

Should I Go To Church?

What Is A Church?

This first section is from The Open Bible - "The Christian's Guide: The Meaning of the Church." "In modern English the word "church" is used in five ways: (1) a building designated as a place of worship, that is, a church building; (2) all who profess faith in Christ regardless of particular theological beliefs; (3) a denomination; (4) a single organized Christian group, that is, a local church; and (5) the body of Christ, that is, the universal church. While all of these are legitimate uses for modern English, the word "church" is used in the NT (New Testament) in only the last two senses - a local church, or the body of Christ, the universal church.... The universal church comprises all believers from the Day of Pentecost until the time God takes the church out of the world, and at which time His program for the church will be complete. The local church is a local, visible, temporal manifestation of the universal church. At one point in history the local and universal churches were identical (Acts 2:41). The universal church will not meet until 'we all get to heaven' and once in session will never cease."

This next section is from "The Bible Believer's Helpful Little Handbook," by James L. Melton. "The word (church) literally means "called out assembly," so the church consists of people who have been called out of this world.

The church is not an organization, but rather an ORGANISM. That is, it's a living body of believers. Anyone who has been saved by receiving Christ as Savior is a member of the church, for the church is made up of all true believers in Christ. A person's denominational membership is in no way connected with his membership in the body of Christ. Those who have truly received Christ are members of His Church, regardless of what any denomination believes or says (Jhn. 1:12; Acts 16:31; Jhn. 5:24; Mat. 11:28; Rom. 10:13, etc.).

Beware of anyone who speaks of THEIR church as being the "true church," because the true church is a SPIRITUAL BODY OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST, not an organized group of religious people.

The Bible will sometimes use the term "church" when referring to local assemblies of Christians (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Ths. 1:1; Phi.2), but the term is never a reference to any denomination or any building."

Church Participation

Most of the following paragraph is from an article entitled "What Keeps People From Believing In God And The Bible." Often non-Christians see people who go to church as people who are to be sinful. Therefore Christians are expected to set the example of how a Godly person should live. But since many church goers live a life which is seen as un-Godly, non-Christians see many 'Christians' as hypocrites and untrustworthy. Why would anyone want to be a member of such a group? What non-Christians do not understand is that all people are sinners; no person is sinful (other than Jesus Christ). Remember that the church is a hospital for sinners and not a club for saints. If you took all the sinners out of church, there would be no one left. A true Christian is a changed person with true desires to follow the laws of God. For those who are not willing to make Christ more valuable than the follies of sin and continue to disobey God's laws and Christian morals, there is strong doubt that they are truly saved. Broad is the way to a life of corruption and eternal damnation, but narrow is the way to righteousness and eternal salvation. Therefore many people who go to church will call themselves Christians but not truly be saved and will not enter heaven. It is up to Jesus to judge and handle those who are hypocrites to the Christian morals and laws. So do not let the ignorance and actions of some church members keep you from being saved or keep you from attending church. Our main purpose for attending church services should be to worship God through song, scripture reading, and prayer. We should attend church to

fellowship with other believers in Christ, and to strengthen our faith and biblical knowledge and understanding, and to strengthen our relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This section is from The Open Bible - "The Christian's Guide: The Reason for Participation in the Local Church." "The ultimate reason that we should participate in a local church is because it is specifically commanded by God. Even in NT days there were those who yielded to the temptation of absenting themselves from the worship services of the local church. The writer of Heb. points out that members of a local church have an obligation to one another. They are to provoke one another to good works and to exhort one another to live consistent lives worthy of God. This can best be done within the context of a local church; so believers are commanded not to forsake the assembling of themselves together."

This section is from The Open Bible - "The Christian's Guide: Benefits of Participation in the Local Church." "The benefits of participation in a local church are immediately apparent. This passage (Acts 2:42-47) records the first meeting of the first local church. From this passage seven benefits of participation in the local church are immediately apparent: instruction - 'continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine'; fellowship - 'and fellowship'; observance of the ordinances - 'breaking of bread'; corporate prayer - 'prayers'; effective outreach - 'fear came upon every soul'; common cause - 'had all things in common'; and mutual assistance - 'divided them among all, as anyone had need.' In addition to these, four other benefits of participation in the local church are clear: worship (Acts 20:7); discipline (Matt. 18:15-17; 2 Cor. 13:1-10); pastoral oversight (1 Pet. 5:1-3); and obedience to God's command (Heb. 10:25). Participation in the local church is not optional for the child of God. It is imperative and yields eternal benefits."

The Right Church

A church is not just a building; a church is its people and their beliefs. A pamphlet printed by Shadow Of The Steeple Ministries points out the importance of choosing a proper church and gives some important guidelines. The following text is from this article.

"Many say today that it does not matter where you go to Church just as long as you go. This may sound good but it is not Scriptural. There are so many false religions and cults that serious thought should be given to where we will attend Church. Many say that they go to the Church of their choice. This statement is not Biblical. Many go to a certain Church just because they were raised up in it or because they have friends there. The fact is that much prayer and thought should be given to this matter.

"The Christian does not have to pray about going to Church, he is commanded to go. A Christian does have to pray about where to go to Church. Just any place will not do. Your spiritual welfare is important and demands much prayer to find God's will in your life.

"Here are some guidelines to help you choose: The Church of your choice 1) must use the Bible (Authorized King James) as its Authority. 2) must preach Jesus Christ as the Savior and the only Begotten Son of God. 3) must preach that Salvation is by Grace through faith in the shed BLOOD of Christ, plus nothing minus nothing. 4) must teach and preach that man must be born again in order to get to heaven. 5) must believe that Jesus Christ is the only way and the only means of Salvation. 6) must not only preach but also practice the Biblical standards of Christian living. The Church standards should be the highest in the land. 7) should not take a liberal view of the Word of God, but take a strong stand upon the Bible. 8) should have a soul-winning effort of some kind. After all, this is the real reason for the Church being instituted. 9) should have a pastor, not a hireling, who is a strong preacher against sin and its destruction. 10) must believe that there is a literal place called HELL for those who have not been born again.

"These are just a few things to look for in choosing a Church for your family. Please be sure that you find one that God can meet you in."