

Importance of the Church

There's a great deal of talk about being nondenominational. Individuals claim that the church of which they are a part is nondenominational. However, "denomination" is defined as "*a religious organization uniting local congregations in a single legal and administrative body*" (Webster's). If a local church is united to a "single legal and administrative body" with other local congregations, then it is a denomination. The New Testament churches were independent, self-governing units. Thus, they had what may be called "local autonomy."

Many attempt to undermine the need and purpose for the church. The scriptures, however, reveal that the church is essential: There is no salvation outside of Christ (Acts 4:10-12), and the church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23). Redemption and forgiveness of sin is only found in the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13-14), and the term church is used synonymously with the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:18-19). In addition, all spiritual blessings are found "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3), and only those who are in his church, the kingdom, will be delivered up "to God, even the Father" (1 Corinthians 15:24).

God did not leave the church unorganized. Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Would man be so bold as to accuse God of failing to provide the necessary organization for that which He built? The apostle Paul told Timothy, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Since God has equipped the man of God, so that he may "know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15), would it not behoove a worshipper of God to make sure the church of which he/she is a part is worshipping God "in spirit, and truth" (John 4:24)?

The apostle Paul said, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27).