

Why We Must Recognize the Importance of the Local Congregation

The establishment and strengthening of the local congregation was the primary goal of Paul's apostolic journeys, and most of the epistles are written to local New Testament expressions.

The local congregation is God's vessel to express His life on the earth, and it is the "school" where new believers are disciplined and older ones can grow and mature. It is the furnace where we are tested, and it is the fountainhead of any national revival.

God saves people, but He does not stop there. Each of us are then called to take our place in this wonderful body, and it is this commitment of love and sacrifice that binds the "living stones" into a dwelling place for God's Spirit.

Since the local congregation is so central to God's purposes, it is not surprising that the enemy attacks it. He strikes the shepherds so the sheep are scattered. He sows deception and strife into this house—a house that is meant to be filled with love and peace—so that its unity is destroyed.

Since we moved to Jerusalem, we have seen at least three thriving congregations cease to exist.

A healthy church body is not just a good meeting place but also the expression of lives joined together in loving relationship throughout the week. The deepening of the bonds of relationship between members of a congregation is a vital step in advancing God's purposes and a deterrent against the strategy of the enemy to divide.

The very nature of Israeli society, in which people work long

hours and children attend school six days a week, contends against achieving this goal. Many people do not have cars and are dependent on public transportation to get places.

All of this leaves very little free time. Organizing events for the local believers in this nation presents a significant challenge. Please pray for the establishment of God's church body in its fullness here in Jerusalem and throughout Israel.

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