

5 Reasons You Need a Local Church

In Part 1 of this word to the dropout believer, we noted that there are seven strong reasons why every believer should be connected to the church. As a recap, the first three are fellowship, relationship and prayer. The final four are:

4. Encouragement

The fourth reason why it is important for you to be connected to the local church is so that we can receive encouragement and give encouragement to others.

Encouragement is not an optional “goodie” in the life of a Christian that you can take or leave as you see fit. The Bible says encouragement is vital lest a believer become hardened to sin:

“Be attentive, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, and you depart from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence firmly to the end” (Heb. 3:12-14).

The Bible says we must practice encouragement “especially as you see the Day [of the return of Jesus Christ] approaching” ().

5. Protection

The fifth reason that it is important for you to be connected to the local church is for spiritual and physical protection.

How can the church possibly provide physical protection? We must first understand the spiritual protection the church

provides. Psalm 91 says that the believer who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in His shadow without fear of terror, violence, pestilence and destruction. Paul refers to his care for those in the church as that of a nursing mother tenderly caring for her children, and the giving of his life energies for their well-being. (1 Thess. 2:7-8)

A concerned local church strives to provide such care: spiritual, emotional and physical. Indeed, in these last days before the return of Jesus, the Bible declares that many will be deceived by the coming of powerful world and religious leaders who cause the damnation of many:

For the mystery of lawlessness is already working. Only He who is now restraining him will do so until He is taken out of the way. Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His presence, even him, whose coming is in accordance with the working of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all deception of unrighteousness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love for the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie: that they all might be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2:7-12).

6. Support

The sixth reason why it is vital for you to be connected to the local church is support. Support includes moral, emotional and financial support. In times of crisis, one may not have family or relatives to whom they may turn for help. Indeed, the church is often the only buffer that stands between hopelessness and hope. The local church is a family that takes care of its own (Phil. 2:1-4).

Some dropout believers want the support of the local church

without being accountable to the church. This is not God's plan. The writer of Hebrews put it in very simple terms:

"Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but let us exhort one another, especially as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

7. Obedience

The seventh and most important reason why it is necessary to be connected to the local church is simply because the Lord commands it so. Every mature believer is familiar with the injunction to assemble together (Heb. 10:25). There is a fundamental part of our relationship to God that is not complete until we are integrated into the body of Christ. A member cannot say, "I have no need of you" to another part of the body (1 Cor. 12:21). God's design of the body of Christ demands that there should be no division (or separation) from one another (1 Cor. 12:25). If one member suffers, we all suffer with him; if one member is honored, so we all are honored (1 Cor. 12:26).

A believer cannot be in submission to Jesus Christ as the head of the church and willfully refuse to be submitted to the leadership of the local church:

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who must give an account. Let them do this with joy and not complaining, for that would not be profitable to you" (Heb. 13:17).

My dear dropout – the Lord loves you with an everlasting love and calls you to return to Him – not on your terms – but on His. In spite of all the shortcomings of the church especially in the West, He said the gates of hell will not prevail against His church. You need to be under that promise and protection in these last days! {eoa}

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