Membership in the Church
Romans 12:4-8

If you could be a ______ of God and a _________ in the kingdom of God, would you? Today, we’re exploring what it ______ to be a member of the church. Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our __________, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” The Bible gives us _____ on every page. Scripture reveals God’s _____ to bless and redeem man from His weaknesses and sins.

Many people today say, “Jesus, yes; but the ________, no.” About 80 percent of Americans believe you can be a “good Christian” _________ ever being a member of any church. Many want to be Christians but not members of an “organized ________”. Some people have decided to be Christians “at large” or to establish small “house churches”; but they hold the organized church today in __________. Can a Christian please the Lord Jesus and ______ to be part of the church He built? Is attending church and being a church member _________?

Some quit worshipping at church because they had a _____ experience, and we’re sorry for that. Some leave the church because they have _______ and are ashamed. Some stop going because they disagree with some __________ of the church. Many in our culture think churches are too “__________,” and have quit because they don’t want to hear about sin. Others have simply gotten too _____ for God and don’t have time to worship. We hope you’ll put God ______; and we want to explore the ________ of the church that Jesus built. He purchased His church for a reason, and you will be _________ to be a member.

Our reading today comes from Romans 12:4-8.

I hear people speak about “_______ the church”, and they have an important message. We must be the ______ of Christ in the world today. The notion that we can “be the church” but not a ______ of any local congregation, however, is an unscriptural idea. God expects His people to __________ with one another for worship and ministry. Read what the Hebrew writer says in Hebrews 10:24-25. In the New Testament, when a Christian quit assembling with the church, he was _________ _________ from God. He was _________ the faith. He was hurting _________ and hurting the _________ by returning to the world.

Jesus built the church to bless us. Solomon said, “Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). People in the church _____ each other stronger, better, and more faithful and committed. Each Christian needs the _________ of love and faith that his
brothers and sisters give him. Each Christian needs to so _____ and so _____ that he provides an example of commitment to the cause of Christ. Saying, “I love Christ, but I won’t go to church” sends a ________ signal. It says, “I love God, but I’ll ________ which commands I’ll obey and which I won’t.” This person isn’t really obeying ______, but is obeying _______ and his own wishes. Read what Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. God knew His people needed the ________ and the ______ that each one could give the other to grow and to remain strong in faith. Two are better than one, _________ they have each other.

Where would we be __________ Bible teachers and godly examples? If you have children, don’t _______ them out of a spiritual education. It’s a shame that nearly 40 percent of the young people in America grow up without any spiritual __________. They need the _____ of God to face the temptations and the pitfalls of life. Your children’s education isn’t complete if it lacks the _______. If you educate their ________ but fail to educate their ______, you haven’t prepared them for the day when Jesus comes again. They won’t know Him, but will be like the five foolish virgins who didn’t have oil for the lamps and found themselves shut out of the __________. Someone converted you to ________, and they were likely faithful members of the church. They not only taught you the ________ but also taught you about the ________. Bible stories are not myths or legends; they are historical accounts of God’s __________ with man. The Bible helps us to make _______ of where we came from, why we’re here, and what will happen to us after we die. We _______ this spiritual education!

The ________ is God’s kingdom in this life, and __________ is God’s kingdom in the next life. We enter the church here so that we may enter the __________ of heaven in the days to come. Read Philippians 3:20-21. People who have this ________ of heaven and want to live for the Lord have a tremendous ____________ by putting their faith there and being active in church.

Read 1 John 3:1-4. Church helps us _______ on the things that matter and to keep ourselves ready and pure for the ________ of our Lord Jesus.

We ask, “What was the church ______ in the New Testament?” The word “church” refers to an assembly, a congregation that was called together for a specific ________. After Paul had established several congregations on his first missionary journey, he ________ to those congregations, strengthening and encouraging them. Acts 14:23 says, “When they had appointed elders for them in ________ church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Later, Paul wrote “to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons” (Philippians 1:1). Did you notice that all the members were called “_______” and not a special class? There are no “super saints” in the Lord’s church; _____________ is important and loved.
New Testament churches were ________ with established leaders. They were ________ congregations, meeting at set times and in set locations. Sometimes churches _____ in a family’s house; but in those days a large house could hold a congregation. In some cases, congregations _____ outside or in caves. At that time, the church was ________ persecuted and considered illegal. The earliest church ________ date about 250 A.D. Although they could not openly show themselves, churches assembled to ________ and to encourage each other.

