

## The church of Christ

### Ephesians 4:1-6

Occasionally people ask me \_\_\_\_\_ I am a member of the church. Many years ago I became a member of the church Jesus \_\_\_\_\_, the one you can \_\_\_\_\_ about in the New Testament. We search the Scriptures because we know God has revealed the \_\_\_\_\_ in them. God's Word is pure and holy; it never \_\_\_\_\_ anything but what is good and acceptable and perfect. When we \_\_\_\_\_ God's Word, we show Him our love and our loyalty. The more we \_\_\_\_\_ His Word, the more we love Him. And, the more we love Him, the more we want to give our \_\_\_\_\_ to Him. When we \_\_\_\_\_ Him from the heart, the Lord is pleased.

The church that Jesus built is the one you can read about in the New Testament; it appeared on \_\_\_\_\_ in identifiable, local congregations. They were like \_\_\_\_\_ in various locations, meeting each first day of the week to \_\_\_\_\_. They ate their meals together; they took care of their needy; and they \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. Acts 2:42 says, "They were continually \_\_\_\_\_ themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." To be the church Jesus built today, congregations must \_\_\_\_\_ to follow the examples of what God desires. We can \_\_\_\_\_ what God instructs by examining the New Testament.

The Lord's teaching was not \_\_\_\_\_ for the first century. He gave it for \_\_\_\_\_ time. That teaching is preserved for us in \_\_\_\_\_ form in the New Testament so that people in every age might know God's will. What God \_\_\_\_\_ in the first century, He desires in the twenty-first. If the Lord gave us this \_\_\_\_\_ in His Word, shouldn't we follow it? Jesus said, "Why do you \_\_\_\_\_ me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I \_\_\_\_\_ you?" (Luke 6:46). Because we call Jesus our Lord, we \_\_\_\_\_ Him and \_\_\_\_\_ His words.

### Our reading today comes from Ephesians 4:1-6.

As members of the Lord's church, our heart's \_\_\_\_\_ is to believe in and to obey the Lord Jesus. We don't want to \_\_\_\_\_ to His words or take \_\_\_\_\_ from them. We want to believe and practice \_\_\_\_\_ He taught and nothing else. When we became Christians, we recognized Jesus Christ as our \_\_\_\_\_ Lord. Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving \_\_\_\_\_ to God the Father through him." We act in His \_\_\_\_\_ and by His authority. We belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some encyclopedias say that the church of Christ \_\_\_\_\_ in America in the early 1800s with men such as Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Barton Stone; but Campbell and Stone could not establish something that has \_\_\_\_\_ been established. I've never \_\_\_\_\_

membership in any church but the church Jesus established at Pentecost in 30 A.D. I wasn't \_\_\_\_\_ in the name of Campbell or Stone. Neither of them was \_\_\_\_\_ for me. I didn't even \_\_\_\_\_ of them until years after I was baptized. I believe in the Lord Jesus and was \_\_\_\_\_ in His name. I've taken up my cross to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus. He is my Lord and the only \_\_\_\_\_ of His church. Churches of Christ look to Him \_\_\_\_\_ as our Savior and Lord.

Today, there are more than 12,000 \_\_\_\_\_ churches of Christ across the United States. Like the churches of the New Testament, these congregations \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus as their Lord and Savior. They don't have bylaws or a manual that they use in \_\_\_\_\_ to the New Testament. They don't have a headquarters or an organization that's \_\_\_\_\_ the local congregations. They don't meet annually to make official \_\_\_\_\_ of the church or to make binding theological decisions. While these congregations \_\_\_\_\_ one another as brethren, they are autonomous. Each congregation has its own \_\_\_\_\_ made up of its elders and deacons, who look to the Bible for their teaching and practice.

Should you visit one of these congregations on a Sunday morning, you'll find a warm \_\_\_\_\_. Churches of Christ are families who gather together with a \_\_\_\_\_ faith, hope, and love. They are brothers and sisters to one another, but there is \_\_\_\_\_ in their hearts for someone new. They \_\_\_\_\_ about your soul, your well-being, and your family. Churches of Christ generally have Bible \_\_\_\_\_ for all ages on Sunday mornings. These classes study the Bible closely to learn the \_\_\_\_\_ about God and how we should serve Him.

Churches of Christ gather each Lord's day, which is the first day of the week or Sunday, to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. They look to the Scriptures to see \_\_\_\_\_ God wants them to worship as a church. They \_\_\_\_\_ their worship today after the examples and instructions that were given in the New Testament. Worship is a time to draw \_\_\_\_\_ to God and to express our love, our praise, and our thanksgiving for all that God has done for us. Worshiping God \_\_\_\_\_ us of how holy God is and how we stand in \_\_\_\_\_ of His grace and forgiveness. Worship is a time of \_\_\_\_\_ and of \_\_\_\_\_ toward God.

Christian worship to the Lord consists first of \_\_\_\_\_. **Read what 1 Timothy 2:1-2 says.** As Christians we pray for everyone in \_\_\_\_\_. We \_\_\_\_\_ God for all His blessings and for peace. We pray for strength, courage, and comfort. We even pray for our \_\_\_\_\_. We pray especially that God will open a door for the \_\_\_\_\_, so that men may \_\_\_\_\_ the will of God.

During worship we enjoy the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Scripture. Paul told Timothy, "Until I come, give attention to the \_\_\_\_\_ reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching" (1 Timothy 4:13). Scripture nourishes our \_\_\_\_\_ and builds us up. Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus, "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to

\_\_\_\_\_ you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). We need God’s Word in our \_\_\_\_\_ every day.

