

The Church and Its Members

Intro: *There's confusion in the religious world about what the church is and what constitutes membership of it*

- A. The church is NOT the building though often referred to so.
 - 1) Some ask, "Where do you go to church?"
- B. The building is simply the place where the church meets.
 - 1) In this lesson, we'll examine what exactly the church of Christ is and what constitutes membership of it.

I. What the church is

- A. From Gr "ekklesia", compound of 2 words
 - 1) "Ek" - out "kaleo" - to call; hence, "the called out"
- B. Word is a *collective noun* like covey, flock, herd
 - 1) 1 quail not a covey, 1 bird not a flock, 1 cow not a herd.
- C. "Ekklesia" is used to describe any assembly of people
 - 1) "*a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly, any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance*" (Thayers)
 - 2) **Acts 19:32, 41** - Ephesian silversmiths
 - 3) **Acts 19:39** - A magistrate court
 - 4) **Acts 7:38** - Moses & Israelites in the wilderness
- D. The distinction between any assembly is who called them together, and their purpose in assembling.
 - 1) Demetrius called the silversmiths for purpose of recovering their idol-making business.
 - a. The Heart Association, Elks Club, Boy Scouts all meet for different purposes and are called by different people.
- E. Jesus built His ekklesia
 - 1) **Matt 16:18** - "*Upon this rock, I will build My church.*"
 - 2) **Eph 1:21-23, Col 1:18, 1 Tim 3:15**
 - 3) We can see the distinction between this "ekklesia" and any other - It is Who calls it out and Who it belongs to and what it does
 - 4) It is why this "ekklesia" is called the church of Christ
 - a. He "*has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity..*"
2 Tim 1:9
 - b. It belongs to Him and exists for His purpose

II. What constitutes a member of that church?

- A. One who answers a call.
 - a. "*.. you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*" **1Thes 2:11-12**
 - b. Called by the gospel - **2 Thes 2:14**
- B. How one answers the call
 - 1) **Acts 2:37-47**
 - 2) Thru-out Acts, conversion and inclusion into the church of Christ always the same
Hear Believe Repent Confess Baptism Faithful Life
- C. Members of the church became known as Christians
 - 1) "*And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*" **Acts 11:26**
 - 2) "Christian" is used too loosely today. If not added they way these were, not a Christian!
- D. Also called "members of one body"
 - 1) **1 Cor 12:12-14, 27**
- E. Called to fellowship with God and one another
 - 1) **1 Cor 1:9, 1 John 1:3**
 - 2) Fellowship is a joint participation in a spiritual work
 - 3) Contingent on right living - **1 John 1:6-7**
- D. Members are called to assemble and work together
 - 1) **Heb 10:23-26, Eph 4:11-16**
- E. Members are accountable to and submit to one another
 - 1) "*Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.*" **Eph 5:21**
 - 2) "*Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*"
1 Pet 5:5 (NKJ)
 - 3) "*Obey your leaders and submit to them...*" **Heb 13:17**
 - 3) We submit to one another to help one another over the relentless attacks of the devil.

Conc *There is more to the distinction of the church*

- A. We will examine it in the lesson "The Measure Of A Strong Church"

INVITATION