

New Members Class (Pt. 3)

Know What Your Church Practices

Church members, leaders, gathering, and mission

Intro

Ephesians 1:15-23

“The church is the community of all true believers for all time.”
–**Wayne Grudem**, *Systematic Theology*, 853

- The church is both universal and local.

Church Membership

- It is God’s revealed will that every believer would be meaningfully joined to a Biblically-faithful local church.

*“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”
(Hebrews 10:24-25)*

- Is there a connection in your mind between your spiritual health and your involvement in the church?

“The closer you are to the Lord, the closer you will be to other believers.”
–**Peter Jeffrey**

Formal Church Membership

*“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ...27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”
(1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27)*

- “Regenerate church membership.”

- Church discipline assumes church membership (**1 Cor. 5:13**).
- Church leaders need church membership in order to be faithful to the Lord (**Heb. 13:17**).
- Church membership is a witness to the world.

Church Leaders

*“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ...Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.” (**Hebrews 13:7, 17**)*

- God has determined that the church would function with leaders.
- Not everyone in the church leads, but it is necessary that *some* lead.

*“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” (**James 3:1**)*

- Church leaders are not an undefined group. They are identifiable (**Acts 20, 1 Peter 5, Titus 1**).
- Two primary church offices: *elder/pastor/overseer* and *deacon* (**1 Tim. 3; Titus 1**).
- Leaders are a personal gift to the church by the Ascended Christ (**Eph. 4:11**).

Church Gathering

- What is the mark of a true church?

“That the Reformation rightly sought the key mark of the church in the Word of God cannot be doubted on the basis of Scripture. Without the Word of God, after all, there would be no church.... The Word is truly the soul of the church. All ministry in the church is a ministry of the Word. God gives his Word to the church, and the church accepts, preserves, administers, and teaches it; it confesses it before God, before one another, and before the world in word and deed. In the one mark of the Word the others are included as further applications. Where God’s Word is rightly preached, there also the sacrament is purely administered, the truth of God is confessed in line with the intent of the Spirit, and people’s conduct is shaped accordingly.”

–**Herman Bavinck**, *Reformed Dogmatics*, v. IV: *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 312

- The gathering of the people of God is a gathering around the Word.

Hear the Word

Preaching

“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known.”
(Colossians 1:24-25)

- Preaching is an act of worship, and preaching builds the church.

“Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.” **(2 Tim. 4:2)**

“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.”
(1 Tim. 4:13)

Sing the Word

“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.” **(Ephesians 5:19)**

- Singing is an expression of our corporate life.

Pray the Word

“My house shall be called a house of prayer” (Matthew 21:13)

- The church is called to be a community of intercessors.

See the Word

Sacraments/Ordinances

*“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”
(1 Corinthians 11:26)*

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4)

- Baptism & the Lord’s Supper are visible demonstrations of the reality of the gospel expressed in the church.

“The ordinances are the dramatic presentations of the Gospel. They are the moving pictures that represent the spiritual realities of the Gospel, written and directed by Jesus Himself. The bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper portray Christ’s body and blood broken and poured out for the remission of our sins, a visual reminder of Christ’s Cross-work on our behalf (Luke 22:19-20). In the same way, baptism portrays our spiritual death to sin, our symbolic burial with Christ, and our resurrection with Him to new life (Rom. 6:3-4). The ordinances, then, are when we see the Gospel enacted, and our participation in it dramatized. They are where the word of God’s promise is spoken to us in tangible form—we touch and taste the bread and wine; we feel the waters of baptism. They are means of grace instituted by Jesus that God uses to assure His people of the trustworthiness of His Gospel and the reality of our participation in it.”

–Mark Dever, *Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel*, 85

Live the Word

Gifts, Fellowship, Fruit

*“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ ...26If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together”
(1 Corinthians 12:21, 26)*

 Small Group Ministry

Church Mission

- Cruise Ship vs. Battleship
- “Missional Misfires”
- The mission of the church is a *gospel* mission.

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

- Gospel opportunities at LCC...