



Lesson 6: The Local Church
Why You Need It & Why It Needs You

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers....And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- Acts 2:42-47 -

CLASS EIGHT:
PART 2
THE LOCAL CHURCH

III. THE LOCAL CHURCH – PURPOSE AND PRACTICE

The local Church is the expression of the presence and power of Christ in the world. More than 90% of references in the New Testament to the “church” are referring to a church in a specific locale.

While all true believers in Christ are part of His Church universal, all true believers in Christ should also belong to a local body of believers.

The benefits of local Church membership are many. The purposes for every believer ministering and fellowshiping to and with other believers are clearly spelled out in the scriptures.

IV. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIBLICAL MINISTRIES AND FUNCTIONS OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH?

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:41-47

- Continuation of the work of Christ – continuing *to do what Jesus BEGAN to do and teach* (Acts 1:1)
- Evangelism – preaching the Gospel, planting churches, etc. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Luke 24:47, 48)
- Discipling new believers, teaching (Matthew 28:19)
- Worship
- Fellowship
- Ministry – serving / meeting needs

V. WHAT ARE THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH?

At Church on the Rock, we regularly participate in 2 ordinances:

- A. _____ – Administered for believers only, by immersion, as the biblical witness to their salvation, and identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ – Romans 6; Colossians 2:11, 12 – See the notes on baptism above. While we do pray for infants and young children a prayer of dedication to the Lord (like Hannah presented Samuel to the Lord or Jesus blessing the children by laying His hands on them), we do not baptize infants as there is no Scriptural basis for the practice.

- B. _____ or the Lord's Supper** – Communion was instituted by our Lord and is the practice of believers in Christ through partaking of unleavened bread and grape juice or wine.

At Church on the Rock, Communion is open to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and desires to participate.

As Instituted by Christ:

They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." Luke 22:13-20

As explained by the Apostle Paul:

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

VI. WHAT'S THE PRACTICAL "TAKE AWAY"?

- 1) There are certain practices and beliefs that are the basic foundation of Christian life and practice. The Bible not only teaches these doctrines but also demonstrates the ways these are worked out in the life of a believer.

These basic truths form the foundation upon which an effective, valued, rewarding Christian life that glorifies God can be lived.

All basic biblical *doctrines* (beliefs) must result in Bible-based *practice*. For example, if we have repented of our sins, we also need to *walk before the Lord with a humbled, repentant heart*. If you understand the importance of *worship* as a Christian, then you will also gather with other Christians in a local Church to worship. If you understand that all believers are commanded by Jesus to preach/tell/share the Gospel with all people everywhere, then you will find ways to witness to others. If you understand that all believers have certain gifts and graces and callings to serve the Lord, then you will be connected to a local Church in order to serve the Lord using your gifts, callings, and

graces to serve Him in and through the local Church.

- 2) One of the most important attitudes all believers should carry in their hearts before God includes consistently searching for ways to live solely for God's glory and not for themselves. Jesus Christ did not die on the cross *only* to make our lives **happy**. He died on the cross so that all men might be saved. All are saved only through Christ, and they are only saved by hearing the Gospel from others. All our lives should be lived by finding the best way we can serve God in bringing the Gospel to all mankind, across the world, and around the corner. It is only in serving Him that we find true peace and rest. We live for His pleasure and serve at His pleasure.

ANSWERS:

Pg. 1 – Water Baptism

Pg. 2 - Communion