

What Makes The Loop 287 Church Of Christ Different

Introduction. In Ephesians 3:10, the church is the manifestation of God's wisdom. The church is a divine arrangement with a divine purpose. This fact should dispel from every mind the common concept that the church was planned by human wisdom, brought into existence by human will, or ruled by human authority. The church is the most wonderful organization on earth. Because of the preciousness of the church, we need to have a full knowledge of it.

But there are so many churches now. How can anyone be assured that they are following what is right? Because of this confusion, we need to see what makes the Loop 287 Church of Christ different.

I. We Respect God's Authority

- A. On the mountain of Transfiguration, when flanked by Moses and Elijah who represented the Law and the Prophets, God made His declaration that we are to listen to and obey the voice of Christ (Matthew 17:5).
- B. The apostle Paul commanded the Colossians to do everything in the name of Christ (Colossians 3:17). The word "name" means that we recognize the authority of the person who is named. Therefore, we should do everything by the authority of Christ. On the other hand, every congregation should have the attitude manifested in Galatians 2:5.
- C. There are three ways to establish the authority by which the church is governed.
 1. Command — a direct statement or positive command in the scriptures (Acts 17:30; Colossians 3:9).
 2. Approved example — the practice of the church in the New Testament under apostolic guidance (Acts 18:11; 19:10; 20:31; 1 Corinthians 10:11).
 3. Necessary inference — neither expressly stated nor specifically exemplified yet is necessarily implied by the language used (Matthew 22:23-33, 41-46; Acts 8:35-36).
- D. A congregation that does not respect God's authority will introduce man-made inventions. Our struggle is certainly against the devil who wants to destroy us (Ephesians 6:10-13). We have to be strong and not allow ourselves to be influenced by falsehood.

II. We Honor The Church's Mission

- A. The work of evangelism.
 1. It has been God's plan from eternity to save the world by the preaching of the gospel. All mankind is in need of salvation (Romans 3:23). The gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16; James 1:21).
 2. The church is God's agency in preaching the gospel. The members of the church are compared to sowers in the world (Matthew 13:3-9; cp. John 1:40-42; Acts 18:26). The church was taught to observe the commandments of Christ and the apostles (Matthew 28:19-20).
 3. Local congregations were the only organization through which this work was done in first century times. The church at Thessalonica was a wonderful example to other churches in evangelism (1 Thessalonians 1:3-8). The

church in Philippi was also outstanding in this work (Philippians 1:3-5; 2:25-30; 4:14-20).

B. The work of edification.

1. The church is edified by the strengthening, growth, and development of its members. The purpose of every child of God is to do everything for the purpose of edification (Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:26).
2. We must grow in godliness and ability to overcome temptation and lead pure lives. We must establish our hearts unblameable in holiness (1 Thessalonians 3:13). We must build ourselves up in the most holy faith (Jude 17-23). We must resist the devil and draw near to God (James 4:7-10).
3. The congregation may edify its members through worship (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Peter 2:5), through faithful teaching, by proper discipline (Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Titus 3:10), and through love and consideration of the members for one another (1 Corinthians 3:3; 12:25; Ephesians 4:29-32; Philippians 2:3-4; 4:2).

C. The work of benevolence.

1. Benevolence was never used as a means of introducing the gospel. Benevolence is the fruit of the gospel, not the means of propagating it. Food and clothing were never offered by the early church as a means of getting people to listen and accept the gospel.
2. There is a work of benevolence which churches of Christ can and should do. Congregations can provide for saints who are needy (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-37; 11:27-29; Romans 15:31; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:1, 12-13). The church never set up a benevolent institution to care for the needy.

D. This is all very different from the world's view of "church."

1. The mission of the church is not social.
2. The mission of the church is not to provide and serve as guide in recreation.
3. The mission of the church is not to make money.
4. The mission of the church is not to serve as a school of domestic relations.
5. The mission of the church is not to teach secular subjects.
6. The mission of the church is not political.

III. We Strive For The Mind Of Christ

A. Humility (John 5:30).

1. The Lord was pleased to do the will of the Father. This showed a wonderful spirit of humility (Philippians 2:5-11).
2. Christians who possess the mind of Christ will consider others as more important than themselves and they will look out for other's interests (Philippians 2:3-4).

B. Zeal for the Lord's house (John 2:17).

1. Christians have to put the Lord first (Matthew 6:33). They will cleanse themselves from sin, and be vessels for honor in the Master's house (2 Timothy 2:21).
2. They will attend the worship assemblies because they love the Lord, and they will develop their talents and build up the church (Matthew 25:14-30).

- C. Judging righteous judgment (John 7:24).
 - 1. The world screams, “Judge not” (Matthew 7:1)! But the Lord said that righteous judgment needs to happen.
 - 2. Judging righteous judgments means that we will identify and expose sin instead of ignoring it based on a “judge not” mentality (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- D. Maturely taking care of issues with each other (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17).
 - 1. Christ should live within a Christian (Galatians 2:20). That means He would not have been hateful, vengeful, jealous, envious, divisive, or a whole host of other attitudes.
 - 2. In my opinion, we have done well in our unity and love for each other. Churches have always been plagued by “church hoppers.” They never exercise enough forgiveness and love to solve problems where they attend.
 - 3. They see something they do not like or take offense easily and then are gone. But forgiveness and love are the main principles of being a Christian. If these are not exercised, can this Christian go to Heaven?

Conclusion. We need to continue to be different. The gospel of Christ teaches that His church is to not be like the world. The most important task in the world is to obtain the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:8) and show the manifold wisdom of God to others (Ephesians 3:10).