

Seeing The Value Of The Church

Introduction. The value of the church needs to be seen and studied for two reasons, First, in today's culture, too many people place a low emphasis on church involvement and membership. Perhaps their understanding has been choked by the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches (Matthew 13:22). They have hardly any idea as to what it means to be part of the spiritual family of God.

Second, coming to Christ is coming to the church (Acts 2:47; 5:14). Any idea of experiencing salvation without belonging to a local church is foreign to the New Testament. If Jesus values His church, so should we. The following five reasons are why we make such a big deal of the church and its activities.

I. It Is An Obedience Issue

- A. Members of the local church were identified as the flock and the shepherds of the local church knew who they were (1 Peter 5:1-2).
- B. When we become Christians and God adds us to the church, we follow the example of Paul and join a local congregation (Acts 9:26). Letters often accompanied them as they traveled between congregations (Acts 18:27, Apollos; Romans 16:1-2, Phoebe; Colossians 4:10, Mark).

II. It Is A Fellowship Issue

- A. In the New Testament, we enjoy the commonality of shared spiritual life. We are called into the fellowship of God's Son (1 Corinthians 1:9).
- B. We have been saved in order to enter fellowship and partnership, not only with Christ, but with fellow saints as well (1 John 1:3). The right hand of fellowship means a common participation (Galatians 2:9; cp. Acts 13:1-3; 14:27; Philippians 4:15-16).
- C. The closer we get to Christ, the more we crave the fellowship of other Christians. In Hebrews 10:24, we stimulate one another to love and good deeds. In Hebrews 10:25, we do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. It is hard to imagine how this comes to be so easily ignored.

III. It Is An Authority Issue

- A. We commit to working under elders (1 Thessalonians 5:12). We are to esteem them very highly in love (1 Thessalonians 5:13).
- B. Are we willing to heed these simple instructions (Hebrews 13:7, 17), because they are for our benefit (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15).

IV. It Is An Identity Issue

- A. First of all, we have been joined to Christ (Galatians 2:20; 5:24). He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him (Luke 20:38).
- B. We are all united with the same Christ into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13), of which He is the head (Colossians 1:18). We need not be ashamed to belong. You are going to be a part of what you believe in, so where is your citizenship (Hebrews 13:14; Revelation 21:27)?

V. *It Is A Loyalty Issue*

- A. We are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:12-13, 19). This means that we are not just another human organization (Matthew 18:20).
- B. We are just not floating around out there. We are fellow citizens with the saints. We are part of a family (1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 4:17). Family is precious so we need to be loyal and support the work and mission of this church.

Conclusion. This is an extraordinary place. If you want spiritual resources, they are here. See the value of your spiritual family. See its essentiality as you build on the spiritual foundation of your life. Are you part of God's family?