

POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS

There is a general feeling that church attendance is unimportant or, as many have stated, “They do not believe in ‘organized religion.’” This may be a valid point when one considers all the various religions organized by men, but not when it comes to the religion organized by God.

Further, some wrong attitudes are understandably the result of having to face too many different faiths. Not all churches can be right and in this God agrees. HE says there is only “one way” (John 14:6) and that there is only “one faith” (Ephesians 4:5).

Others believe that they can be acceptable Christians on their own without having to be part of any assembly, however, the concept of a “*personal savior!*” and “*going it alone*” is not taught in the Scriptures.

HOW IMPORTANT IS ASSEMBLY?

The best way to understand the importance of the church is to see how important it is to God! The apostle Paul emphasized the church’s worth in the most imperative of terms when he wrote: “...Christ *loved* the church and *gave Himself up* [died] for her” (Ephesians 5:25).

Paul further states that the church is Christ’s body (Ephesians 1:22-23) and so it does His work now that the Lord no longer walks on this earth. To NOT be a part of that body makes a Christian *fruitless*. It is like our own hand saying, “I don’t need the rest of the members” (1 Corinthians 12:21). The apostle stresses that each of us must do his part (Ephesians 4:16), especially since it is the church that Jesus is going to take up to the Father (Ephesians 5:27). It is in the Lord’s body that the cleansing blood of Christ flows, and it continues to cleanse those only who are a part of it (1 John 1:7).

HOW IMPORTANT TO YOU?

The church is provided by God to help us stimulate one another to love and good deeds, and to encourage one another in times of hardship. To forsake the assembling of one’s self is to abandon our fellow Christians during their struggle against the world (Hebrews 10:24-25).

The apostle John writes that if we are not fellowshiping with one another, we are not walking in the light, and the blood of Christ is not washing away our sins (1 John 1:7).

The church is also God’s primary institute of learning, gifted with teachers and Elders for the equipping of the saints for the building up of themselves (Ephesians 4:11-13), and it is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God is to be made known (Ephesians 3:10).

The church is a spiritual assembly of people and God’s temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17). The assembly is God’s dwelling where His people worship Him (Ephesians 2:20-22). It is in the church ONLY that one can render acceptable worship in service to the Lord. It is where one goes to get one’s soul purged by obedience to the gospel truth (1 Peter 1:22), to get one’s sins forgiven through prayer and spiritual sacrifice, and to get one’s spirit awakened to duty in remembrance through the partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

PUTTING GOD FIRST

Too many have put God aside as they worry about getting rich and pursuing happiness. Jesus taught that putting the kingdom of God first is how one lays up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20,33), and if one does so, the Lord has promised that He would then take care of one’s daily subsistence.

David wrote that when the Lord is our Shepherd we shall not want (Psalms 23:1) and that he had never seen the righteous forsaken (Psa. 37:25).

All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3) and the church is the fullness of Him (Ephesians 1:22-23), thus to be in the church is to be where all blessings are.

WILL ANY CHURCH DO?

Through the cross of Christ we are reconciled to God in the church (Ephesians 2:16), but one needs to ask: “Will any church, or any faith, do?” The answer is: “No!” In the same letter Paul writes that: “There is ONE body [church]... and ONE faith...” (Ephesians 4:4-5) [*Emphasis mine*]. Jesus told His disciples that He would build HIS church (Matthew 16:18), making it distinct from all other assemblies of men.

The church acceptable to God must be along New Testament guidelines. There is no other authority one can use to know what is acceptable. Just as Moses was warned to follow the pattern shown to him (Hebrews 8:5), the right assembly will try to do what pleases God (Ephesians 5:10). Christ will be the head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15), the overseers will be properly qualified (1 Timothy 3:1-13), and the members will be in submission to those who rule over them (Hebrews 13:17).

The worship should also consist of the apostle’s teaching, fellowship, the Lord’s Supper, and prayer (Acts 2:42). The singing of praises to God should be without instrumental accompaniment (Ephesians 5:19 – voice only is authorized) and financial offering should be in accordance with the dictates of one’s heart (2 Corinthians 9:7) – not a mandatory tithe. Just any other type of worship is not recognized by God (Matthew 7:21-23).

If you would like further study on this subject, or any other scriptural topic, we encourage you to contact us through the information provided on the back of this brochure. “All the churches of Christ greet you” (Romans 16:16).

