

CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE INVOLVED IN THEIR CHURCH

Acts 2:42-47

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: A person becomes a Christian when he/she believes in and puts his/her trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, is indwelt with the Holy Spirit and made a child of the family of God. Then comes personal spiritual growth and service which involves working together with other Christians. Sadly, many Christians live a "solo" Christian life, with minimal involvement in their local Church congregation. They are a bit isolated, aloof, solitary and have little to do within their Church. Such "solo" action by a Christian can be detrimental to that Christian's life as it will create inactivity, unhappiness, spiritual stagnation, etc. They are like embers pulled away from the fire and soon cool off and die out while the rest of the embers that are close together continue to remain hot. Christians need to be involved in their Church.

I. CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE AS ONE AS THEY LIVE THE LIFE OF CHRIST TOGETHER

1. What "togetherness" means:

- "Fellowship" - Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 John 1:3, 7
 - Christians are "fellows"
 - "fellow citizens" - Ephesians 2:11-22
 - "fellow heirs" - Ephesians 3:6
 - "fellow workers" - Philippians 4:3
 - "fellow servants" - Colossians 1:7
 - "fellow soldiers" - Philippians 2:25
 - Working together in extending "the right hand of fellowship" - Galatians 2:9
- Sharing together in the work and rewards of the Christian life.
- "Brotherhood" - 1 Peter 2:17
 - In Christ, Christians enjoy a family relationship - Mark 3:31-35
 - Christians are the "house", the "family" of God - Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 3:15
 - Every Christian needs to have a "family" awareness about other Christians.
- "Membership" - 1 Corinthians 12:27
 - The Church is Jesus Christ's BODY - Ephesians 1:22-23
 - Christians are "members of one another" - Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:25
 - As members of the same body, there are joint responsibilities.
 - Bodily members are functionally interdependent - 1 Corinthians 12:12-27
 - Not everyone has the same duty/function - Romans 12:3-8
 - For the "body" to grow, each member must contribute - Ephesians 4:16
 - There are NO useless or unimportant Church member.

2. What local church "membership" means:

- The "local" church is different from the "universal" church:
 - The "church" of Jesus Christ universally is the sum of all Christians - Matthew 16:18
 - A "church" of Jesus Christ locally is a specific group of Christians who function together as a local congregation - Acts 14:23; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:16
- A person is added by the Lord Himself to His "universal" church upon that person's belief in Him and repentance - Acts 2:41, 47
- Upon believing in Jesus and being added to Jesus' "universal" church, that person should join him/herself to a "local" church - Acts 9:26-28
 - For there to be "local" churches, God's Word points to:
 - A divine purpose for the local church

- A place of responsibility that Christians are to be a part of.
- The idea of becoming a Christian and never becoming a part of a local congregation is not according to the Scriptures.
- Christians are obligated to participate in the life of a faithful congregation whenever possible:
 - There is a command for Christians to withdraw from certain other members implies that fellowshiping with other Christians is not optional - it is expected.
 - Much of what a Christian is to do is for "everyone's good - common good" - 1 Corinthians 12:7

II. THERE ARE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES TO OTHER CHRISTIANS

1. There are certain attitudes to maintain:

- Concern for one another - 1 Corinthians 12:25-26
- Humility, lowliness of mind - Philippians 2:3
- A peaceable spirit - Romans 14:17-19
- Appreciation for others and their work - 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3
- Willingness to cooperate, work together - 1 Corinthians 12:21
 - Sometimes two or more working together can do things better than just one person.
 - "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success."
- Friendliness, warmth - Philemon 1:7
- Gentleness, meekness - Galatians 6:1
- Forbearance, longsuffering, patience - Colossians 3:12-13
- Forgiveness - Colossians 3:13
- Love - John 13:34-35

2. There are certain things to do:

- Join a local, faithful congregation (church) - Acts 9:26
 - Those who are not active miss an important part of being a Christian.
 - Those who are more or less "permanent" visitors also miss out on most things.
 - When joining a Church, it is to be with the intent of being an actual, functioning member, not just get one's name on the Church role.
 - Joining a Church involves making real commitments to the Church family/group.
- Pray for other Christians, especially those of one's own congregation - Philippians 1:9-11
- Submit to the Church Pastor, deacons - 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 13:7, 17
- Attend and participate in the services of the Church family - Hebrews 10:24-25
 - It is one benefit for a Christian to have private worship, private prayer and family worship, but he/she must not neglect congregation worship and joint Bible study.
- Every meeting of the congregation is vital to every member:
 - The Lord's Supper - Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34
 - Praying - Ephesians 2:42; 4:23-31; 12:12
 - Singing - Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16
 - Preaching and teaching - Acts 20:7
 - Giving as God has blessed - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:9
- Church meetings provide opportunities for being every member to do something:
 - Help in getting things ready for meetings (cleaning, greeting, etc.)
 - Actually attending the services which is critical for the overall growth of the Church.
- Participation in services to the fullest of one's ability:
 - Worship is not some spectator thing.
 - Not "how did the preacher do?" but "how did I do?"
 - Listen to the music, the sermon in a manner that shows respect and reverence to God.

- Church services are not just routine, but are God-given opportunities for one's spiritual growth/good.
- God wants every Christian to give something to the Church services and being present and involved reveals whether one desires what God has or not.
- Contribute financially to the work of the Church - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7
- Engage personally and directly in the work of the Church family:
 - evangelism - Acts 8:4
 - edification - Romans 14:9
 - benevolence - Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35
- Help maintain unity within the Church family - John 17:20-23 1 Corinthians 1:10; Romans 15:5-7; Ephesians 4:1-3
- Participate in Church discipline, instructively as well as correctively - 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 6:1-2- 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15
- Extend courtesy and hospitality - Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9
- Find something to do and do it! - Colossians 4:17; 2 Timothy 4:5

CONCLUSION:

1. There is much joy that comes from one's relationship with other Christians:
 - John and Paul had great joy - 3 John 3-4; Ph. 1:3-5
2. Being an active member in a local Church is crucial to having joy and to remaining faithful to the Lord.
 - Sharing all the blessings the Lord provides for the local Church (His servants)
 - Being encouraged by others to be faithful and active in doing something for others.
3. Christian, how active are you in your Church?