

FINDING A CHURCH HOME AND GETTING INVOLVED

1. Introduction:

- A. Why do you attend your church?
 - i. For almost all of you, you go there because your parents take you there on Sunday.
- B. Many of you will be leaving your childhood home within the next few years.
 - i. This will be a time of challenge spiritually.
 - ii. For the first time, you will be on your own.
 - iii. You alone will be responsible for growing your faith.
 - iv. You will make many decisions for yourself.
 - v. One of those decisions will be:
 - a. Should I even be a part of church?
 - b. If so, where should I attend?
- C. Finding a strong church family to be a part of is one of the most critical decisions you will ever make.

2. What is the church?

- A. The word “church” is often misused.
 - i. Ex: “They’re at the church.”
 - ii. Commonly refers to the building.
 - iii. Scripturally, this is not correct.
 - iv. You are the church.
- B. The church, in scripture, is made up of all Christians. (Heb 12:22-24)
 - i. Those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ are part of His church.
- C. The church is the body of Christ, of which Christ is the Head. (Col 1:8)
- D. There is only ONE true church. (Eph 4:4)
 - i. You are part of the church that was established on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:47)
 - ii. You are part of the church that meets in Africa, Asia, etc.
 - iii. Each first day of the week, we proclaim Christ’s death with them through the memorial feast.

- E. While there is only one church, there are separate local assemblies. These local assemblies are referred to in multiple ways:
 - i. Churches of God (1 Thes 2:14)
 - ii. Churches of Christ (Rom 16:16)
 - iii. Church of Galatia (Gal 1:2)
 - a. Often, the local assembly is referred to as the church of _____.
- F. Regardless of the location of the assembly, there is still one church.

3. Why do I need to be a part of the church?

- A. Some think they can have a personal relationship with Christ without church.
 - i. One cannot expect to be a Christian and not be an active part of the body.
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 12:12-19
- B. The body is made up of many members (v 14)
 - i. A single member has no part in the body (v 19)
- C. If one is apart from the body, they are dead spiritually!
 - i. Meeting together (plurality) is essential for Christians (Heb 10:24-25)
- D. In order to have a relationship with Christ and access to salvation, one must be a member of the body.

4. How do I find a body of the Lord's church when I leave home?

- A. Most of you will soon be moving from home.
 - i. You will have to find body to worship/grow with on your own.
- B. Part of the challenge will be selecting one church (out of many) to be a part of.
 - i. It's almost like walking in to a Baskin Robbins.
 - a. 34 flavors – take your pick
 - ii. Yellow pages in Lubbock, TX have over 20 churches of Christ.
 - iii. To some, it can seem a little overwhelming.
 - iv. However, if you can find a church home that allows you to grow spiritually, worship in accordance with God's word, and fellowship with other believers, your faith will be strengthened despite the challenge it may be.

- C. Criteria for selecting a congregation to attend: Note: This is by no means an exhausted list. Below are a few criteria that I feel are most often neglected.
- i. Is the inspired Word of God the foundation for the beliefs of the body? (2 Tim 3:16)
 - a. If the answer here is an absolute yes, the following should all be yes as well.
 - b. Too often, “churches” try to pick and choose what portions of God’s word they want to follow.
 - c. The word must be followed in its entirety.
 - ii. Is the church Christ-centered?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15 – Death, burial, and resurrection.
 - iii. Does the body believe in the *entire* plan of salvation?
 - a. Water baptism (Mark 16:15)
 - iv. Is the body governed by an eldership? (Titus 1:5)
 - v. Is the memorial feast taken every first day of the week? (Acts 20:7)
 - vi. What are women’s roles in the church?
 - a. Specifically, what are their roles in the worship service?
 - vii. Is the worship in accordance with the scriptures?
 - a. Instrumental music?
 - viii. Does this church share Christ with others?
 - a. Is the church content to stay the size it is?
 - ix. Is this a growing body? Is this a body that I can grow in?
 - a. Is this a place that will help me get to heaven?
 - x. NOTE: You will without a doubt have opportunities to let others know why you attend a certain congregation. Be able to tell them why!
- D. NOT valid reasons to attend a congregation (although not disqualifiers):
- i. I have friends/family that attend there.
 - ii. I enjoy the worship service.
 - iii. I like their activities/ministries.
 - iv. The location is convenient for me.
 - v. The sign says “church of Christ”.
 - vi. They have a campus ministry.
- E. Finding a church home vs. finding a spouse:

