



Series: Know Your Bible

Lesson: 6. Your Local Church and Why It Matters

- **Today's Questions about the Relevance of the Local Church:**

1. Why do I need to commit to one church when there are so many choices around?
2. Why do I need to go to all the trouble to go to church when I can just livestream it from home?
3. If we can livestream a sermon, why hire our own pastor when our church can just livestream a more established preacher?
4. If I can watch videos or listen to podcasts of famous preachers whenever I want, why do I need to be a part of a church at all?

- The _____ of Membership

1. Biblical vs. 'formal' membership

Heb. 10:24–25 – and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

2. Church membership is _____ to fulfill what God intends for Christians.

- a. The immediate response to the official formation of the Church at Pentecost was for Christians to gather together, and it never stopped.

Acts 2:42 – They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

- b. The *many* 'one another' commands in the New Testament can only be meaningfully fulfilled by being a committed part of a local body (cf. Heb. 10:24–25).

- c. God intends for us to be accountable to spiritual leadership, including His messages through His Word

Heb. 13:7, 17 – Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith...¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

1 Tim. 4:13 – Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

- d. The New Testament records that believers traveling to another city would carry letters of commendation so they could be immediately accepted into the local assembly (e.g., Acts 18:27; Rom. 16:1–2)
- e. God's Word is written primarily to God's assemblies to build up *corporate* faith and practice.

3. _____ within our culture has seeped into the Church at the expense of the corporate identity so pervasive in Scripture.

a. Most evangelism focuses entirely on a _____ relationship with Christ and has no place for identity and relationship as a part of His body/His bride.

b. Most teaching in churches focuses on what to do or think as individuals without any emphasis on how we fit and function as a body.

c. Many congregants view their churches in _____ terms, so they have no problem bouncing from church to church.

d. Church attendance is viewed as completely _____.

e. People now use parachurch organizations as substitutes for being part of a local assembly.

• The _____ of Membership

1. Membership is _____. (Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:24–25; Tit. 2:1–10)

2. Membership is _____. (Heb. 13:17)

1 Thess. 5:12–13 – But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, ¹³and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. (cf. Rom. 13:1–2)

*1 Thess. 2:7–12 – But we proved to be gentle among you, **as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.** ⁸Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. ⁹For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; ¹¹just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you **as a father would his own children,** ¹²so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. (cf. John 10:11)*

3. Membership is _____.

John 17:20–21 – “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

John 1:12–13 – But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

2 Tim. 1:3–5 – I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, ⁴longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.

Eph. 2:19–22 – So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

4. Membership is _____.

Eph. 4:11–13 – And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12–31)

- **The _____ of Membership**

1. Baptism

- a. The New Testament expectation is that baptism follows belief as a _____ to salvation.

Matt. 28:19–20 – Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Acts 2:37–38 – Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (cf. Acts 8:35–36; 16:31–33)

- b. Baptism is an outward _____ of the inward reality of who we are in Christ and what happened to us in salvation.

Rom. 6:3–7 – Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin.

- c. We celebrate it as a church so that believers can publicly declare their allegiance to Christ.

2. Communion (1 Cor. 11:17–34)

- a. The Lord's Supper is meant to be a time of congregational fellowship where we commemorate what Christ accomplished on our behalf with both His earthly life and His sacrificial death.
- b. It is a fulfilment of the original _____ meal: both serve to unify God's people around their core identity and ultimate hope.
- c. It also provides a reminder of how important it is to deal with _____.

3. Church discipline (Matt. 18:12–17; 1 Cor. 5)

- a. The intent is to _____.
- b. The intent is also to protect the _____ of the church.

4. Discipleship

- a. The core command of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19) is _____.
- b. This is more than evangelism; it is the process of making and developing students who imitate their Master.

John 8:31 – So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;”

2 Tim. 2:2 – The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

- c. The Church’s job is to make sure that ALL of the true faith is passed on to a new generation.
- d. The Church is to work together toward a more _____ faith. (Eph. 4:12–13)

5. Giving

2 Cor. 9:6–8 – Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

- a. God will bless us with whatever we need to fulfill

_____.

- b. Our finances should reflect our true _____.

Matt. 6:19–21 – “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- c. We should prioritize contributing to the ministry of the _____ (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1–14).

What Do We Do with These Truths?

1. What is most challenging to you about being committed to a local church? Why?
2. How is God growing/convicting/leading your relationship with the local church?
3. How would you describe the Bible's teaching about the local church compared to our culture's description of it?
4. How does your perspective change regarding church practices when viewed through a corporate lens instead of an individual one?

Blanks: Necessity, required, Individualism, personal, consumer, optional, Meaning, fellowship, submission, identity, loyalty, Practices, response, testimony, Passover, sin, restore, purity, discipleship, mature, His will, local church