact, it was the pattern of Paul's ministry to establish local congregations in the cities where he preached the gospel. Hebrews 10:24-25 commands every believer to be a part of such a local body and reveals why this is necessary.

> And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

It is only in the local body to which one is committed that there can be the level of intimacy that is required for carefully stimulating fellow believers "to love and good deeds." And it is only in this setting that we can encourage one another faithfully and biblically.

The New Testament also teaches that every believer is to be under the protection and nurture of the leadership of the local church. These godly men can shepherd the believer by encouraging, admonishing, and teaching. Hebrews 13:7 and 17 help us to understand that God has graciously granted accountability to us through godly leadership.

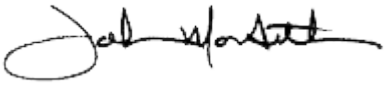
Furthermore, when Paul gave Timothy special instructions about the public meetings, he said, "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching" (1 Timothy 4:13). Part of the emphasis in public worship includes these three things: hearing the Word, being called to obedience and action through exhortation, and teaching. It is only in the context of the local assembly that these things can most effectively take place.

Acts 2:42 shows us what the early church did when they met together: "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." They learned God's Word and the implications of it in their lives, they joined to carry out acts of love and service to one another, they commemorated the Lord's death and resurrection through the breaking of bread, and they prayed. Of course, we can do these things individually, but God has called us into His Body—the church is the local representation of that worldwide Body—and we should gladly minister and be ministered to among God's people.

Active involvement in your local church is imperative to living a life without compromise. It is only through the ministry of the local church that a believer can receive the kind of teaching, accountability, and encouragement that is necessary for him to stand firm in his convictions. God has ordained that the church provide the kind of environment where an uncompromising life can thrive and His people can grow spiritually.

Over the next few weeks, we're going to take a closer look at some of the fundamental institutions and functions of the church, and how they have a direct impact in your spiritual growth and your usefulness to the Lord. We'll also look at God's design for the church, and how that design is part of the foundation for your spiritual life.

We frequently hear from conscientious, faithful believers struggling to find solid, Bible-teaching churches in their areas. My hope is this series will help you know what to look for in a local church, and how you can be most useful within your congregation.



Available online at: http://www.gty.org

COPYRIGHT (C) 2024 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (https://www.gty.org/about#copyright).