

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

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Why Do You Go To Church?

Over the years I have asked the above question and have been surprised and perplexed by the variety of answers that I have received. Answers have ranged from, "I like the preacher" to "We like the people there." Others have said that it was the "building", "atmosphere", or "the activities they have for the young people." While it is understandable how these kinds of things can influence someone's decision with regard to where they attend worship services, none of these things get to the heart of "why do you go to church?"

From the very beginning, God has wanted Man to pause from his routine and schedule to worship Him. With His great wisdom and foresight He recognized that if a special time were not set aside each week for this that we would fill up our time with earthly and selfish pursuits and leave no or little time for God in our lives. Under the Old Testament dispensation of time, the Sabbath Day was set aside as the day each week when believers in God were to worship in a special way (Exodus 20:8). Of course one could worship at any time and place that they chose but the Sabbath Day was a special day of dedicated service to God. Under the New Testament dispensation of time, Christ has set aside the "first day of the week" (Sunday) as a special day of dedicated service to Him. Disciples in the early church gathered together each Sunday to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance and gratitude of the sacrifice made for them by the Lord (Acts 20:7). They contributed of their means so that the Lord's work could be carried on (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). They sang praises to God, prayed, and heard the Word of God proclaimed. These were the things that were done by early New Testament Christians because they came for the purpose of worshipping the Great Creator and Savior.

Jesus said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23). To worship in "spirit" means to worship from the heart and to worship in "truth" means to worship according to the truth of God's Word (John 17:17 - Sanctify them

through thy truth: thy word is truth). So, I ask you again my friend, "Why do YOU go to church?"

Please join us for worship services as we gather around the throne of God's grace to worship the Almighty.

- Keith Hamilton

God In Us, All Or None

When one begins to discuss the nature of Deity — its plurality of functions, each of which is given personality — man's limitations become immediately apparent. But our understanding of God will not be bettered by ignoring what God has said about Himself. Nor can we know Him by pitting one facet of deity against another. The Holy Spirit is deity, and we must consider this in our studies of Holy Spirit operations.

GOD (deity) is ONE (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29-32; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:13-16), yet both Son (John 1:1, 14) and Spirit were present in creation (Genesis 1:2, 26). We accept the plural nature of the ONE God, not because we fathom it, but because God's word declares it.

The Holy Spirit has the characteristics of deity: being Eternal (Hebrews 9:14), Omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), Omnipresent (Psalms 139:7), etc. When Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, he lied to God (Acts 5:3-4). The Spirit *knows* (1 Corinthians 2:9-16), *wills* (1 Corinthians 12:11), *speaks* (Acts 8:29), *grieves* (Eph. 4:30), and *strives* (Gen. 6:3) — is thus given personality in the same way as is the Father and Son. We cannot accurately think of the operation of the Spirit in such a way as to ignore this.

God being ONE, there is perfect consistency in all of His operations. His truth is ONE, and His Spirit does not deliver one thing to one, and a contradicting thing to another. (See 1 Corinthians 14:37.) God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11). Even those specially endowed messengers, through whom His truth was delivered to the world (Luke 24:48-49), were subject to that message just as the rest of us (Galatians 2:11-14). God revealed Himself to man in an ever-increasing clearness, as He prepared man for the ultimate revelation in His Son (Hebrews 1:1-4) and confirmed the message of His Son to man by His Holy Spirit (Hebrews 2:4). The inspired message is now presented to man for his acceptance or rejection.

One cannot accept God's word and reject God's Spirit (Acts 7:51-52). We cannot accept the Son and reject His words (John 12:47-50). To reject the Son is to reject the Father

(John 8:42). What we are really saying is that God is ONE — and an acceptable relationship with one facet of deity is such with all. *No one has the Spirit or is moved by the Spirit to do or say anything contrary to the will and way of the whole of deity.* We are baptized into the realm of the whole of deity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

The Spirit dwells in the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). [Note: we are God's house, a habitation of God through the Spirit, Ephesians 2:22.] Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **we** (emph. mine, RT) will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23). But a Christian is not God incarnate. God, the very essence of deity, does not dwell in material temples — neither flesh nor stone (1 Kings 8:27-30; Acts 7:48). Paul says that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:16-19) and couples this with God's Spirit in the inner man, and our being filled with . . . God.

Spirit-indwelling concepts which divide deity cannot be true.

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, June, 1970

Teach Children True Values

Children do not know true values. A very small child will prefer a shiny copper coin to a crumpled ten dollar bill. Older children would eat all desert and no meat if parents allowed it. Children will not look beyond this life unless they are taught about heaven and hell.

If children see their parents forsake the assembling in order to go visiting, will they not be taught that visiting is more important than the assembling to worship God? If parents continually criticize the church of the Lord, speaking evil of faithful brethren, will not the children grow up to despise the church of the Lord?

- Lynn Headrick

PETER REMINDS OF OUR RELATIONS

In 1 Peter 2:17, Peter wrote what may be considered a concise, four-point summary of the Christian's relations to others. Please consider the Christian's duty to live by these imperatives:

"Honor all people" – Though we live in an unkind world where most people have no interest in living for Christ, we must refrain from generating contempt for other people. Every human creature is made in the image of God. Remembering this will aid us in revering and venerating others, treating them in ways we wish to be treated (Matthew 7:12), and thus bringing glory to our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). This is how we keep our behavior excellent among others (1 Peter 2:12) and proclaim the excellencies of Christ and God (1 Peter 2:9). Since Jesus died for all (Hebrews 2:9), can we not honor all?

"love the brotherhood" – The Christian's honor for all men deepens into a more profound and undefeatable goodwill toward "those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours," (2 Peter 1:1). The church ("brotherhood") is the family of God ("the household of the faith", Galatians 6:10; "God's household", Ephesians 2:19). When a Christian acts in relation to a fellow Christian it is always for that person's benefit or good, as a member of the same spiritual family. Peter said that our souls have been purified for a sincere and fervent love of the brethren (1 Peter 1:22). It is impossible to be a lover of God without brotherly love (1 John 4:20). This characteristic is never optional, it is essential.

"fear God" – This is the Christian's deepest and highest reverential respect, and it is always directed toward heaven. It is where the Christian's deepest devotion abides. It is poles apart from arrogance and self-will. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;" (Proverbs 1:7). "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom," (Proverbs 9:10). Men commit crimes in the world because there is no fear of God in their lives (Romans 3:18).

"honor the king" – It would not be possible to bring glory to our heavenly Father as "lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15) if Christians failed to be law-abiding citizens, submitting to the chief authority in civil government and their righteous and noble decrees. Peter admonished, "Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;" (1 Peter 4:15). Peter had previously commanded: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men." (1 Peter 2:13-15). Men are due honor, but not adoration or worship.

- Gary Smalley

Gatherings from Gary . . .

The goal of my personal Bible study is summed up in Richard of Chichester's prayer: to enable me to know Jesus Christ more clearly, to love Him more dearly, and to follow Him more nearly.

Christians are to live in brotherly love as they live in Christ. Remember this axiom: When love gets low, criticism gets high. Whenever one gets out of touch with Christ, he becomes critical of others. Stay in touch with Christ; "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8).

- * "The heart of education is the education of the heart!"
 - * "Some people are like rocking chairs—full of motion, but they make no progress!"
 - * "Bad habits are like a comfortable bed; easy to get into, but hard to get out of!"
 - * "Plastic surgeons can do almost anything with a nose, except keep it out of other people's business!"
 - * "The most destructive acid in the world is found in a sour disposition!"
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)