

WHY DOES A NEW BELIEVER NEED THE LOCAL CHURCH?

Gathering under Christ and His Word for the glory of God

KEY TEXT

EPH. 3:21

THE CHURCH BELONGS TO JESUS CHRIST

The local church is not a religious club, a stage built around personalities, or an audience gathered to be entertained. It is an assembly of believers who belong to Christ and gather under the authority of His Word. The first question is not, "Did this please me?" but, "Was Christ honored, was Scripture obeyed, and were God's people strengthened?"

01

Christ must be the center

Jesus Christ is the Head, foundation, Saviour, and Lord of the church. A church may have gifted speakers, excellent music, large crowds, or impressive programs and still lose its true center. Everything must lead believers to know Christ, worship Christ, obey Christ, proclaim Christ, and become more like Christ.

HIS PERSON

The church teaches who Jesus is: the eternal Son of God, the promised Christ, the crucified and risen Lord.

HIS GOSPEL

The church clearly proclaims His death for our sins, burial, resurrection, and the gift of life through faith in Him.

HIS AUTHORITY

The church follows Christ rather than culture, personalities, preferences, political pressure, or religious tradition.

"And he is the head of the body, the church... that in all things he might have the preeminence."

COLOSSIANS 1:18

02

The Bible must govern the church

Christ rules His church through His written Word. Scripture determines what the church believes, teaches, practices, protects, and corrects. Human ideas may be useful only when they remain servants of biblical truth. Experience, emotion, tradition, and popularity must never be allowed to overrule the clear teaching of Scripture.

NOT ENTERTAINMENT-CENTERED

Music, media, and presentation may assist ministry, but they must not replace truth, reverence, prayer, holiness, or the preaching of the Word. The church gathers before God, not merely before a platform.

GOD'S GLORY IS THE GOAL

The church exists to make God known, display His wisdom, proclaim the gospel, build believers, defend truth, serve people, and bring glory to Him through Jesus Christ.

WHY DO BELIEVERS GATHER ON SUNDAY?

The resurrection gives the first day of the week special significance.

03

Gathering is part of Christian obedience

God did not design believers to follow Christ in isolation. The church gathers to hear Scripture, pray, sing truth, remember Christ, encourage one another, bear burdens, practise the ordinances, serve together, and carry the gospel outward. Private devotion is necessary, but it was never intended to replace the assembled church.

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together... but exhorting one another.”

HEBREWS 10:25

04

Why the first day of the week?

Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week. The risen Lord appeared to His gathered disciples on that day. The early church met to break bread and hear preaching on the first day, and believers were instructed to prepare their giving then. Sunday gathering does not save anyone, and Christians may gather on other days as well; nevertheless, the first day became the fitting weekly celebration of the risen Christ.

THE RESURRECTION

Christ rose on the first day of the week. See Matthew 28:1-6.

THE GATHERED DISCIPLES

The disciples were assembled when the risen Lord appeared. See John 20:19.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Believers gathered to break bread and hear preaching. See Acts 20:7.

PREPARED GIVING

The churches were instructed concerning first-day giving. See 1 Corinthians 16:2.

05

Prepare your heart, mind, and life to gather

Faithful worship begins before the meeting starts. Do not arrive merely to observe, criticize, or be entertained. Come ready to seek God, receive His Word, encourage His people, and respond in obedience. Preparation helps the believer move from passive attendance to active worship.

PREPARE THE HEART

Pray, confess known sin, forgive others, and ask God for humility, reverence, gratitude, and teachability.

PREPARE THE MIND

Remove needless distractions, bring your Bible, expect to listen carefully, and determine to test everything by Scripture.

PREPARE THE LIFE

Rest properly, arrive on time, prepare the family, give thoughtfully, and come ready to fellowship and serve.

SUBMISSION UNDER CHRIST AND HIS WORD

Biblical submission is ordered, responsible, and never blind.

06

Submit first to Jesus Christ

Every believer, pastor, teacher, and ministry remains under the lordship of Christ. No church leader possesses independent spiritual authority. Leaders are stewards who must teach and apply Scripture faithfully, and members are called to follow godly leadership as that leadership follows Christ and watches for their souls.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls...”

HEBREWS 13:17

07

What healthy submission looks like

Submission is not weakness. It is the humble willingness to receive biblical teaching, correction, direction, and pastoral care. It protects the believer from proud independence and helps the church function with peace and order.

RECEIVE THE WORD

Listen carefully, examine the Scriptures, and obey what God has clearly commanded.

RESPECT GODLY LEADERS

Pray for them, speak honestly, receive correction, and avoid a rebellious or contemptuous spirit.

ACCEPT ACCOUNTABILITY

Do not hide destructive patterns. Allow mature believers to ask difficult and loving questions.

PROTECT UNITY

Refuse gossip, private campaigns, needless quarrels, and the desire to control others.

