

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH Pt. 1 **(Does God View the Church as Essential? Do You?)**

Jesus Christ said emphatically in Matthew 16:18 ...

How precious and important is the Church to Jesus Christ? To you? (Acts 20:28; Eph.1:7, 3:1-6; 5:25)

“Church” (Ekklesia) refers to a _____. What are some of the New Testament metaphors for this relationship?

What did the instructions of our Lord to “make disciples of all people groups” (Matt. 28:19) result in the book of Acts?

Who did Paul write the majority of his epistles to?

Whom did the Lord Jesus Christ walk among in Revelation 2 & 3?

Whom does the Holy Spirit indwell in this Dispensation of Grace? (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20)

Is the local church and its gathering really that important and essential in God’s plan for this dispensation? Does it actually matter that the saints gather in person and participate in a local church?

What are 2 imbalances to avoid?

Why is the local church so important in the plan and purposes of God?

#1: The local church according to God’s blueprint is very important and vital for the saints to be _____
_____. (Acts 2:41-42) What were they intensely and repeatedly devoted to on a regular basis?

- **Focus 1 - “the apostle’ _____”** – this is first on the list because of its priority, for apart from a steady diet of sound & systematic scriptural teaching regarding Jesus Christ, the Gospel, etc. there will be no true worship or spiritual growth. In addition, the remaining elements in this verse will be misunderstood or simply legalistically followed. This is a necessary element to worship the Lord “in spirit and in truth”.
- **Focus 2 – “_____”** – this “koinonia” is derived from a developing like-mindedness around the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Word of God resulting in spiritual conversation and participation.
- **Focus 3 – “in the breaking of bread” or the _____** – this celebration was reflective of the Gospel and was to be done “in remembrance” of their Savior and Lord and with thanks for His finished work.
- **Focus 4 – “_____”** – this involved group or corporate prayers uttered from needy and thankful hearts in response to the Word of God with praise, supplication, and intercession.
- What about corporate singing in worship? Is “worship” really that important to the Lord? (John 4:23-24)
- What did this result in toward the unsaved? (Acts 2:44-47) How does this apply to you & me?

#2: The local church according to God's blueprint is very important and vital for the saints to be _____ for the _____ God has for you. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

- Where does all of this begin? (4:7)
- What are the gifted men to do through the preaching of the Word of God? (4:11-12a)
- What happens when the saints are equipped? (4:12b)
- What occurs when the equipped saints do the work of ministry? (4:12c)
- How long is this process to go on for? (4:13)
- What happens when the saints are not established and equipped via sound doctrine? (4:14)
- What is the contrast to vs. 14 when the divine design is followed? (4:15)
- How should this principally and practically work? (4:16)
- What does all of this assume?

#3: The local church according to God's blueprint is very important and vital for the saints to be _____ spiritually with the "one anothers". (Heb. 10:24-25)

- **"And let us _____"** (katanoeo) – to consider closely, to take serious thought, to be personally concerned, to give thoughtful attention.
- **"_____"** – believers are spiritually connected to other believers in the body of Christ which finds expression in local churches. We are to be concerned about the spiritual welfare of others and not merely our own.
- **"in order to _____"** (paroxusmos) – an incitement, stimulation, or motivation to spur or rouse.
- **"_____ and _____"** – the internal attitude of agape love & the external actions of good works.
- **"not _____ the _____ of ourselves _____"** – God does not want us to forsake, neglect, or abandon by way of priority or practice the assembling of ourselves (episunagoge – from which we derive "synagogue", which means to gather together in one place).
- **"as is the _____ of _____"** – the word "manner" (ethos) refers to manner, custom, or habit.
- **"but _____"** – (parakaleo) can mean to exhort, encourage, or comfort another depending upon its nuance in the context.
- **"and so _____ the _____"** – and even more so or all the more. This expresses the urgency and importance of not neglecting the local church gathering.
- **"as you see the _____ approaching."** – even more so because you see the Day approaching.