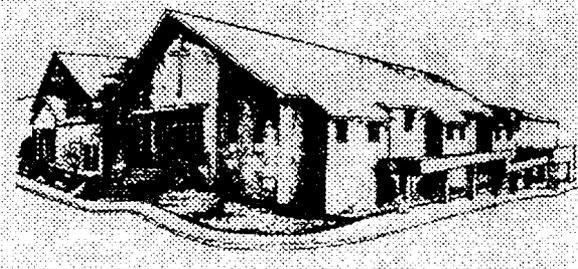


L*esson*
11

The Local Church

“What is the Purpose of Your Involvement in a Local Church?”



God has established three major institutions on this earth—the family, the 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 in perfecting the saved. Therefore, God’s plan for a Christian will always be fulfilled best when connected with the local church.

LESSON 11

The purpose of this lesson is to acquaint you with the importance of the local church and to show you what role the church should play in your life.

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INTRODUCTION

When the word church is mentioned our mind probably visualizes several things: perhaps a building where we once attended or presently attend or maybe a denominational group of which we may have been a part. Even thoughts return (whether good or bad) of experiences we had at one time in our life in connection with a church.

But what is a church? Is it a building or denomination? As we search the Scriptures, we find nothing of a denomination or even a building. It is a body of men and women who have received Christ as personal Savior, banded together in a geographical location to serve the Lord. The Church is people!

Jesus Christ established the Church. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said:

“I will build my church.”

His ministry focused on working with twelve men who would play a vital role in the building of the Church. In fact, the New Testament can be summarized in this way:

THE GOSPELS: Preparation for the church.

ACTS: Establishment and building of the church.

THE EPISTLES: Doctrine and principles which govern the Church.

Thus, the New Testament is all about the Church.

Jesus loved the Church. Ephesians 5:25 says, **“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”**

That’s how much Christ loved His church. He committed His life to it! Therefore, we must consider the importance of the Church.

Discipleship—The Local Church

As we study this lesson about the Church, we need to meditate upon the truths carefully. We need to consider the teachings of the New Testament local church so we can invest our life properly by serving God through our local church. The New Testament gives us the information we need to live out our life serving God through the institution founded by Christ—the Church.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Evangelism/Discipleship/Edification

Evangelism

1. Matthew 28:19-20 is known as the Great Commission. List the things the Church is commanded to do.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. According to Mark 16:15, to whom should we take the gospel?
3. Look up Acts 1:8 and consider the following questions:
 - a. What does God promise to help you perform the ministry of evangelism?
 - b. What is your responsibility as a Christian?

4. Look up the following verses and write down what was happening in the early church.

Acts 14:21

Acts 16:30-34

Acts 19:10

Evangelism is one responsibility given to the Church. It is our privilege to proclaim the Gospel to other people who are in need of Christ.

Discipleship

1. According to Matthew 28:20, what should be done after a person has become a Christian?
2. Read Acts 11:21-26.
 - a. What did Barnabas do with Saul (vs. 25)?
 - b. According to verse 26, what did they do with those saved?

Discipleship—The Local Church

3. In Acts 18:11, what did Paul do with those who were saved?
4. In II Timothy 2:2, what are you commanded to do with the things you have learned?

Evangelism is only the first step in making disciples. Once a person is saved, it is the responsibility of those within the Church to teach those who have been saved. Discipleship is the responsibility of the Church.

Edification

To edify means to “build up.” It is the ministry of the Church to care for those within its fellowship. We should come to church to receive edification so we can go out into the world to evangelize.

1. Read I Thessalonians 3:11-13 and explain what should take place in your life after salvation.
2. From Colossians 2:6-7, after salvation, what does God want to do in you?
3. According to Ephesians 4:11-16, summarize why edification is important in the Church.

LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

There are two basic positions of leadership within a local church: the Pastor and the second is the Deacons. From the following verses we will learn the basic responsibilities of these officers in the church.

Pastor

The New Testament uses three different titles to give a clear picture of the pastor's position and responsibility.

1. From the following verses, list the different titles used:
 - a. Acts 20:17 _____
 - b. I Timothy 3:1-2 _____
 - c. I Peter 5:2 (an action) _____

Bishop is the office, Elder is the title, and Shepherd is the work.

2. According to Titus 1:5-9, what are some of the qualifications of a pastor?

3. Read I Timothy 3:1-7 and write out some more qualifications of the office of pastor.

4. According to Hebrews 13:7 and 13:17, what is your responsibility in relation to your pastor?

Deacon

1. Read Acts 6:1-7.
 - a. Verse 1: What was the problem in the church at Jerusalem?

 - b. Verse 2 and 3: What is the business of the deacons?

 - c. Verse 3: What are the qualifications of a deacon?

2. Read I Timothy 3:8-13 and jot down the qualifications of a deacon.

Deacons who help the pastor by caring for certain responsibilities are assistants to the pastor. They enable the pastor to give time to the Word of God and prayer. Deacons play an important role in the ministry of a local church.

MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

How can we discern whether a church is good or bad? What should we look for in a church? The following verses form a list of qualifications that must be found in a church in order for it to conform to the New Testament.

1. Does this church believe and teach the Bible as the Word of God?

Titus 1:9

Another way of asking this question is, “Does it in any way violate the principles laid down in the Word of God?”

2. Does this church endeavor to carry out the Great Commission?

Matthew 28:19-20

Mark 16:15

- a. Is there an evangelism/discipleship ministry?
 - b. Is there a missions emphasis in this church?
3. Does this church have an effective prayer ministry?

Acts 2:42

4. Does this church provide adequately for its members?
 - a. Fellowship—Acts 2:42
 - b. Needs—Acts 6:1

There is no perfect church! But a church that follows the Bible will have these characteristics in it.

YOUR PLACE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CHURCH

1. Learn

- a. Look up John 5:39. What does this verse admonish you to do?

- b. What does Matthew 11:29 challenge you to do?

- c. What was Paul's desire in Philippians 3:10?

Through Bible study at church we will be able to learn our Bible and become more familiar with the truths it contains. These life-changing truths need to be mastered!

2. Participate

- a. What does Hebrews 10:25 challenge you to do?

- b. James 1:22-23 encourages you to do what?

We need to be faithful in our attendance and begin to look for places we can minister. There is a wide variety of things we can become involved in as we become more acquainted with our church.

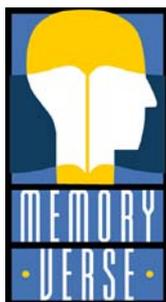
KEY: Get involved!

The secret to enjoying your church is getting involved and ministering. The contented Christians are those who are ministering to others. Remember, you are saved to serve. God wants to use you to make a difference in this world.

CONCLUSION

1. The Church is vital in our Christian life. It is our place of accountability and service. Our dependability is of a necessity!
2. Our church needs us to minister and encourage others. If we are not there, we will not receive the encouragement we need nor can we encourage someone else. Be faithful!

Memory Verse
Hebrews 10:25



From the principles taught in this lesson you should have a better understanding of the church.

Write down any questions you may have regarding this lesson.