08

Submission has biblical boundaries

Submission never gives a leader permission to contradict Scripture, conceal serious sin, manipulate consciences, demand personal loyalty, or protect abuse. Pastors must shepherd as examples, not as lords. When human authority conflicts with God, believers must obey God rather than men.

NOT BLIND OBEDIENCE

Test teaching by Scripture. Ask honest questions. Seek wise counsel. Truth does not fear examination, and genuine leadership does not demand unquestioning loyalty.

NOT PROUD INDEPENDENCE

Do not use past hurt or another person's failure as permission to reject all authority, accountability, membership, correction, or faithful gathering.

A balanced biblical pattern

- Leaders: teach the Word, model holiness, and care for souls.
- Members: learn humbly, serve faithfully, and receive correction.
- Everyone: remains accountable to Christ and His Word.

ENEMIES THAT WEAKEN THE CHURCH

The greatest dangers are often errors, sins, and priorities allowed to grow within.

THE ENEMY IS NOT EVERY PERSON WHO DISAGREES WITH US

Believers must not treat ordinary people as enemies. The church is called to love, teach, warn, forgive, and seek restoration. The real enemies are the lies, sins, spiritual attacks, and corrupting influences that move the church away from Christ and His Word.

09

Guard the truth and the life of the church

A healthy church is never careless. It watches both doctrine and conduct because false teaching corrupts belief, while tolerated sin corrupts fellowship and testimony. Every member can either strengthen the church through truth and love or weaken it through pride, disorder, and indifference.

FALSE DOCTRINE

Human ideas, distorted verses, another gospel, and teaching that minimizes Christ or contradicts Scripture.

ENTERTAINMENT AND CONSUMERISM

Treating worship as a product and judging the church only by comfort, excitement, convenience, or personal preference.

PRIDE AND PERSONALITY WORSHIP

Building around a gifted person, seeking position, refusing correction, or valuing influence more than faithfulness.

WORLDLINESS AND HIDDEN SIN

Allowing culture, immorality, greed, bitterness, or secret compromise to shape the church more than holiness.

GOSSIP AND DIVISION

Passing accusations, creating factions, speaking without love, and refusing the biblical path of reconciliation.

NEGLECT AND ISOLATION

Treating gathering as optional, disappearing when corrected, or attempting to grow without the body.

APATHY AND PRAYERLESSNESS

Maintaining activity while losing dependence upon God, compassion for souls, and hunger for spiritual life.

FEAR OF PEOPLE

Softening truth, avoiding necessary correction, or changing the message to gain approval and preserve popularity.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock... to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

ACTS 20:28

How believers help protect the church

- Know Scripture and remain teachable when corrected.
- Speak truth in love rather than spreading suspicion or incomplete stories.
- Deal with sin biblically through confession, restoration, and forgiveness.
- Keep Christ central when personalities and preferences compete for attention.

BECOME A STRENGTHENING MEMBER

Do not merely attend the church. Learn to love, serve, and build it up.

10

Take your place in the body

The local church is not a weekly service provided for religious customers. Every believer is part of a body and is called to contribute to the spiritual good of others. You may begin with little experience, but you can still pray, encourage, learn, welcome, give, serve, witness, and become dependable.

WORSHIP AND LEARN

Gather consistently, sing truth, listen carefully, take notes, ask questions, and put biblical teaching into practice.

FELLOWSHIP AND CARE

Know people beyond the meeting, pray for them, bear burdens, show hospitality, forgive, and encourage the weak.

SERVE AND WITNESS

Use your abilities humbly, support gospel work, help practical needs, and speak to others about Jesus Christ.

11

Practise the responsibilities Christ gave His church

A new believer should learn the biblical meaning of baptism, the Lord's Supper, membership, giving, discipline, mission, and spiritual service. None of these replaces the gospel or earns salvation. They are acts of obedience and participation for those who already belong to Christ by grace.

BAPTISM / LORD'S SUPPER

Be baptized after believing as public identification with Christ. Remember His sacrifice with the gathered church reverently and according to Scripture.

GIVING AND GOSPEL WORK

Give willingly, thoughtfully, and honestly. Support sound ministry, care for needs, pray for labourers, and help carry the gospel beyond the congregation.

12

A simple preparation checklist

Use these questions before and after the church gathers. They help move the heart away from passive attendance and toward deliberate worship, obedience, and service.

BEFORE GATHERING

- Pray for the preaching and the people.
- Confess sin and choose forgiveness.
- Come to honor Christ and receive His Word.
- Prepare your Bible, family, giving, and schedule.

AFTER GATHERING

- What truth did I learn and obey?
- Whom did I encourage or pray for?
- Did I respond humbly to correction?
- How will I strengthen the church this week?

FINAL REFLECTION

Will I strengthen Christ's church?

Come prepared. Receive Scripture, protect unity, and serve others. Christ is the center, the Bible is the authority, and God's glory is the goal.

BIBLICALIST

Man's Questions. God's Answers.

biblicalist.org