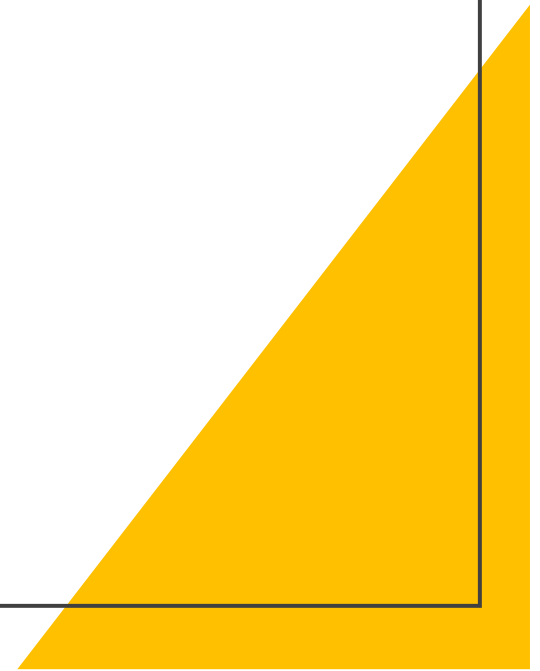


Why Join*
a Church
Part #2
Acts 9:26-28



From Our Last Lesson We Learned

#1 Integrating With the Local Body/Church was the New Testament Pattern for Christians

- Both Acts 9 and Acts 22 note that Saul/Paul became a Christian by being baptized in the city of Damascus
- Then he sought to be engaged with the local body in Jerusalem which was established on the day of Pentecost. Barnabas, a local disciple facilitated his effort, Acts 9
- The scriptural pattern was: once you were added to the body/church through baptism by Jesus Christ (Acts 2:47), you then sought to “join” in fellowship or membership with the local body of baptized believers where you lived
- There is NO scripture for the, “member at large” category with no local affiliation to a Body of Christ

Observations in Scripture

- Local leaders (Elders, Bishops, Pastors) were formed with apostolic criteria to look after the local membership (Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:17; 1Thess. 5:12)
- The words, “Elder, Bishop, and Pastor,” refer to the same office. This is the highest position in the local church. There were NO “Reverends” in the early church. Psalms 111:9 refers to God as “Reverend”(KJV) or “awesome”(N.I.V.), “awe inspiring”(N.L.T.)
- Therefore, the title “Reverend” is a designation for an “awesome God” and not a man
- The New Testament pattern was that each local church had a “plurality” of Elders, Acts 14:23
- There is NO scripture for the “One Pastor or Elder, or Bishop” form of government of the local church or one Pastor/Bishop/Elder having authority over several churches

So What Was the Preacher's Role in the New Testament Church?

Preach the word! 2 Timothy 4:1-4

I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.

Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

For the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lust will they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch though in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

A Preacher's Role is to Initiate the Organizational Maturation of the Church

Look at what Paul admonishes the young preacher Titus to do, Titus 1:5

For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee;

- A minister's job is to set in order those areas of the church that require completion. For a local church body, part of that would be to organize and develop that local church body and appoint men who are spiritually qualified to lead and serve that local body of baptized believers as Elders
- Deacons-Special servants of the local church are to be appointed as well

1 Timothy 3:12-13

What Do We Learn From This?

- The local body/church was not complete or mature in its growth with the “minister” as its only designated leader
- One of the minister’s jobs was to appoint “local oversight” who met the spiritual criteria that the apostle Paul outlined for him in 1 Timothy 3:1-7
- Question: 1 Peter 5:1-2 says that elders are to feed or shepherd the flock of God. Is the local preacher/minister in the flock or not in the flock?
- If so, he too is to be “overseen” or shepherded by the local shepherds or pastors appointed, Acts 20:28
- Question: Are you saying that the minister appoints these “leaders” then “crawls up under them” and is subject to their leadership (after he has ordained them)?
- Answer: Yes! Just like parents end up being shepherded by their Godly children that they raised at some point!

Reason #2 Why “Join” or Be Added to a Church

We Need to Be Held Accountable For Our Personal Actions

There are two types of Accountability that men and women need to address during their lifetime:

#1 Our Accountability to God In Our Personal actions-Romans 14:9-13

#2 Our Accountability to Each Other In Our Personal Actions-1 Corinthians 12:24-26

We Are Accountable to God, Romans 14:7-12

“For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live unto (honor) the Lord; and if we die, we die to (honor) the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s (we are answerable to God in everything from life to death; and we are not the final arbitrators)

But why do ye judge your brother (don’t insist on your own way)? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ, For it is written:

“As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”

My Non-Apostolic Opinion (preference) Should Not Be a Barometer for Your Righteousness (God’s Word Should)

There is a Context That Generated Paul's Argument of Accountability to God in Rom. 14

- **The Roman Christians were highly judgmental as to whether God was pleased with their brother's actions versus their own actions**
- **Some said in order to be pleasing to God you had to be a vegetarian, and they would condemn those that weren't (this was a "non-apostolic preference")**
- **Others thought that it was ok to eat what you wanted as long as you gave thanks to God when you did**
- **Some thought that certain days were holy days and should always be observed, and they condemned those that felt otherwise (again insisting on their way of righteousness)**
- **Others thought that, other than the Lord's Day, every day was pretty much like the other**

#2 We Are Accountable to Each Other

- In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul compares Christians in the body of Christ to body parts of the human body. They depend on one another (like hands, eyes, and feet)

But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 1 Corinthians 12:24-26.

- If you are about to get hit in the head, what do your eyes do? What do your hands do? What do your feet do?
- If the hand stops doing what it is supposed to, what does the brain do? What do the eyes do? What does the other hand do?
- His point is that, in this manner, different parts of the body are accountable to other parts for the sake of the whole body

If You See That Connection, Look at This One! Galatians 6:1-2

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

- If a fellow brother or sister should get caught up in sin, it is the responsibility of the “spiritual body” to help restore them to their faith again
- Why? Because being accountable to someone is a preventive method of making sure that we don’t fall away from our faith
- In good marriages men and women are allowed to hold each other accountable (that’s why marrying a “yes person” doesn’t help their spouse as much)
- Don’t be so enamored that you refuse to correct them. Being held accountable can improve you as a person

The Local Jews Were Commended for Holding the Apostle Paul Accountable!

As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those of Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Acts 17:10-11

- The Bereans had the audacity to hold the Great Apostle Paul accountable for his sermons and his messages
- Why? Because their souls were at stake.... and ours are too!
- Behind the idea of accountability is an issue of “INTEGRITY”-to make sure that you practice what you preach!

***Who Holds You
Accountable to God?
Your Local Church Can!***

Romans 12:4-5

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

So we, being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

The Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38