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 _______
member 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.