

Why I Love the Church of Christ

Introduction. The Scriptures make it clear that people need people (Proverbs 27:17). More than that, Christians need Christians. It's important that we who serve the Lord have those surrounding us who think like we think and who have the same goals and desires that we have.

Paul loved the church. He loved the Christ who founded the church. He loved the work and organization of the church. But he also loved the people who made up the church (Romans 1:11-12; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Philippians 1:5, 8; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). "Church" is not about a building or a location. It's always about people. Let me tell you about six things I get from the church, and therefore why I love it.

I. I Get the Oversight That God Intended for Me

- A. The elders of the church watch for my soul (Hebrews 13:17; cp. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2).
- B. When people are trying to quit alcohol or some other equally destructive sin, they often look for help.
 1. Twelve-step programs urge such people to find someone they can communicate with at a moment's notice, an open pathway of interaction. The reasoning is that this deters someone from drinking, drugs, etc.
 2. If someone knows what I'm doing all of the time, I'm less likely to take that destructive action. This is the important notion of accountability.
- C. When brethren are watching for me, they'll see when I begin to return to the world, and they'll intervene and take the necessary steps to turn me back to faithfulness and righteousness (James 5:20).
- D. They'll put my eternal destiny above my feelings (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6).

II. I Get Spiritual Brethren Who Help Me Grow

- A. I get to associate with people of "like precious faith" (2 Peter 1:1), and they're concerned about me becoming stronger in Christ, pressing on to maturity (Hebrews 5:12-6:1; 1 Peter 2:2).
- B. One of the most important relationships in human society is the home. In fact, the home is the basis of orderly society. When the home breaks down, so does the civilization around which it exists.
- C. Christians are blessed with a built-in family that's often closer than a fleshly family. A godly home is built around God (1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:19).
- D. Additionally, when I associate with the finest quality of people in the wonderful blessing of worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Revelation 14:7), I not only respectfully exalt and revere God, but I grow as a person of faith.

III. I Get Friendships With Godly People

- A. We need companions, people to laugh and cry with, people who know us, and treat us as close friends (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

- B. In short, we need a fraternal bond with other people. When we can't find it, a lot of Christians are tempted to look in the "wrong places" (James 4:4).
- C. I need people who are "walking in the light" (1 John 1:5-7) to provide godly examples to follow.
 - 1. The New Testament teaches preachers to be an example to believers (1 Timothy 4:12).
 - 2. But it works both ways. Preachers get to watch godliness in action among the people with whom they worship and serve (Acts 9:39; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2). Jesus came in the flesh and He served other people (Matthew 20:28). I get the incredible benefit of seeing that "incarnation" in fellow believers.
 - a) I see Christians of compassion, who are letting the beauty of Jesus be seen in them in a world of cynicism and skepticism.
 - b) I see Christians who volunteer their time to charitable causes, give to the homeless, and see to it that people feel loved and cared for.
- D. When the world hates me, the brotherly love from the saints means everything to me (Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8). When I have hard times, I get compassion from brethren who stand by me (Philippians 1:7; Hebrews 10:34).
 - 1. Living in the world and dealing with issues isn't easy. Becoming a Christian doesn't usually change that a whole lot.
 - 2. If you think about it, our leader was tortured and killed when He was 33. We learned a long time ago that living like Him doesn't mean that life's going to be easy. But it does mean that we have an assurance of God being with us in the form of people who follow Him.

IV. I Get Instructors When I'm Uninformed

- A. One of the most important things that churches provide is instruction. The Proverbs do a wonderful job of instilling wisdom and knowledge (Proverbs 1:1-7). In fact, multiple times the writer treats his readers like children (1:8-9; 4:1; 6:20).
- B. Likewise, in the New Testament, the church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Timothy knew the Scriptures from his youth (2 Timothy 3:15), and the church works to teach its members (Titus 2:1-5).
- C. As a preacher and Bible class teacher, it's right to craft good content. But remember that the power is in Christ working through your hands to serve beautifully broken people, restoring one fragile heart at a time. If it's where Jesus is, then it's where all of us will want to be — and we get there because we're taught to be there.

V. I Get Loving and Concerned Rebuke When I Stray

- A. Children chafe at censure and rebuke. It's always been so, because the child sees himself as lighthearted and fun-loving. However, the parent sees the child's "play" as drifting toward danger.
- B. Therefore, Mom and Dad intervene and rebuke and chasten their children to bring them back from a dangerous path (Proverbs 23:13-14; Hebrews 12:9).

- C. Christians need this course-correcting kind of discipline. The church provides it with preaching (2 Timothy 4:2), and in the more active work of bringing members back to righteousness (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 13).

VI. I Get Encouragement When I'm Trying

- A. Children need to hear that they're doing well. A child who gets only negativity and criticism will develop an unhealthy and warped sense of self.
- B. When a child is working hard at fixing themselves and making changes, they need someone in their life saying, "Well done" (Matthew 25:21, 23). It's the same with Christians (Philippians 2:20).
- C. When our men preach or teach and our women teach and serve, they need encouragement.
 1. I don't really think they expect it, and I believe they would preach and teach without any acknowledgment. But it's an absolute truth that Christians need to know their efforts are "hitting the mark."
 2. This isn't a hunt for back patting, but simple kindness in expressing gratitude for the effort. If someone says they don't need this, they're being untruthful.
 3. This is the work that we should be doing with one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11), whether we're preaching, teaching, preparing the Lord's Supper, cleaning the building, or mowing the yard. Jesus (John 16:33), Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37; 11:22-24), and Paul (Romans 15:13) knew how to encourage.

Conclusion. I really do love the church of Christ. I love its simplicity and how it glorifies the Godhead. But I mainly love how each of us get to serve in this church and in our communities.

We should be incredibly grateful to be a part of Christ's church. Church membership staves off the temptations of sin and the devil. Church membership actively promotes being better people. Church membership serves as my pathway to eternal life. I wish everyone loved the church of Christ, but everyone has to make their own decision. If you've thought about becoming a part of this body, talk to us as we stand and sing.

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