

Why Church?

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Ephesians 3:21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

America is a very religious society although that is quickly passing away. Just during this decade, surveys on attitudes about church and religion showed that, among adults in the country, those who claimed some kind of Christian belief dropped by almost 8% from 2007-2014. Overall there was a drop in percentage of Americans who claim a Christian religion at all from 78.4% to 70.6% in the same 7 years. One of the most sobering aspects of all this is that in this decade, fully 25% of young adults reject any religious affiliation at all. This is a warning bell about where the world, or at least this nation, is going in relation to any association with the God of the bible.

When we look at the behavior of our fellow citizens regarding spiritual things, and when we give some thought to the general American attitude about church and about what we call “faithfulness to the Lord,” we can’t help but notice that the sacredness of these things has generally degenerated all around us. Even people who are faithful to go to church seem to have begun to be so casual about meeting with God that they act more like their church going and their participation in church-related activities is more like a party than a worship time or a consecrated time of service.

This trend will continue if we are to understand the prophecy of the bible. So, I think it’s time for us to consider these questions: Why have any concern about church affiliation? Why go to church? Why assign any importance to church? To answer, I’m going to look at a number of things that should convince us that there are a multitude of biblical answers to these questions.

- I. The first thing we want to think about that answers these questions is in our text: **(Eph. 3:21)** - “Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”
 - ◆ There is no doubt that in the end, God will be glorified by everything that exists in His created world. But he has ordained a special glory to be His in His church.
 - Only in the setting of the church can this glory be produced, because it is only in the church that the unique spiritual relationship between the Lord and a collective group of believers is realized and acted out.
 - The God-ordained congregation of believers here on earth is one of a kind, set up by the Lord. Because of that, it has the necessary spiritual structure to render this glory.

- ◆ The reason why the Lord's church should be so important to us is that this glory of God which is to show itself in His church is **by Christ Jesus**
 - That Redeemer who saved us, who washed us with His own blood
 - That Substitute for us who suffered the violence and abuse as a criminal for us
 - That Savior who had us in His heart and on His mind when He trudged to Calvary
- ◆ Here's an incentive to help us value the Lord's church and all its endeavors and its existence: this glory to the Lord in the church is to **always be revealed** (throughout all ages, world without end)

II. Our second answer to the question about the value of the Lord's church to the people of God is that the **Lord has placed and outfitted His church to be the source of all spiritual helps** we will need as the people of God

- ◆ The Lord deals directly with each of us as believers, and our fellowship with Him is available as one-on-one because we are priests of God through grace, citizens in His Kingdom by grace, and children of the Great King by grace. But the Lord has instituted and sustained the church as a support organization for the people of God and when we understand that and interact with our church in that capacity, we discover that the Lord has set things up that way.
- ◆ We should all read the 12th and 13th chapters of 1Corinthians carefully, but let me summarize: every member has a function in the Lord's church he/she is a member of, and every member (in addition to being a critical working member of this body of Christ) has the privilege and opportunity to draw spiritual support from that body of baptized believers he/she is a member of. The ultimate accomplishment to be achieved by one of the Lord's churches is the upbuilding of every member of that body.

III. The third thing we want to note about why the people of God should value their relationship with the Lord's church is that **God made His church to be the messenger to the world, the only authorized agent of the ordinances of the gospel, the house of God, and the guardian and keeper of the truth of God.**

- ◆ See **Mat 28:18-20** – “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.**” Amen.
- ◆ See **1Tim. 3:15** But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

IV. The last thing we want to note about why the Lord's church and its business should be valued so much by believers in Christ is found tucked away in scripture: that reason: because the Lord's church is now engaged to Christ and **is to be His metaphorical bride.**

◆ See **John 3:29**

◆ See **2Cor. 11:2**

◆ See **Rev. 19:7-8**

◆ See **Rev. 21:2 and 21:9**

◆ **See Rev. 22:17** – “Say” in this verse is in the present tense; this means that the Bride was present at the time of Christ's sending this Revelation message through John. At that time there was only one church of Jesus Christ...the new testament church.