

# CHURCH ISSUES

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

## 1. What is church unity based upon?

The unity of the church is based upon the truth of Scripture (Eph. 4:13; II John 1-6). Everything else stems from this unity in the truth. Along with the rest of the Scriptures, the Biblical teaching about separation is a vital truth to be united in. All Scriptural themes are for our profit (II Tim 3:16). Since “all” scripture is profitable to us, our unity must stem from “all” that the Bible teaches us. Our missions outreach and love for people must always mold itself within the confines of truth or else we will be one - sided in our ministry, following only the path of our emotions over and above the truth. Therefore, true unity is not found in united emotional endeavors but in the absolute truth of God’s Word.

## 2. What is the church service for?

The church has been ordained by God as a center for the teaching of His Word (Acts 15:35, 18:11; I Cor. 4:17; I Tim. 4:11, 6:2). The Bible being proclaimed with clarity and conviction will change the life of every believer. God uses godly preaching and blesses it. As a result, lives are transformed and changed. Ephesians 4:11-12 gives God’s local church design for Biblical growth. He has given pastor-teachers to instruct the saints within the setting of the local church. Acts 2:42 informs us about the key things involved within the church life of the assembly as we meet together. They are teaching, fellowship, communion and prayers. These are the very things which church life is all about. To upset this design is to create a church service, which is not Biblical. Many today are adding drama, dance and other evangelistic thrusts in order to attract unsaved people into the church.

**Remember:**

The church service is not solely an evangelistic service to see people saved or to bring the entire world into the church.

*We must distinguish between the church service and the church outreach.* The church **service** is primarily for the saint’s edification. The church **outreach** is evangelism (Mark 16:15). We must go out to witness and not flood the unsaved into the church to bring them to Christ. This will cause “undo” turmoil and stress on any church ministry, which is for the saint’s growth and for the discipleship of young believers in the Word. This is the true Biblical pattern.

### **3. What is a key role for church people?**

**A key role of the people within the church is the discipleship of young believers (Matt.28:18-20). We can do this corporately or individually. We must disciple people in order to bring them under the Biblical pattern of separation and right living. This discipleship ministry involves the help of well-seasoned saints. There is to be a strong nucleus of older Christians in the Lord, who have developed in their Christian walk. It's these people who are to establish a good spiritual pattern within any local church, not to threaten other people, but to set an example before those people who are young in the Lord (I Thess. 1:6-7, 4:1-3).**

**We must simply disciple people into the Scriptural pattern of godly living by God's grace ( Titus 2:12). This is how we can really show love for other people, no matter where they are at in life for "love rejoiceth in the truth" (I Cor. 13: 6). Love seeks to disciple the lives of people and see change in their lives. When the young believers dedicate themselves to the Lord by yielding to the new life within them, then they can become an affective working part of God's New Testament Church (Rom. 12:1-2; I Cor. 12:20-22). God uses holy and clean lives in His work. He does not use dirty lives that have not committed themselves to the Lord (I Thess. 4:1-7).**

- We must follow the process of discipleship before membership within the local church. Discipleship prepares people to represent the church and uphold the testimony of the local church. Converts are to move from discipleship to church membership. Bringing them in to the fellowship in a hasty, premature manner will only result in the Scriptural action of church discipline (I Cor. 5: 11-13; II Thess. 3:6-15).**
- There must be a preparation time to prepare the young believers to represent the church testimony and the overall Christian testimony ( I Cor. 5:1; II Cor. 3:2; I Peter 4:4). The time of discipleship is not a time of shunning people away from the church but to train them for the ministry of the local church.**
- We must care without compromising the testimony of the local church which is to be a pure testimony of Godly lives ( II Cor. 3:2; I Cor. 3:3; II Cor. 6:17; I Thess. 5:17). We must be a local company of believers who follow the established "Biblical traditions" of the Bible (II Thess. 2:15) and manifest a changed life so godless men are genuinely surprised (I Peter 4:3-4).**

4. What is the church ministry to do in order to reach out to people?

a. Missions outreach (Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15).

The church supports specific mission agencies, which are reaching out to people. This is missionary outreach of the church. We support, pray and assist gifted evangelists or missionaries to effectively spread the Gospel. These are specific ministries for “gifted people.” Not everyone can do this type of missionary outreach nor should they be expected to (Eph. 4:11). We must remember that other people can be actively involved in these evangelistic ministries through their own ministry of prayer (Col. 4:2-3, II Thess. 3:1).

b. Everyday verbal witness (I Thess. 1:7-8).

