

# Biblical Discipleship

8



THE LOCAL CHURCH





## LESSON 8: THE LOCAL CHURCH

### "What is the Purpose of My Involvement in a Local Church?"

God has established three major institutions on this earth: the family, civil government, and the local church. It is the local church which has been commissioned by God to carry out His purposes in reaching the lost and perfecting the saved. Therefore, God's plan for a Christian will always be fulfilled best when connected with the local church.

The purpose of this lesson is to impress upon the individual the central role which the church should play in his everyday life.

#### I. What is the local church?

A. It is NOT a building. *Acts 14:27*

1. We worship God in spirit and truth. *John 4:24*

2. Our bodies are the temple of God. *I Corinthians 6:19*

B. It is NOT a denominational group of congregations.

C. A local church is a body of men and women who have been saved and called by God to serve in a specific

area. "The church" is the body of Christ, the saved multitudes from every nation.

1. In *I Corinthians 12:27*, Paul, writing to saved people, states clearly, "ye are the body of Christ."
2. Paul compares the church body to the human body in this passage — *I Corinthians 12:14-27*.
  - a. Each member has a different function, verses 14-20.
  - b. No one member can function alone, verse 21.
  - c. Each member's contribution is important, verses 22-24.
  - d. A properly functioning body operates as a single unit, verses 25-27.

## II. What is the function of the local church?

- A. The first local church in the Bible was organized in Jerusalem. (*Acts 2:41-47*) The believers there organized their church for the following purposes:
  1. The teaching of the word of God, verse 42.
  2. Fellowship with other believers, verse 42.
  3. Prayer, verse 42.

4. The observance of the two ordinances of the church: baptism, verse 41, and the Lord's supper, verse 42.
5. To be a testimony of God's grace and power, verse 43.
6. For mutual assistance and ministry, verses 44-45.
7. To reach out into the community, verses 46-47.
8. To glorify and praise God, verse 47.

- \* B. The single most important priority of the local church is to edify (build up, teach, strengthen) the saints.

*Ephesians 4:11-16*

### III. How do I function in the church body?

- A. During your Christian life, you should grow through three broad, general stages, as outlined in Ephesians 4:12.

1. The perfecting of the saints — Observe and learn.

Your first priority should be to submit to the teaching of the word of God to learn to be the man or woman God wants you to be.

*Matthew 11:28-30*

2. The work of the ministry — Participate.

In time, you will naturally grow to the point where you can begin to serve and take on some basic functions through the already established ministries of your church.

*Matthew 4:19; James 1:22-25*

3. The edifying of the body of Christ — Lead.

As your growth continues, you should reach the point where you can begin to minister to others in the same way you have been ministered to.

*II Timothy 2:2*

- B. These three stages can be roughly compared to the stages of growth physically: childhood, youth, adult.
- C. BE PATIENT! This process takes time. Just be sure to remain faithful to God's established institution, the local church.

IV. Basic questions.

- A. If God moves me to another location, how do I find the particular local church that God wants me to serve through?

1. Pray about it! Ask God to show you which church to associate yourself with.

*James 1:5*

2. Observe the qualities of a particular church and compare them with the biblical requirements of a proper church.

- a. Is there evidence of soul winning?

*Matthew 7:20; Acts 2:47*

- b. Do they believe and teach the Bible as the word of God and the infallible guide for life?

*Titus 1:9*

- c. Is the membership encouraged to read and study the Bible as much as the leadership?

*Acts 17:10-12*

- d. Do they minister to the needs of people?

*Acts 6:1*

- e. Do they send out and support missionaries?

*Acts 13:1-3*

## NOTES

12. Briefly explain the primary purpose of this lesson.

Key memory verses:

*Ephesians 4:11-12; I Corinthians 12:27; II Timothy 2:2*

NOTE: Many churches today are not fulfilling God's plan because their primary attitudes are:

1. In order to really learn the Bible, you need to go to a Bible College.
2. The primary purpose of a local church is to be a social or political organization.
3. The local church is primarily for weddings, funerals, and religious holidays.
4. Only the "leadership" of the church is charged with any responsibility of meeting people's spiritual needs.

From the Bible principles taught in this lesson you should understand that these attitudes are wrong, and why.

Write any questions you may have concerning the subjects in this lesson.



## THE LOCAL CHURCH Lesson #8

9. How do these three stages of spiritual growth match up with the three stages of physical growth found in / *John 2:12-14*?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ to  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ to  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ to  
\_\_\_\_\_.

10. The Christian should be \_\_\_\_\_ because growing spiritually is a process that can only be properly accomplished within the established \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.

11. When a Christian is looking for a local church to serve in, what are some qualities he should be checking for?

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.

1. What are the three institutions God has established on earth?

- A.
- B.
- C.

2. List some things that a church is NOT:

3. Define the local church.

4. In *1 Corinthians 12:14-27*, Paul teaches that in many ways the church body is similar to the \_\_\_\_\_ . List five parts of the body that are mentioned in this passage of scripture.
- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.
5. List four basic similarities between the church body and the human body.
- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
6. The first local church in the Bible was at Jerusalem. In *Acts 2:41-47*, we see this local church functioning. List the functional purposes found in this passage of scripture.
- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.
- F.
- G.
- H.
7. What is the most important priority of a local church?
8. There is a proper order for you to follow in participating in the church body. List the three general stages connected with spiritual growth.
- A.
- B.
- C.