

Welcome to our visitors
We're glad to have you with us!

Prayers & Announcements

Shut-ins

Updates & Prayers

Daily Bible Reading:

(Sun) Jeremiah 42-44 (Mon) Jer 45-48
(Tue) Jer 49-50 (Wed) Jer 51-52
(Thu) Lamentations 1-2 (Fri) Lam 3-5
(Sat) Ezekiel 1-4

The Gospel Plan of Salvation

Hear the gospel Christ; read it: Acts 2; 3; 13; 17; Rom 10:17
Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior of men: Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4
Repent of your sins: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4
Confess your faith in Jesus Christ: Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10
Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins: Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21
Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge: Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48

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Bible Study..... 9:30 a.m. – Sunday
Worship..... 10:30 a.m. – Sunday
Worship..... 6:00 p.m. – Sunday
Bible Study (ladies)..... 7:00 p.m. – Tuesday
Bible Study..... 7:00 p.m. – Wednesday

Bible correspondence courses available
Web site: www.greenmeadowchurchofchrist.com

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“If you put the brethren in remembrance of these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ” (1 Tim 4:6).

Come Out and Be Separate

Paul’s words to the Corinthians, is a classic definition of “holiness” and states in clear terms Jehovah’s demand, “Ye shall be holy, for I am holy” and “be ye yourselves holy in all manner of living” (2 Cor 6:17; 1 Pet 1:15-16). Holiness means to be “set apart” from the world. It calls disciples of Christ to a “distinct” and “special” life that elevates their thinking and lives above the “present evil” that has and always will define the world (1 John 2:15-17).

Be Separate – The apostle’s orders to retreat—to exit the world and remain aloof from it, if taken physically, is the very opposite of the Lord’s prayer in which Jesus asks the Father not to take His disciples “from the world” (John 17:15). This is what creates the struggle that Paul describes in this text and that he himself battled daily (2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 1 Cor 9:24-27).

Saints have a mission to live in the world while keeping themselves from its evil. Their goal is to shine as lights and hold forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Phil 2:15-16). Paul’s command to the Corinthians to “come out” and “be separate” follows a comprehensive appeal to the brethren to live in an ungodly world without compromise.

The apostle practically exhausts his vocabulary stressing that Christians must not be unequally yoked with unbelievers in lawless behavior. Righteousness, he says, may not “share” (metocha) with iniquity, light may not have “fellowship” or “communion” (koinonia) with darkness, Christ and Belial may not play together in the same symphony (sumphonasis), believers may have no “part” or “accord” (meris) with unbelievers, and God’s temple may strike no “agreement” or “alliance” (sunkatathesis) with idols.

A Holy Sanctuary – This image leads the apostle’s to call for holiness. “Ye,” he says, “are a temple of the living God” in fulfillment of God’s promise to dwell in His people, walk with them, be their God, and receive them as His children (2 Cor 6:16, 18). He had made this point to the Corinthians in a previous epistle when admonishing them that the body may not be joined to a harlot in sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:15-20). “Know ye not,” he wrote, “that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which have from God.”

Paul’s word for temple (in the first epistle and here) is not hieron, the grounds around the temple building where ordinary Jews could congregate. Their bodies are the naos, the “holy place” where only the priest, set apart for sacred services, could enter to approach God. Their bodies are sanctuaries, hallowed temples, where God dwells through the Spirit and only sacred and holy conduct may enter.

Cleanse Yourselves – What this demands, the apostle concludes, is that Christians must “cleanse” themselves “from all the defilements of the flesh and spirit.” In this way they bring to perfection through lives of purity the holiness that proceeds from a heart that fears God (2 Cor 7:1). And this, brethren, is the key to all that Paul calls on the Corinthians to do. Fear God! When disciples fear God, they sanctify their hearts in reverence and awe before Him and deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts” to “live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:12).

At no time in history is man more exposed to the world of sin. He no longer has to look for evil in hidden brothels. Lascivious behavior is available on a TV screen that hangs on the wall of man’s living room or bedroom, it can be seen with the click of a button on a pornographic Internet site, and it can be purchased and viewed in lewd magazines at open newsstands. Immodest clothing that once was reserved for places of ill-repute, ballrooms and beaches now appears on the streets and in the malls of every city. Regrettably, some of it has been seen at the weddings of Christians and in the assemblies of saints.

This world may not be our home, but it is our present dwelling place and we cannot escape that. We have a mission here as “strangers” and “pilgrims” to show forth the excellencies of God. When we separate ourselves from the culture of an evil world, fill our hearts with the fruit of the Spirit, and manifest in our lives the holiness of God—then will the light of the gospel shine through us into a world darkened by the unholy and irreverent behavior of men who have no fear of God and regard for their own souls (1 Pet. 2:9-12; 2 Cor 4:3-4). For the benefit of a corrupt and benighted world and the salvation of our own souls, brethren, “come ye out from among them, and be ye separate.”

MEMBERSHIP IN A LOCAL CHURCH

When one is baptized into Christ the Lord adds him to His body the church – He is the Savior of that body (Acts 2:47; Eph 4:4; 5:23). That new member must become a working member of a local church (1 Cor 12:12-27). When this precept of God is carried out “membership” in the Lord’s body can take on its greatest meaning.

I. INDIVIDUAL DECISION TO IDENTIFY WITH A LOCAL CHURCH

- A. Membership in the body of Christ requires one decision (1 Cor 12:13; Acts 8:38).
- B. Membership in a local church requires a separate decision (Acts 9:26).
 - 1. There is holy intimacy between the members of a local church (Rom 12:4-5).
 - 2. There is mutual love as existed between Jesus & the Twelve.

II. CONGREGATIONAL RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR DENY MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership may be granted to one who is in fellowship with God.
- B. Membership cannot be granted to one who disobeys God (1 Cor 5:11-13; 2 Thess 3:6).
 - 1. Mistakes can be made (1 Cor 5:1-13; Rev 2:14-15; Acts 9:26; 3 John 9-10).
 - 2. Righteous judgment must be exercised (John 7:24).

III. CONGREGATIONAL DUTY IN MEMBERSHIP

- A. Determine if the prospective member is in fellowship with Christ (Acts 9:26-30; Gal 2:9).
 - 1. All others should be taught the truth in love (Eph 4:15).
- B. A congregation has an obligation to its members.
 - 1. Prompt to warn those who are out of step (1 Thess 5:14).
 - 2. Diligent to withdraw from the disorderly (2 Thess 3:14-15).

IV. INDIVIDUAL DUTY IN LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- A. He must *express* a desire to be identified with a congregation (Acts 9:26).
- B. He must *identify* with a congregation that is faithful to the Lord (Eph 1:1).
- C. He must *seek out* his role & go to work with that congregation (1 Pet 4:10).
- D. He must *relate* properly to the members & elders (Rom 15:2; 1 Thess 5:12-13; Heb 13:17).

The membership directory of a local church is not the “Lamb’s Book of Life” (Rev 21:27), but it ought to represent, as closely as possible, those who are in fellowship with God through Jesus Christ.