

Questions Posed for Study

Question: Why is it important/necessary for church Membership?

To Join or Not! Part I

(Acts 2:41 – 47)

Intro: There are those folks, genuinely saved, who have a problem with church membership or with any form of organized local church. They obviously have their reason but their reasonings are not based on the Scriptures. So, then, what does the Bible teach or instruct about this subject before us today?

I. In the beginning – Organized.

A. When we look at the beginning of the local church, it is important for us to understand,

1. The first church group was organized in Jerusalem.
2. Comprised of Jews raised in Judaism.
3. They came to accept Christ as God's Son and became believers.

B. The Jews used a local synagogue for their place of worship.

1. In starting a synagogue, ten Jewish families had to be willing to support the synagogue through their offerings and faithfulness.
2. The Jews then became a congregation in this local synagogue.

II. Jesus starts the church – Matthew 16:13 – 20.

A. In this question by Christ to bring the disciples to a place of understanding, Jesus asks, in **verse 13 & verse 15.**

1. Peter's answer is spot on in **verse 16** – "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."
2. Then in **verses 17 – 18**, Jesus tells them, that based upon the truth of Peter's statement concerning Who Christ, that upon that truth, Christ would build His church.
3. We do not accept the Roman Catholic's rendering of this verse that Christ was stating He would build His church on Peter.
 - a. The word used in **verse 18** for Peter is [petros] meaning a stone or rock. And the word [petra] meaning a rock, a cliff, a projecting rock.
 - b. While Peter was saved through faith, he was nonetheless spiritually instable.

4. When Jesus started the church, it was with the understanding that there would be a company or group of believers united by faith in Christ.
 - a. The biblical word used in **verse 18** is the Greek word [ekklesia] meaning a gathering or assembly of people gathered for the purpose of worship in a religious service.
 - b. It is a word used for any gathering in a civil sense as well.
 - c. Jesus certainly had in mind for His church to gather for to worship religiously.
 - (1). **Hebrews 10:24 & 25** certainly expresses the purpose for our gathering.
 - (2). The “assembling” means meeting in a gathering together in a single place.
 - (3). The religious assembling of Christians.
 - (4). This is a born-again group of Believers banding together for the purpose of being a local church.
- B. How did/does a person become a part of this assembly? Acts 2:41.
 1. They were saved first (**Acts 8:36 – 39**), then they were baptized, then added to the assembly.
 2. One may enter into a church building and be a part of the congregation, but they are not a part of the church [ekklesia] such as a member would be.
 3. This is to say only members are given a voice in the operation of the church be it finances & expenditures, tenure of its pastor or pastors, the missionaries whom we will take on, the doctrinal statements and even which translation of the Bible that will be used. These are the decisions for only members in good standing.
- C. This begs the question, “How can a church exist & function without members?”
 1. We should not be so naive as to think any church worth its existence can accomplish God’s goals or purpose without Jesus Christ as the head of the local church.
 2. Without members how would the local church carry out the great commission? **(Matthew 28:19 & 20; Mark 16:14 – 15)**
 3. How would a church send out missionaries with prayer & financial support without members?
 4. How would the local church be able to afford a pastor without members or a building to meet in?
- D. Next week we will, Lord willing pick up with – “What constitutes a church?”