

## THE SERVICE AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE CHURCH

### 1 Peter 2:5-9; Romans 12:1

**Introduction:** The Church was not mentioned descriptively anywhere in the Old Testament and God kept it quiet until Jesus appeared on the scene. After Jesus ascended back into Heaven, the Holy Spirit descended, filled and indwelt those who had been faithful followers of Jesus. Since that hour, God's Church has been in existence and according to scriptures, will continue till God calls it into Heaven. What is the purpose of the Church, who makes up the Church are just some of the questions people ask about the Church.

### I. THE CHURCH GIVES SERVICE TO GOD

1. Those of the Church perform beneficial services for others.
  - In the Old Testament, the priests performed specific services for people, being a go-between them and God, as intercessors, thus serving both God and people.
  - There was the service of Sacrifice by both the Old and New Testament Priests.
    - In the Old Testament, the priests were set apart, went through a cleansing ritual, wore specific clothing, having been born into a specific family (Aaron's or Levi's), then blood was placed on ear, toe and thumb at induction into priesthood.
    - In the New Testament, there is also a setting apart, cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, born into the Family of God, the believer/priest's whole body becomes a living sacrifice.
  - There was the service of worship.
    - Every piece of the Tabernacle and Temple represented something special.
      - No strange incense, no strange fire was allowed.
      - God had no place for anything foreign, strange, or added changes.
    - In the New Testament, places of worship represent something special.
      - There is the Cross, the Dove, the shape of the buildings, colors used.
      - God still wants true worship, no additions, nothing strange or foreign.
  - There was the service of intercession.
    - The Old Testament priests represented the people before God and God before the people. They were a "go-between" for both God and the people.
    - The death of Jesus Christ tore apart the veil that hung between the Holy of Holies and the people, therefore removing any need for anybody or anything other than Jesus to be between God and the people

### II. THE CHURCH GIVES SERVICE TO PEOPLE (*Romans 12:1-8*)

1. Christians give service to others after they dedicate themselves to God.
2. The Holy Spirit gives gifts to believers to use in service to others, a diversity of gifts, each believer receiving his/her own special gift.

3. Christians are not spirit filled BECAUSE they are active in service. They are active in service because they are spirit filled.

### **III. THE CHURCH'S STEWARDSHIP TOWARD GOD (*Romans 14:10-12*)**

1. Too often money is regarded by the Christian without due recognition of its relationship to God.
2. Earning money must be done in a manner worthy of the Christian's relationship to God.  
(*1 Corinthians 10:31*)
3. Having money is a great Christian responsibility.
  - Motives of having money vary, some think they deserve to have what they have, others freely share what they have with those who are less fortunate.
4. Giving money is an important part of the Christian life.
  - How much a Christian gives to his/her Church depends upon his/her attitude about giving.
  - Tithing is something taught from the very beginning in the Bible, but then there is the attitude of "grace" giving also.
  - God is concerned with the heart, not so much with the amount.
  - Blessings come when the heart is right.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The Old Testament had places of worship where God's people assembled and had appointed priests to assist the people in worship, acting as go-betweens for the people and God.
2. God established the Church after Jesus went back to Heaven and every member of God's Church is a priest; qualified by Jesus, not that person's own heritage or works.
3. God expects His Church to serve Him and to serve others.
4. Christians, Church members, Priests, Children of God, are expected to give back to their Church financially as God blesses them.