

# Attend The Church Of Whose Choice?

**Introduction.** In Acts 9:26-28, Saul wanted to join himself to the disciples in Jerusalem. This action sets the precedent for a Christian to seek out a congregation with which to identify and then put forth their energies into enthusiastic service of God.

With several local congregations within most people's driving radius, which church I will join myself to and commit my time, influence, and resources is a matter of judgment. Making this decision should be taken very seriously. But it is amazing and disheartening to listen to the reasoning some use in reaching their conclusion. By evaluating seven of these reasons today it is my hope that you will be prepared to consider your choice carefully and persuade others of the necessity of a careful choice.

## ***I. Attend The Church Of Your Choice***

- A. This is the most popular mantra and one that has been around for as long as I can remember. It implies that it really makes no difference which church one chooses and that one local congregation is just as good as another. It says that as long as I like it and am satisfied, nothing else matters. The religious world is incredibly fractured, and this is one of the reasons.
- B. Jews were not even allowed to select the Passover lamb on this basis (Exodus 12:1-13). The Lord has only given us one choice — the church which His Son built and purchased (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; cp. Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4). We cannot substitute just anything we wish.

## ***II. Attend The Church Of Christ Of Your Choice***

- A. It seems that if "church of Christ" is on the sign that is all that matters. But think for a moment: does the presence of "Medical Doctor" on an office door mean that the person so designated is competent to dispense medical advice and treatment? We would never choose a doctor, or any other professional service, on this basis and it is equally poor reasoning in deciding on a church to which to join ourselves.
- B. Not all churches of Christ are "equal" (Revelation 2-3). Sardis had a "name" but nothing else (3:1). True churches of Christ are going to stick to God's original plan for the church's spiritual mission (John 18:36; Romans 14:17) by preaching the gospel to sinners (Philippians 4:14-16), edifying the saints (Ephesians 6:10-18), and assisting needy saints (Acts 11:27-29).

## ***III. Attend The Church Of Convenience's Choice***

- A. The idea goes that we will choose one that is close to our residence and whose assembly times are more in line with our schedule; not too early so as to interfere with sleep and not so late that it interferes with football games, and certainly one that will get us to the restaurant before the crowd arrives.
- B. Convenience is one of the arguments that Jeroboam used as an excuse as he set up the idolatrous centers of worship in Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:25-33). The concept of bearing one's cross has become irrelevant to a lot of religious people today (Mark 8:34; 10:21; Luke 9:23-25). Where can I really serve and help build up the cause of Christ?

#### ***IV. Attend The Church Of The Children's Choice***

- A. "Let's make sure a church has a good, active youth group" seems to be the litmus test for many. But is our concern more with entertainment than with edification; with the social rather than the spiritual? Young people rarely have the maturity to make, or help make, such weighty decisions.
- B. Jesus did not come to entertain (Luke 19:10; cp. John 6:26-27; 1 Corinthians 11:22, 34). Young people need building up (Ephesians 4:14-15), and although it may not be as exciting or flashy, it is still necessary. The way to do this is through the "word of his grace" (Acts 20:32). The process to do this is through good, diligent work. Surround yourself with people who are going to provoke you and your family to grow (Psalm 26:4; Proverbs 9:6).

#### ***V. Attend The Church Of Social Status' Choice***

- A. We certainly do not want one that is very small, in a bad part of town, and that assembles in a building whose architecture is unappealing. What would our friends think? We would not dream of inviting people to such a location; how embarrassing! We need to be a part of a group of people which assembles in a facility that will impress our friends and that might even offer some contacts that will help us in our careers.
- B. The gospel is for every creation (Mark 16:15), and many different types of people responded to its call (1 Corinthians 1:26). A truly spiritual person understands that we are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28), and does not consider what a church can do for them, particularly the baser needs of financial gain.

#### ***VI. Attend The Church Of Good Performances' Choice***

- A. The song leader and singing must be of at least semi-professional quality and the acoustics in the building just right. And the speaker must be one who, in a short period of time, can hold our attention with jokes, illustrations, and anecdotes, instead of with Scripture.
- B. For my part, I want to do everything as good as I possibly can — we need excellence in what we do. But I do that to honor my Lord, not to ensure that some get their ears tickled (2 Timothy 4:3). My singing only needs to "teach and admonish" (Colossians 3:16) and my preaching needs to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" (1 Kings 22:6-8, 18) to be fitting as an offering to God (Hebrews 13:15).

#### ***VII. Attend The Church Of The Bible's Choice***

- A. What about discovering from the New Testament what God expects local churches to do? Then, find a church that is trying to do exactly that. It may not be one the children like because there are few, if any others, in their age range. It may meet in a small, nondescript building in a bad part of town, with a song leader and preacher that are lacking a bit in singing and speaking skills.
- B. But if they are striving to do God's will (1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Peter 4:11), nothing more or nothing less, why should this not be our choice?

**Conclusion.** The choice boils down to will I seek out a group that is truly a church of Christ or one that simply wears the name but bears little resemblance to New

Testament churches? Will I use very subjective, selfish criteria in making my decision or will I use the Bible? So many have lost the concept of reading, learning, and discerning from the biblical text. How I “feel” seems to mean more than what God expects.

Use your New Testament for more than just ornamentation and use it as it was intended: as the standard by which we determine the decrees of the Lord. What do the Scriptures say, not the children. What is God’s will, not that of social status. What does the New Testament dictate, not convenience. What does God want, not what do I want. Any attitude less than this means we will consistently make improper spiritual choices and fail to have the approval of God.