Churches of Christ \_\_\_\_\_ from their hearts, because they want to praise God and to edify one another. **Read what Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16 say.** The music in Christian worship in the New Testament was by means of \_\_\_\_\_ singing, and \_\_\_\_\_ member of the congregation participated. The New Testament gives \_\_\_\_\_ example or instruction for Christians to worship with instruments of music. We seek to \_\_\_\_\_ the New Testament teaching in all things, so we simply sing. We know this \_\_\_\_\_ God, because the early church didn’t use instruments of music in worship for many centuries. Since our worship is to glorify God, our desire is to please Him by following the \_\_\_\_\_ of the New Testament for Christian worship. Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of \_\_\_\_\_ that give thanks to His name.”

Each Lord’s Day, the first day of the week, we commune together in the \_\_\_\_\_. **Read what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.** The Lord’s Supper is a \_\_\_\_\_ memorial meal, and every \_\_\_\_\_ of the church partakes. Christians \_\_\_\_\_ the body and the blood of Jesus sacrificed for them so they might have the forgiveness of sins.

Each first day of the week, Christians \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord for the work of the church. **Read what they believe in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.** Churches of Christ do not send \_\_\_\_\_ or expect a \_\_\_\_\_ of ten percent. They urge members to give \_\_\_\_\_ as they have been prospered and as they \_\_\_\_\_ in their hearts.

During worship a preacher or minister will \_\_\_\_\_ the word of God to build up and to encourage brethren to live faithful and holy lives, to know the Lord and His truth, and to keep on doing good and reaching out to others with the gospel. Paul urged Timothy to “preach the word; to be ready in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2). Preachers have the responsibility of persuading the \_\_\_\_\_ to come to Jesus and of \_\_\_\_\_ the brethren. They must teach the \_\_\_\_\_ counsel of God, and that means they must speak against what is false and what is immoral. They must call men to \_\_\_\_\_ of their sins and to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church is a \_\_\_\_\_ that’s made up of brothers and sisters. In fact, 1 Peter 2:17 tells us to “\_\_\_\_\_ the brotherhood.” No one is \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ than anyone else. Each member of the body is \_\_\_\_\_ and valued. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 20:25-28.**

The church that Jesus built wasn’t \_\_\_\_\_ into clergy on one hand and laity on the other. In fact, each congregation had its \_\_\_\_\_ leadership, and no leader held \_\_\_\_\_ over several congregations. The idea of an archbishop or a hierarchy over \_\_\_\_\_ congregations is foreign to the New Testament. It was a development brought about by \_\_\_\_\_ over the centuries. In the

New Testament a \_\_\_\_\_ of elders or shepherds oversaw the work of each congregation. They didn't have one \_\_\_\_\_ over the elders in a local church. When Diotrephes, in Third John, put himself first and tried to \_\_\_\_\_ the church, the apostle John \_\_\_\_\_ him.

The Lord Jesus refused to let His followers assume a \_\_\_\_\_ that put them above others as some of the Jews did. **Read Matthew 23:8-12.** For this \_\_\_\_\_, ministers and others in the church of Christ refuse to be called "Reverend" or "Father."

In the Lord's church every member is called a "saint"; there isn't any \_\_\_\_\_ class of Christians that are above others. **Read what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:2.** Every person washed in the blood of Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit is a \_\_\_\_\_.

In the Lord's church every member is a \_\_\_\_\_. **Read what Peter said to the whole church in 1 Peter 2:9.** Israel had a \_\_\_\_\_ tribe of priests among the Levites, but the church doesn't have that! According to 1 Peter 2:5, every Christian is a priest \_\_\_\_\_ up "spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Every Christian has the \_\_\_\_\_ as a priest to serve God, to worship, and to teach others about God.

While the church Jesus built, the church of Christ, is not a denomination or a sect, you can \_\_\_\_\_ it today in identifiable congregations. You can be a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord's church! The same \_\_\_\_\_ that made members of the church in the first century makes members of the church today. First Peter 1:23 says Christians are "born again, not of perishable \_\_\_\_\_ but of imperishable, (that is) through the living and abiding word of God." If you have the same seed, you have the same \_\_\_\_\_. If you change up that seed by \_\_\_\_\_ it with human traditions and doctrines, you have something \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27.** You're building your religious house; and what you build will determine your \_\_\_\_\_. Be wise and build your house on the \_\_\_\_\_. How? By \_\_\_\_\_ the words of Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_ them. Go to the New Testament, all of it, and find everything that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_. Don't build your house on \_\_\_\_\_ traditions or doctrines and then expect to have a firm foundation. Go to the Bible \_\_\_\_\_ to find the rock. In churches of Christ, it's our passion to \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord's words found in the New Testament and simply to do them. We don't want to \_\_\_\_\_ to them or take anything from them.

Become a Christian by putting your \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord and obeying Him. If you love Him, turn away from every \_\_\_\_\_ and serve Him; confess Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God; and be \_\_\_\_\_, immersed in water. Do it in the name of Jesus Christ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins. The Bible says when we're baptized into Christ, we are baptized into His \_\_\_\_\_. Baptism \_\_\_\_\_ us with Christ in His death, in His burial, and in His resurrection (Romans 6:3-7). Churches of Christ today are simply made up of people who \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord according to His teaching. They believed, repented, confessed, and were baptized.