This is the primary witness of the local church in the everyday world setting. *We do not have to reach out to people by filling the church with the people of the world who do not want to be here in the first place.* We are to witness to people out in the world and see them saved so that we might individually and corporately disciple them within the ministry of the local church.

\* This is not to say we can never invite the unsaved to church. Unsaved people will filter into the church who need the Lord (I Cor. 14:23; II Tim. 4:5). It's not wrong to promote evangelistic services within the church from time to time. Nor is it wrong to present the Gospel in the church. If we have any kind of heart for people, we will want to see them saved even within the local church setting.

\* We must also remember that a smaller church or any individual church cannot win the entire world! Likewise, one church alone cannot disciple every new convert. We must learn to be satisfied *to a certain extent* about the mission programs we do support and the outreach we do have through these missions programs and our verbal witness.

\* We must also be on guard concerning the “success syndrome of numbers and bigness” and the notion that “constant activity” is a sign of spirituality within the church. True spirituality is seen in the manifested fruit of the spirit within peoples lives (Gal. 5:22-24) and their willingness to discern truth from error (I Cor. 2:15). Sometimes we must be satisfied with how God is blessing and using the missionary outreach that we do have both corporately as a church and individually. We can only expand our horizons as God directs and supplies the necessary means. **Bigger is not always better.** Nor do we lack vision or heart for people just because we are not measuring up to some man-made criteria or church manual study. On the other hand, our aim should be to continually

“enlarge our coasts” or our outreach ministries (I Chronicles 4:1). This means we should continually have vision to expand our missions programs and verbal witness, along with our discipleship of people.

**5. Why do people leave the church?**

- a. Because the truth offends them and drives them away (Gal. 4:16).
- b. Because people do not present the truth in a gracious spirit and loving manner (Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:15).
- c. Because people do not want to be discipled and come under the authority of the truth (Matt. 28:19-20).

**People do not want to live:**

**\*A sanctified life from sin (I Thess. 4:3-5; I John 2:15-17)**

**\*A separated life from ungodly people (II Cor. 6:17)**

**\*A sacred life in appearance (I Thess. 5:22).**

**6. Should we encourage others to be faithful in their church attendance?**

The Bible declares that we should faithfully encourage each other to be regular at the stated church services (Hebrews 10:24-25). We need to “provoke” one another to love God more and use our gifts in the work of the Lord. *When we are disturbed at the believer’s exhortations, it’s because our life is under conviction and not right with the Lord.* Each man within the household setting is to see that his wife and family stay actively on target with the church ministry. He is to keep their lives set - apart for God’s use and holy purposes (Eph. 5:25-26). As the leader within the home (I Cor. 11:3), it’s the mans responsibility to keep their families serving the Lord in the setting of God’s local church, where they can use their gifts for each other within the body (I Cor. 12:7). Men, we need to take a stand and make a commitment.

**Joshua 24:15**

**”As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”**

**7. Is the church the most important link in the believer’s life?**

This should be an obvious answer. The church is to be the central focus and attention of each believer’s life. We are to support the home base with

our giving (I Cor. 16:2) and faithful attendance (Heb. 10:25) and our gifts (I Cor. 12:7). If the home base is not unified in the truth and functioning, as it should be, all other outreach ministries within the church will not function, as they should be. \* Our children need to be taught the importance of the local church in their lives. A child's neglect from God's house will never result in a future thriving church, whose people are fully committed to the Scriptures and edification of other people.

#### **8. Who leads the church?**

The Bible teaches that the God-ordained leadership is to act as the overruling government, which guides the people in the ministry. The people do not govern themselves nor could the church function without a directing leadership. Specifically, the pastor is to teach (Heb. 13:7; Acts 20:28), guard (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28-31) shepherd (I Pet. 5:2) and rule (Heb. 13:7; I Pet. 5:2) God's people within a given church. There needs to be respect for the pastor as he seeks to uphold the truth of Scripture in every spectrum and situation in life (I Thess. 1:6). The flock of God must remember the pastor's dedicated work on their behalf (I Thess. 2:11). The people must remember that the pastor will have to "give account" of how he led the flock and remained true to the Scriptures (Heb. 13:17).

The people need to trust in the pastor and leadership (Acts 6:8-10) of a local assembly as they seek to promote an honest ministry (Rom. 12:17) and direct a Scriptural based Bible ministry. The people of the church have voted into the ministry men who are to be leaders over them. As these men seek to guide and lead in the details of church life and business, the rest of the assembly must learn to trust in their leadership. The assembly needs to have confidence in their leaders decisions and business over the church (Acts 6:3). Without this trust, the people will become distracted in areas that do not concern their part of ministry within the church life.