

The Local Church

Sunday PM, October 29, 2023

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Straight Paths Bible Church

Hebrews 10:25-27 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

- I. The first thing that tells me people are wrong who lightly esteem the local church is that it is the same song the backsliders and lost people sing.
 - A. I hear this same stuff from lost people who are showing some interest in religion.
 - 1. They claim church is not necessary and they can learn as much with home Bible studies, etc.
 - 2. They condemn all churches and being full of hypocrites and people that are far less righteous than they, therefore, they assume they have an excuse for rejecting them.
 - B. The first thing you hear from backsliders is that they don't see the importance of being in church and they can live without the church.
 - 1. They also have great contempt for those who do make up the local church.
 - C. This is a Biblical sign of one who doesn't know God.

1 John 3:14-15 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death

1 John 2:10-11 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

1 John 5:1-3 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

- 1. If you love someone you want to be around them.
- 2. You could never say about someone you love, "I don't need you, I don't want to be with you, I am better off without you."

- II. The church is an organization.
 - A. The Bible gives clear instructions for leadership.
 - 1. That there be pastors and elders.
 - 2. Requirements are given for those who qualify for leadership positions.
 - 3. Responsibilities of the leaders are given
 - a) They are to watch for our souls. (Heb 13.17)
 - b) They are to teach us and protect us from error. (Eph 4.11-14)
 - c) They are to have the oversight. (1 Pet 5.2)
 - d) They are to be our examples. (1 Pet 5.3)
 - B. The church is not just a group of believers meeting together for Bible Study and debate, or to listen to preaching online or recorded.

1. The church has proper leadership, proper doctrine, proper ordinances, and proper organization.
2. The epistles of Timothy and Titus were instructions on how to form a New Testament Church.

1 Timothy 3:14-15 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

3. Titus had been preaching in Crete and many had been saved. They were meeting together, but that did not constitute a church, so Paul gave instructions in Titus 1.5:

Titus 1:5-6 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

- a) Some things were wanting and they had to do with leadership and organization.
4. Paul and Barnabas did likewise and when they had started churches they were careful before they left to “ordain elders in every city.” (Acts 14.23)
- C. The church is a divine institution and it is the center of God’s work in the world today and is to continue until Jesus returns.

1 Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

- D. Consider, too, that there is no Bible instruction about the discipline and watch care of Christians apart from the church.
- E. There is no instruction about leadership among Christians apart from the church.
- F. There is no instruction about the work of Christians apart from the church.
- G. The entire life and work of God’s people for this age appears in the context of the local assembly.
- H. The Bible emphasizes that the church is God’s chosen means of accomplishing His purposes in this age.
- I. There are more than 100 references to the church in the New Testament and the vast majority of those references are clearly to the local assembly, not to all the people of God in a general way.
- J. We must also understand that a New Testament church is not merely a group of Christians meeting for prayer and Bible study.
- K. A believer should never be content merely to listen to preaching sermons on a cassette player, or to read sermons from a book, or to listen to preaching on the radio or television, or to meet together with a loose-knit group of believers without proper leadership and organization.
- L. So it is clear from Scripture that it is God’s will that every believer be a faithful and fruitful member of a sound New Testament church.
- M. If there is not such a church in the area, the establishment of such a church should be the highest priority.