

The New Testament Church

I. The Church That Jesus Built

- A. "I will build My church..." (Mt. 16:18).
- B. "The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16).
- C. The church is His body (Eph. 1:22-23).
- D. There is just one body (Eph. 4:4).
- E. Now, let's begin to discuss the identifying marks of the church of Jesus Christ...

II. The Church Submitted to Christ in All Things

- A. Jesus is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23).
- B. We are to do all things in the name of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17).
- C. The same thing was taught in every local church (1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Jn. 9).
- D. Doctrinal division wasn't tolerated (Rom. 16:17-18).

III. It Was Worshipped According to the Pattern

- A. Worship is in Spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24); the "truth" is the word of God (Jn. 17:17).
- B. It is possible for a church to worship in vain (Mk. 7:7-9).
- C. How did the early church worship?
 - 1. Every Sunday, the Lord's Supper was observed (Ac. 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-29).
 - 2. Every Sunday, the collection was taken up (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7). Notice also that the Sunday collection is the only authorized means of gathering funds.
 - 3. They prayed together (Ac. 2:42).
 - 4. They taught and studied the word of God (Ac. 2:42; 2 Tim. 4:2).
 - 5. They sang praises to God (Rom. 15:9; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12).
- D. Women were to keep silent during the worship assembly (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-12).

IV. The Congregations Were Self-Governing

- A. There were no denominational organizations, central headquarters, synods, conventions, etc.
- B. Each church was autonomous (Ac. 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
- C. A plurality of elders governed each local flock (Ac. 14:23; 20:17; Tit. 1:5).
 - 1. They had to meet certain qualifications in order to be appointed (1 Tim. 3:1-7).
- D. When elders were appointed, deacons (servants) could be appointed as well (1 Tim. 3:8-13).
- E. The organization of the church outlined in Philippians 1:1.

V. The Works of the Church

- A. They were to engage in evangelism; teaching the lost (2 Tim. 4:5).
- B. They were to engage in edification; teaching and building up the saved (1 Cor. 14:26).
- C. They were to work benevolence (Ac. 11:27-29; Rom. 15:25-26; 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1).
 - 1. Notice that in every case, the recipients were Christians.
 - 2. We're talking here about basic needs, not luxuries (Mt. 6:11; Jas. 2:15-16).
 - 3. Individuals are commanded to give to all men (Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27), but not the church. There is a difference between the church's work and that of the individual.
- D. The works of the church were NOT:
 - 1. Social meals, banquets, potlucks, chicken dinners, etc (1 Cor. 11:22, 34).
 - 2. Recreation: sports leagues, pool tables, dance clubs, bowling alleys, fitness centers, etc.
 - 3. Political rallies.
- E. In other words, the work of the church is spiritual (Jn. 18:36; Rom. 14:17; Eph. 5:26-27).

VI. A local church can be unacceptable to God (Rev. 2:5, 14-16).

VII. We must join a church (Ac. 9:26) that is following the New Testament pattern (Heb. 8:5-6).