- i. When looking for a spouse, hopefully you have a list of criteria they will certainly meet.
 - a. Are they a Christian? Will they encourage me to grow spiritually? Will they help me raise Christian children? Do they fit in with my family... etc.
- ii. Once all of these criteria are met, then “preferences” can be examined.
 - a. Looks, hobbies, personality, etc.
- iii. However, starting by dating someone based on preferences doesn’t work.
 - a. Neither does finding a church home.
 - b. Don’t start by looking at a church that meets your preferences.
 - c. Start with a church that meets Biblical standards.

F. General advice: (Disclaimer: This is not based on biblical principles, but rather my experiences in finding a church home while in college).

- i. Visit multiple congregations.
 - a. See what is out there.
 - b. Not only will it help you find the strongest place to worship, it will allow you to develop appreciation for the body that you decide to be a part of.
- ii. Don’t “church hop”.
 - a. Find one church body to be a part of.
 - b. If you are hopping here/there, you do not become connected to the body.
- iii. If possible, find a church with an active group of peers.
 - a. College will be a challenging time for you spiritually. Surrounding yourself with friends that are like minded will help your growth and to keep you accountable for struggles/temptations you will certainly face.
 - b. Finding a spouse.
- iv. Find a church that does not isolate its young adults from the rest of the body.
 - a. Recall 1 Corinthians 12

5. I have found a church home... now what?

- A. Many young people will take college as a 4 year leave of absence from church altogether. Others will attend but in no way be connected to the body. To be connected to the body, one must be active in worship, fellowship, and service.
- B. How are you involved in your church?

- i. In the worship service?
 - ii. In your youth group?
 - iii. Service/missions?
 - iv. There is no reason you can't be involved in the same way in a "new" church.
 - v. It might seem difficult to leave the comfort zone of the church you have always been a part of and find a new one. However, you need a church and a church needs you.
 - vi. This is an easy time to find excuses to NOT attend/serve.
 - a. I'm new/young.
 - b. I don't know anybody.
 - c. I will be gone in 4 years anyway.
 - vii. Don't let fear/doubt/uncertainty keep you from plugging in and using your abilities.
- C. Each one of you is a talented individual!
- i. God has given each of us gifts. (Eph 4:11-13, Rom 12:4-8)
 - ii. Whatever your gift is, use it!
- D. There are several ways to become involved:
- i. Young men, express your desire to participate in the worship service/devotionals.
 - a. Song leading, prayers, serving communion, devotional talks.
 - b. Any small group worship setting/devotionals
 - ii. Plug into a small group.
 - a. Start one if needed
 - b. Ladies, start a girl's only small group.
 - c. Can be either an in-depth bible study or a fellowship/encouragement group.
 - d. It can be whatever you need it to be.
 - iii. Become a "recruiter" (encourager).
 - a. College is a time when most are trying to find where they belong.
 - b. Give them a reason to want to belong in God's family.
 - iv. Be the event organizer.
 - a. Most young people are always looking for something to do.
 - b. Set up informal "hang outs".
 - c. Put Christians in a Christian environment.
 - v. Service projects/mission trips

- a. One thing you will likely have more of than anyone else is time.
 - b. What are you doing with your time?
 - c. On a college campus, there are countless opportunities for service/missions.
 - d. Take a week out of your break and go to a third world country.
 - e. Join a service project in the town.
 - f. These events can change your perception of the world.
- vi. Find your role in the body!
- a. You may not know what you're good at yet.
 - b. Try several different things until you find one you can do well.
 - c. Keep doing it.
- E. Remember that to truly be a part of the body, you must have a function.

6. Conclusion:

- A. Remember that to have an effective relationship with God/Christ, one must be a part of the body of Christ, the church.
- B. There is only one church. You alone are responsible for making sure you're part of it.