

A Clear Distinction

Have you ever heard anyone argue, “A church is made up of Christians, so whatever the Christian does that means the church did it also (and vice versa)?” This argument is not well thought out and has truly laughable consequences. It actually leads to making a mess of Jesus’ will for His church!

- **The Local church and the Christian: A Clear Distinction...**

- In the area of economics
 - God allows the individual Christian to go into business, work, and make a profit (Acts 18:1-3; Ephesians 4:28).
 - The local church is to obtain money in a different way (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- In the area of family
 - Individuals can marry, bear children, and care for aged family (1 Corinthians 7:2; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 5:8).
 - The local church has different instructions in this realm (1 Timothy 5:16).
- In the area of social activity
 - Individual Christians can plan, pay for, and provide parties, feasts and banquets (Luke 5:29; 1 Corinthians 10:31).
 - God wants this realm to be separate and apart from the work of His church (1 Corinthians 11:22).
- In the area of helping the needy
 - Individuals can use their resources to help whomever they want (Galatians 6:10; James 1:22).
 - The local church’s funds are limited to needy saints (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- In the area of restoration (Matthew 18:15-17)
 - Step #1: Individual goes alone (Matthew 18:15).
 - Step #2: Individual goes back with one or two more (Matthew 18:16).
 - Step #3: the church steps in (Matthew 18:17a).
 - Step #4: the church withdraws (Matthew 18:17b).

- **This is important to...**

- Understanding who we are (1 Corinthians 12:12).
- Understanding the true mission of the church (Acts 20:28).
 - Worship and praise to God (Acts 2:42; 20:7)
 - Edifying one another (1 Corinthians 14:26)
 - Teaching the gospel (Mark 16:15; 1 Timothy 3:15)
 - Spiritual discipline (Matthew 18:17)
 - Appointing bishops and deacons (Philippians 1:1)
 - Equipping one another for spiritual service (Ephesians 4:11-12)
 - Supporting preachers (1 Corinthians 9:14)
 - Helping needy faithful Christians (1 Corinthians 16:1)
- That church membership doesn’t take the place of our individual obligations to God.
 - It doesn’t mean that we don’t have to obey John 4:24.
 - It doesn’t mean that we don’t have to obey Matthew 28:19.
 - It doesn’t mean that we don’t have to obey Galatians 6:10 and James 1:27.
- Determining if we trust in the drawing power of Jesus and His gospel (John 6:26-27).

Conclusion: Let’s respect the distinctions that the Bible makes!