



Midtown Messenger

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4 Reasons We Know the Church is Important to God

By: Andy Brewer

*I*t seems to be a belief that is growing more and more prevalent all the time. People see the importance of God, they see the importance of a relationship with God, and they see the importance for a connection of some form to Christianity; but despite it all they see absolutely no need to have any connection with the church. Their mantra is “give me Jesus but not the church.” The church holds no value to them whatsoever. In their minds they can be Christians just as much on their own, in the isolation of their homes, in the serenity of nature, or anywhere in the world as they can connect to a local church. It’s the anti-religion religion, and it ignores everything we know about God’s mind concerning the church. The church isn’t important to people who don’t see the church as God sees the church. But there are at least four reasons by we know the church is important to God and why it should be important to us as well.

The church was in God’s eternal wisdom. That means that even before time ever began God had the church in mind. It was always a part of His plan. It wasn’t an afterthought or a “plan B” because His mission had failed. When Paul was addressing the revelation of God’s mystery he said that God’s eternal purpose was accomplished through the church making God’s manifold wisdom known to the world (Ephesians 3:8-11). How could something that God had in mind through the recesses of eternity be unimportant?

The church was promised by God. From the time that sin entered the world God set a plan in motion that would culminate with His church being established and redemption being made possible. And with that plan in mind throughout history God would repeatedly give reminders about the coming of that church. Just read passages like Isaiah 2:2-4; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; Joel 2:28-32; and other passages and see the plan God had in mind. The church was at the center of God’s redemptive plan throughout history and He repeatedly reminded man of it. How could something that God promised throughout time be unimportant?

God sent His Son to die for the church. When Paul met with the Ephesians elders one last time he tried to encourage them and remind them of the gravity of their responsibilities as elders. In that context he said these words, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). The church was important enough to God that He was willing to send His Son to die for it. How could something God was willing to let His Son die for be unimportant?

God promised to save the church. Just as the ark was God’s chosen vessel of salvation from the flood that destroyed the world the church is God’s chosen vessel of salvation from the condemnation of sin. We know that because Christ is said to be the Savior of His

body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). Therefore, if I'm in the church I'm among the saved because God has promised to save the church. How could something God promised to save be unimportant?

There is absolutely no doubt that the church is important to God. He designed it to be an essential part of our lives. So when we say the church is not important we are minimizing something for which He sent His very Son to die. The church may not matter to a lot of people in this world but there is no doubt that it definitely matters to God.

Still Restoring

The idea of restoring New Testament Christianity is “that God set forth His standard of acceptance in salvation, worship, church organization and daily living” and “to follow the teachings of God, revealed in the New Testament, to direct our lives in the same way as He did first century Christians” (therestorationmovement.com/about.htm). We can open our Bibles and find a pattern for what the New Testament church is to look like, not in customs and culture, but in commands and cause. Yet, a tendency we must guard against is a haughty spirit that portrays the idea that we have already arrived. Consider four areas where we need to keep at the restoration plea and overcome neglect.

- **CHURCH DISCIPLINE.** For years, I have seen this referred to as “the forgotten commandment.” At times, people will say of it things like “it doesn't work,” “it's harmful,” “it runs people away,” etc. Were we to substitute that argumentation for subjects like women's role, worship, or baptism, wouldn't we cry heresy or apostasy? However, in far too many instances, we have simply ignored and failed to practice this plain, New Testament teaching (Mat. 18:15-17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thes. 3; Ti. 3:10-11).

- **EVANGELISM.** It is so much easier to focus upon ourselves, to devote all our resources to internal issues. Is there a spirit of evangelistic zeal running rampant among us? Is this an area to restore, to be like the early church? Perhaps we may be intimidat-

ed by the culture of political correctness. It could be the risk of ruining relationships or even rejection that causes us to avoid efforts at soul-winning. It could even be that we need to build our conviction for or commitment to this imperative given by the resurrected Savior Himself (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-47).

- **CHURCH ORGANIZATION.** It is very likely that the number of churches of Christ which have elders are in the minority. At times, the reality of a shortage of qualified men is to blame. At other times, preachers or others prefer not to have elders. But, even where churches are “scripturally organized” (i.e., having elders and deacons), there is room for restoration—Preachers preaching and evangelizing, elders leading and shepherding (pastoring), and deacons actively carrying out and administrating the ministries and works of the local church. At times, there is a need to restore the roles of each of these works so that the proper, appointed men are doing the work Scripture outlines for them.

BROTHERLY LOVE. This is difficult, in a world increasingly characterized by hate, discord, and general worldliness. In our culture, where it's easy to become disconnected with others—even our Christian family—we must strive to restore the beacon and central identification mark Jesus urged when He said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). Isn't there room for more concentration upon this command, which will be reflected in how we treat each other locally and in the brotherhood as a whole (1 Pet. 2:17)?

I love to spend as much time as possible talking about what the church is doing right. It is doing so much right. By following the New Testament pattern regarding salvation, worship, the church's purpose, and the like, we stand out in a religious world that has lost its way. Meanwhile, however, let us stay at the business of restoring the church to the pattern revealed in Scripture, even in areas that are more difficult and demanding though just as necessary.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of August 25, 2019

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Bryant Siegel
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Mark FitzSimmons
Fruit of the Vine: Doug Jobes
Offering: Bryce Dolan
Assist: Kirk FitzSimmons, Scott DeDear, Brant Jacobs

Sunday Evening: Mark FitzSimmons, Doug Jobes

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Pat Gooch
P.M. Closing: Young Men

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Anthony Scherffius
Sun. P.M.: Young Men
Wednesday: Anthony Scherffius

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Lupe Escojido

Open/Close Building:

Sound System: Don Lynn

Greeters: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Prepare Communion: Jeffres

MEMBER INFORMATION UPDATE:

Lupe Escojido Sr.'s new cell phone number is (361) 652-3599. Please update your pocket directory with a label located on the table in the foyer.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Dee Gilpatrick, who requested prayers on her behalf. The Family of Rex Horst, Rex passed away last week.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug. 28: Wednesday night singing
Sept. 10: Men's and Ladies' Tuesday Bible Class
MidTown's Fall Gospel Meeting—Nov. 10-13 with Jason Rollo.

AREA EVENTS

Sept. 3,9,16,23: Digging Deeper with Wayne Jones @ Odem church of Christ
Sept. 7: Ladies' Day @ Portland church of Christ
Sept. 21: San Pedro C of C Ladies' Day in San Antonio
Oct. 18-20: Recharge Youth conference @ Weber Rd.
Nov. 9: Bible Bowl @ Weber church of Christ

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Rachel Harris (26); Christian Sneeringer (28); Yvonne Smith (29); Barbara Withers (31)

Happy Anniversary: Clark & Barbara Withers (31)

The annual Summer Youth Series Awards will be held immediately following Sunday evening services Sept. 22nd. After the awards there will be a congregational fellowship meal. Please bring a potluck dish.

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Mickey Tisue
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Faye Henderson
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of August 18, 2019

Bible Class.....113
A.M. Worship.....142
P.M. Worship.....90
Wednesday Bible Study.....89

Offering \$3,774

THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

Each week will focus on reading a portion of the New Testament, each reading will only take 30 minutes:

2 Corinthians 10—Galatians 6



SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli
New Zealand - James & Emily Cammock
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - Cody Kilgore

GO PAPERLESS!

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