

## Some Points That May Surprise You

Some people are reluctant to visit religious services because they do not know what to expect when they attend. We do not want that to keep you from being with us, so the following points have been arranged for your information. You may be surprised about some of these facts.

1. You may be surprised that everyone is invited to participate in the singing portion of the worship assemblies. We have no choirs, special groups, or solos. We use no pianos, drums, organs, guitars, etc. All music is a cappella (vocal) as the New Testament indicates it was in the apostolic days (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). The singing is beautiful and encouraging.
2. You may be surprised that visitors are not requested to make a contribution. Local members contribute on the first day of the week, each and every week. This is done without demand in the form of "dues" or "assessments." Giving on the basis of other New Testament principles is impressed as the plan of scriptural giving. No bake sales, car washes, fish fries, raffles, or money-raising schemes are used. We do not beg from those outside the Lord's own family. All contributions, if the Lord's will is respected, are freely given.
3. If you visit with us on any first day of the week, you may be surprised to find that we commemorate the death of Christ by partaking of the Lord's supper, which was instituted by Christ and commanded and taught by Paul (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). In the first century, *"upon the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread"* (Acts 20:7). Therefore, since every week has a first day, it follows that the Lord's death must be commemorated every week and not once every six months, or only on Christmas or "Easter Sunday."
4. You may be surprised that no ultra-emotional appeals are made. You will not be urged to act or move in response to the invitation of the Lord until you have sufficient knowledge of the truth, which will serve as a basis for your faith (John 20:30-31; Acts 16:32).
5. It may surprise you that most Christians attend every assembly of the church because they want to. They know it is commanded and they realize that assembling to worship is vital to their spiritual growth and service to God (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:25).

6. You may be surprised to know that we have no man-made prayer book, no church-authorized discipline, manual, creed, or ritualistic worship (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 4:1-4).
7. You may be surprised at the structure of our services. You will not hear shouting, screaming, or any other unbridled emotion. No one will faint, roll around on the floor, or speak in "unknown" tongues. You will see that the admonition of the apostle Paul that everything "*be done decently and in order*" is sincerely observed (1 Corinthians 14:40). This is a respectful time for our Father in heaven.
8. You may be surprised that the assembly is not conducted by a man claiming to be a part of a special priesthood. Since the Lord Jesus Christ is our High Priest and all Christians now make up a general priesthood and can themselves approach God and offer their prayers and sacrifices, it should be evident that no special priesthood is necessary today (1 Peter 2:5-9; Hebrews 4:14-16).
9. With virtually all denominations having earthly headquarters, it may surprise you that the church of Christ has neither earthly headquarters nor an earthly head. Christ alone is head of His body and the church's headquarters is in heaven, where Christ now sits and rules with all authority (Ephesians 1:22-23; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:18). Elders oversee the local congregation (Acts 14:23), but they do not make laws for the church.
10. Contrary to what you may have heard, you may be surprised to know that the church of Christ is not intent on condemning everyone to hell, but invites all to come to our Lord in obedient faith, in faithful service and worship and in godly living, that one may enjoy the benefits of His grace and strive for the hope of eternal life (Titus 2:11-12; 1 John 2:25).
11. Finally, you may be surprised to learn that the Lord's church is neither Catholic, Protestant, sectarian, or denominational. The Lord's church in the first century was none of these. If we are correct in our claim that we follow His word alone (admitting that not all "churches of Christ" can honestly make this claim) and in every way seek to be simple New Testament Christians, then we are the same as in the first century. Being of the same head, doctrine, and practice results in being the same body the Lord purchased or built, and therefore antedates both Catholicism and all Protestant denominations (Acts 20:28; Matthew 16:18).

We do work toward the unity for which Jesus prayed, but true unity is found only in Christ (John 17:20-21). Both Catholicism and denominational

sectarianism stands opposed to this unity. We stand upon the word of our Lord alone, respecting His authority in everything and speaking only as He directs us. We are trying to "*all be one*" in Christ as He so fervently prayed. Peter wrote, "*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ...*" (1 Peter 4:11). Please open your Bible, search the scriptures, and open your heart!

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