

Sermon Notes for Churched: We Partner Together (Ephesians 2:19-22; 3:6 and other Scriptures)

- **Partnership** in a local church is often misunderstood or neglected.
- **Common reasons why** people resist joyfully partnering with a local church are:
 1. “I’ve had bad experiences with churches”
 2. “I don’t trust the leadership”
 3. “I don’t believe in church membership, it’s not in the Bible”
 4. “I don’t agree with everything this church believes”
 5. “I’m a member of another church”
- **The church** is not a club (based upon a common interest) or service provider (based upon a common need or desire), but an embassy of “the kingdom of His beloved Son” as one nation (heavenly) representing the Lord’s authority, name, reputation and glory inside another nation (earthly).
- **Ephesians 2:19-22; 36** reveal our unique connection to the church as fellow citizens, God’s household, a whole building being fitted together, a holy temple, a dwelling of God in the Spirit, fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, fellow partakers.
 - There is no such thing as a commitment to the head of the body (Christ) without a commitment to His body.
 - You cannot fulfill your Scriptural obligations to God, church leaders and other believers without the local church and neither can other believers fulfill theirs.
 - Partnership or membership in a local church is a special, official and beneficial partnership to faithfully know, love and serve Christ and fellow believers.
- There are four **biblical reasons** why every follower of Jesus Christ should formally, willingly and submissively be a functioning partner in a local church:
 1. **Your local church partnership honors your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**
 - It’s the Lord’s church (“My church” – Matt. 16:18) and He’s the “head” of the church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18)
 - The Lord is the “foundation” (1 Cor 3:11), goal (Col. 1:28), groom (Eph. 5:25-27), message (1 Cor. 1:23) or the past (crucified), present (risen and High Priest) and future (coming again) of the church to name a few.
 - Matthew 16:18-19 (18:18) gives the church authority (“the keys” and “binding and loosing”)
 - Revelation 2-3 shows how the Lord walks among the seven churches of Asia Minor and assesses, warns, appeals and rewards them
 2. **Your local church partnership honors your spiritual leaders.**

- **Shepherding:** God uses leaders (pastors, elders, overseers) to “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Pet. 5:2) by which the church is cared for (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13)
- **Submission:** God uses believers to submit to the shepherding and guidance of its spiritual leaders (Heb. 13:7, 17)

3. Your local church partnership honors your fellow believers.

- You can’t flourish in your faith without a strong, active commitment to a local body of believers.
 - An inactive, disconnected believer is a contradiction, living in deception and needs to repent.
 - How can disconnected or loosely connected believers fulfill commands to “love one another” (Jn 13:34) or “bear one another’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2) or “employ your gift in serving one another” (1 Pt 4:10)?
- Every church metaphor assumes and expects a united, intentional and active partnership
 - “*branches*” depict our collective dependence on Jesus the Vine and His life that flows through us (John 15:1-5)
 - A “*holy temple*” depicts God’s dwelling with us as we worship together (Eph. 2:20-22)
 - “*living stones*” depict our “being built up as a spiritual house” anchored by the orienting “Cornerstone” (1 Pet. 2:4-6)
 - The “*body*” depicts our mutual dependence and different roles played for the good health of the church (1 Cor 12:12-27)
 - The “*bride*” depicts our faithfulness to our groom Jesus Christ to be without “spot or wrinkle...holy and blameless” (Eph. 5:26-27)
- Notice some of our **F.A.M.I.L.Y.** (“God’s household” – Eph. 2:19) obligation
 - **Fellowship:** We share a fellowship obligation (one another’s; Heb. 3:12-13)
 - **Advertisement:** We share an advertising obligation to proclaim the gospel (John 13:35; Matt. 28:19-20)
 - **Ministry:** We share a ministry obligation as gifted believers who serve one another (1 Pet. 4:10-11)
 - **Investment:** We share an investment obligation to financially support the ministry of the church (2 Cor. 9:6-8)
 - **Liability:** We share a liability obligation to God and fellow believers as we hold each other accountable (1 Cor. 5:7; Matt. 18:15-18)
 - **Yoking:** We share a yokefellow obligation as we are “diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:2-3; Phil. 4:3)

4. Your local church partnership honors your personal faith.

- **Clubs or service providers** are all about your preferences, benefits and choices, but the church is all about the Lord's preference, benefit and choice.
- **Ephesians 4:11-16** leads to "the proper working of each individual part which causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love" (v. 16)
- If you wander as a lamb (Matt. 12-14), it's your local church that Jesus will send after you (Matt. 18:15-20)