



Should I Be a Church Member?

Hebrews 10:22-25

Many people today say, “Jesus, _____; but the church, _____.” Some people have decided to become Christians “at large” or establish small “house churches”; but they don’t want to be a part of the _____ church like is mentioned in the New Testament. But can a Christian please God and live _____ from the church? Eighty percent of Americans _____ that you can be a good Christian and yet not be a member of a church. This seems odd since the New Testament is _____ of references to the church. The church is not man’s _____ but God’s.

In trying to understand the place of the church in God’s _____ and scheme of things, the first thing we must do is see the connection between Christ himself and the church. There are a number of passages that show such a _____ relationship that one can hardly think of Christ and not also think about His church. The church itself is _____ upon the fact that Jesus is the Son of the Living God (Matthew 16:18). When we think of the purchase _____ that Jesus paid for the church, His own blood, we can only conclude that the church must have been very, very _____ to Him (Acts 20:28). The church is the _____ thing mentioned in Scripture that Jesus purchased with His blood. For this _____, we cannot please God and act as if the church were an optional matter.

Paul said that the church is so closely related to Christ that it may be called his _____, suggesting that the church is how God is _____ in the world today (Ephesians 1:22-23). The head and the body are so interconnected that they should never be _____. Christ without the church is _____ a head without its body.

Christ _____ the church with the same fervor that a husband loves his _____ (Ephesians 5:25). When people criticize and slander the church, Jesus must feel the _____. The apostle Paul also _____ us that Jesus is “the head of the church” and “the Savior of the Body” (Ephesians 5:23). The church does not save; the church is the “_____.” In Acts 2:47 we learn that the Lord _____ the “saved” to His church. The church is not an optional thing that you can take or leave at your _____. It’s the Lord’s called out _____ of people whom He has saved, whom He loves, and whom He purchased with His own _____.

What was the church _____ in the New Testament? The word “church” refers to an assembly, a congregation that was called together for a specific _____. The early churches were _____ with established leaders (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1). They were _____ congregations, meeting at set times and in set locations. When the church of the New Testament faced a _____, they brought it to the apostles and later to the elders of each congregation. They didn’t get _____ and go out and start their own church with their own doctrines and their own ways. Scripture says, “_____ your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep _____ for your souls, as those who will give an account” (Hebrews 13:17).

The notion that we can “be the church” but not be a part of any local congregation is a _____ idea. God’s people assemble with one _____ (Hebrews 10:24-25). People in church make each other _____, and better, and more faithful and committed (Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). God knew that his people needed the strength and _____ that each one could give to the other to grow and to remain strong in the _____. God knew that His people needed training and equipping to do the _____ that He called them to do (Ephesians 4:11-13).

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