

The Blessing of Church Membership (Romans 12:1-21)

- I. No Salvation Apart from the Church? (1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:2; Acts 15; Eph. 1:4; 5:25; 1 Jn. 3:14; Eph. 4:11-14; Jas. 4:6; **Rom. 12:3**)
- II. You Must Submit!
1. To the Church's **Instruction** (Mt 28:19f; Acts 2:42f; **Ro 12:2**)
 2. To the Church's **Discipline** (1 Pe 5:2; Mt. 18:12; Ac 20:28-31)
 3. Bend Your Neck Under Christ's Yoke! (Mt. 11:28-30)
- III. Service (Phil. 2:3; **Rom. 12:4-8**; 1 Cor. 12:15-17; **Rom. 12:9-13**)
- IV. Separation (Mt. 10:32-38; Acts 5:29, 40-41; Rev. 2:10)
- V. Conclusion (Rev. 5:13)

Belgic Confession Art. 28: We believe that since this holy assembly and congregation is the gathering of those who are saved and there is no salvation apart from it, no one ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself, regardless of his status or condition.

But all people are obliged to join and unite with it, keeping the unity of the church by submitting to its instruction and discipline, by bending their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ, and by serving to build up one another, according to the gifts God has given them as members of each other in the same body.

And to preserve this unity more effectively, it is the duty of all believers, according to God's Word, to separate themselves from those who do not belong to the church, in order to join this assembly wherever God has established it, even if civil authorities and royal decrees forbid and death and physical punishment result.

And so, all who withdraw from the church or do not join it act contrary to God's ordinance.

Questions for Family Discussion

- Do you treasure church membership? Why should we? What are some things you love about your local church?
- Is there really **no salvation** apart from the church? Is this talking about the visible (local) church, the invisible (universal) church, or **both**? Can a person be saved without being on the membership roll of a local church? Can a person be saved who willfully refuses to submit to Christ and actively chooses not to join a local congregation?
- Why is **submission** to Christ so important for us? Do **you** really **need instruction and discipline**? Why?
- What are some gifts the Lord has given you, that you will use to serve Christ's body here in Bellingham?
- Why must we **separate** from unbelievers and from false or deformed churches? Where should we draw the line?
- Have you counted the cost of discipleship? Are you willing to follow Christ wherever he leads you, even into persecution and suffering? Even to death? How can our Lord's promise in Rev. 2:10 help you make this commitment?