

## I Love My Church

**Exodus 21:5-6** And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

### **I love our church!**

- I love that we are involved in missions
- I love our pastoral staff
- I love our volunteers (children's ministry, music, visitation, etc.)
- I love the precious saints of God – of all ages!
- The only thing wrong with our church is that it is not BIGGER.

Many people ATTEND church, but not nearly as many ARE the church. We don't become what we are around, we become what we are COMMITTED to. The difference between church attenders and church members, and between the spiritually immature and the spiritually mature, can be summed up in just one word – COMMITMENT!

A person who says, "I'm committed to Jesus Christ but I don't want to be committed to a local church," is obviously a very immature believer. The Bible tells us that the church is the Body of Christ on earth and the Bride of Christ in Heaven. Jesus gave His life for the church. The more like Christ we become, the more we are willing to give our lives for the church! Church membership is critical in your spiritual development.

### **COMMITMENT to a local church family is absolutely necessary ...**

- A Biblical reason (our example is Christ's commitment to the church)
- A cultural reason (an antidote to our society's lack of commitment)
- A practical reason (it defines who can be counted on by leadership)
- A personal reason (it produces spiritual growth in the individual)

Think of how your life changed when you became a parent! You had to grow up quickly and take responsibility because someone else was depending on you for their very life. That's the same in the church, if we want to grow and have a lot of new babies in the kingdom of God!

I could spend a whole lot of time making the case from Scripture that EVERY SAINT HAS A MINISTRY. Jesus taught in His famous "Parable of the Talents" that it is a SIN for me not to use my gifts to build up His Kingdom. Sometimes we hear people saying, "I don't want to work, I just want to be fed" or, "I did my time already, and I'm tired of working." That happens in the human body sometimes too – it's called NO EXERCISE and OBESITY! It is NOT the way things are supposed to be in a BODY.

## **PAUL'S SPIRITUAL ANATOMY LESSON (1 Corinthians 12:14-27)**

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

We sometimes overlook the importance of some of the most critical ministries of our church – those that minister to our guests, to our children, and to those who don't even know the Lord yet! If we are not careful, we become all about US, and we begin to think that attending church services is enough to qualify us as a member of the Body.

Let me say it plainly ... In an Apostolic church, if you have no further commitment to your local church than attending services, you are not living up to the responsibilities of being a member, Biblically speaking.

Let me say it plainly ... ALL Christians are supposed to fellowship, supposed to give, supposed to pray, supposed to live holy, and supposed to assemble together in worship as often as possible ... so in an Apostolic church, if you have no further commitment to your local church than bringing sandwiches to a social event, hanging out with other Christians, putting money in the offering, attending prayer meeting, keeping a list of standards, and coming to church services, you are not living up to the responsibilities of being a member, Biblically speaking.

**IF WE DON'T HAVE COMMITTED CHRISTIANS, WE CANNOT GROW LARGER BECAUSE WE'RE ALREADY PAST THE POINT WHERE THE PASTORS AND EXISTING VOLUNTEERS CAN DO IT ALL.**

**And this is the same problem the early church faced ...**

**Acts 6:1-4** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to **the ministry of the word**.

The “ACTS SIX ROADBLOCK” almost stopped the NT church, but it was SAINTS who stepped up to hold up the hands of the ministry!

You see, there is THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD that your pastors need to spend most of their time in. But we stretch them way too thin in North America because we expect them to do THEIR job and YOUR job too. Look around our building – do you see anything undone or untidy? Maybe that’s because we’re waiting on a pastor to find the time in his schedule to do a job that YOU could do! If you want better, more anointed, more creative, more impacting preaching and services, then free up your pastors to engage in THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD!

**1 Corinthians 16:15-16** I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to **the ministry of the saints**;) That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

There is also THE MINISTRY OF THE SAINTS, and this is the mark of growing, revival, Apostolic churches. Not only have saints stepped up to take ownership of ministry, but Paul tells the church in Corinth to submit to the leadership of everyone who is helping the pastors. Because when no one cares who gets the credit, and when everyone is willing to shoulder some of the work, then God can receive all the glory!

HERMAN MELVILLE, IN “MOBY DICK” ... “To insure the greatest efficiency in the dart, the harpooners of this world must start to their feet out of idleness, and not out of toil.”

**Exodus 17:11-13** And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

**I LOVE MY CHURCH ... “I WILL NOT GO OUT FREE!”**