Read Ephesians 4:11-13. In the early church God gave _________. God knew that His people needed training and equipping to do the ____ that He called them to do: to take the gospel to the whole world, and to build up the church, and to render help to the needy.

Salvation is never without _______________. To be a member of the church means we’re ________ to the Lord and to our brethren. The Lord Jesus said, “Whoever does not _____ his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:27). When you become a Christian, the Lord ____ you to His church. From that day forward, you’re God’s _______ and belong to Christ. You are not your own, and, since you belong to Christ, you must consider how your life ________ on Christ and on His church.

Second Timothy 2:19 says, “Nevertheless, the _____ foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord ______ those who are His,’ and, ‘Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to ______ from wickedness.’” People who live for the Lord should live so as to bring ______ and ______ to the name of Christ. Sadly, some Christians by their ______ language and ______ behavior bring shame on the Lord Jesus and His church. When we become a Christian, we decide to live the moral life that Jesus Christ _________. We must _______ sin behind. Paul asked, “Are we to continue in sin so that ______ may increase? May it never be! How shall we who ______ to sin still ______ in it?” (Romans 6:1-2).

We are obligated to support the church by our ____________. Read Hebrews 10:24-25. When we get involved in the ________ of the church, we influence others to get involved. By attending worship, we get to _______ our brothers and sisters, and we can encourage them to stay ________ to the Lord; we can stimulate them to love God; and we can stimulate them to be kind and to serve others.

God also expects His people to support ____________ the work of the church. Read what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. As Christians, we have an ________ to one another. Titus 3:14 says, “Our people must also learn to ______ in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.” Read 1 John 3:17-18. We can show our love for God by ________ for others and helping them. The best thing that you can do to ______
another’s life is to _______ him about the Lord. The primary work of the church is to _______ the gospel to every creature. People need _______ than physical food; they need God’s _______ to live spiritually. The Lord Jesus said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not _______ by bread alone, but by _______ word that proceeds out of the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). We must stay ____ working for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Someone says, “Well, Phil, we had a _____ experience at church and we won’t be going back.” I’m sorry that you had that experience, but was it the _______ church or just an individual that hurt you? The Bible teaches that when a fellow Christian sins against you, you’re to go to that person __________ and talk to him, trying to restore the relationship (Matthew 18:15). Many times people, rather than following the instructions of the Lord, simply _______ and separate themselves from other godly people that they need in their lives. Don’t quit the church over some _____ brother or sister. Talk to that person and _______ it out.

We will _______ have to deal with rude, selfish, and sometimes immature people; but if the Lord was gracious enough to _______ and put up with us and all our sins, we can be gracious enough to forgive and put up with those who sin only a little against us. We don’t want to _____ our souls because we couldn’t get along with a brother or sister in the church. I would _______ forgive and be forgiven than to hold a grudge and lose my soul.

Some say they want to _______ Jesus, but have no _____ for the church; but if we enter into a relationship with the Lord, we must also embrace the Lord’s _______. The Bible calls the church the household or _______ of God in 1 Timothy 3:15. The church is not only God’s family, but also His _______ (Matthew 16:18). He loved the church so much that He purchased it with His own _______ (Acts 20:28). We must not set the church _______ so quickly. To reject the church is to reject _______ and His will.

We all realize the church is made up of fallible people who sometimes _____ to measure up to the will of God. Before we give up on the church, let’s ___________ that we all “have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). We all need God’s _______. God’s gracious love moves our _______ to walk in the light and to be in His family.

To become a Christian and be added by the Lord to His church, you must _______ Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Repent of your ______, every one of them, and turn your heart to the Lord. Confess the Lord Jesus before others and be __________ into Christ. Romans 6:3 says we are baptized into His ________, and verse 6 says we are crucified with Christ “in order that our body of _____ might be done away with.” We’re buried with Christ and raised to walk in _________ of life. Nothing, nothing is more important!