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VERSE OF THE WEEK

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Capitol Ministries® 8

✦ THE BASICS OF CHRISTIANITY | PART 7

Knowing Jesus: The Local Church



THIS WEEK WE LOOK AT A SCRIPTURAL overview of the importance of the local church. This is a critical topic because you of all people need to maintain a strong intimacy with God in the leadership of our nation. By the local Church, I am speaking about those churches that faithfully teach God's Word. The local church is designed by God to do just that: to mature you as a believer. I have observed over the years that public servants who are committed to a local church are much more apt to be stable and growing spiritually than those who are not. Participating in the Members Bible Study and/or other fellowship groups in the Capitol while necessary is not enough! Therefore my prayer is that this study will prompt all who ponder it to increase (or begin) their commitment to a biblically-solid local church in their district—to join a church and make involvement not only a regular habit, but a scheduling priority! My friend, don't be deceived, nothing can replace God's gym for the growth of spiritual muscle!



Ralph Drollinger

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, location undisclosed, refreshments served.
 SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, rotating offices, hot breakfast served.
 HOUSE: 7:45 AM Thursdays, The Capitol Hill Club, hot breakfast served.

The views expressed in each Bible study are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study Sponsor.



■ MINISTRY UPDATE

Cheyne Day

Ministry Leader, Oklahoma



“Every week I remind Oklahoma legislators that they are servants, ministers, and that God has chosen them for such a time as this. I remind them that they have a very important role in what they do, and that they have a responsibility for God.

“It’s so gratifying to hear top people who sit across the aisle from each other, praying for each other. That has to create a unity when they are on the floor. Maybe they are on different sides of legislation, but they know that colleague on the other side of the aisle has prayed for them and their family. There is something very powerful, supernatural about that and it is a privilege to see.”

Knowing Jesus: The Local Church

I. THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

The Church is a group of believers, a spiritually united body; it is much more than an association or a physical building. It has been said of the Church universal, “The Church is not an organization, but ... a communion, a fellowship that includes all believers.”

Read Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 5:23:

“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”

“For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.”

1. What is Christ’s position in the Church?

2. How is the Church described?

3. At what cost did Christ purchase the Church per Acts 20:28?

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

4. How does a person become a member of the body of Christ?

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.” (Colossians 3:15)

We are _____ into the body.

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:13)

We are _____ into the body.

II. THE LOCAL CHURCH

The New Testament (NT) describes how first century believers came together in small groups to worship Christ, receive instruction from the Scriptures, meet one another’s needs, pray, and evangelize.

A. THE LOCAL CHURCH ILLUSTRATED

1. Where did the believers meet before they had church buildings?

“Also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.” (Romans 16:5)

“The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” (1 Corinthians 16:19)

2. On what day of the week did they meet?

“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.” (Acts 20:7)

3. List four things to which the early Church was devoted:



“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

B. THE LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZED

In Ephesians we read that God gave gifted men to the Church:

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11–12)

- List them:

- God gave these gifted men to the Church to equip the saints for what purposes (vs. 12)?

C. ELDERS/OVERSEERS

The qualifications of an elder or overseer are stated in the following passages:

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the hus-

band of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” (1 Timothy 3:1–7)

“Namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (Titus 1:6–9)

- What are the two major responsibilities of an elder per 1 Peter 5:1–2?

“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness.”

- _____
- _____

♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

Hebrews 10:24–25

“Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

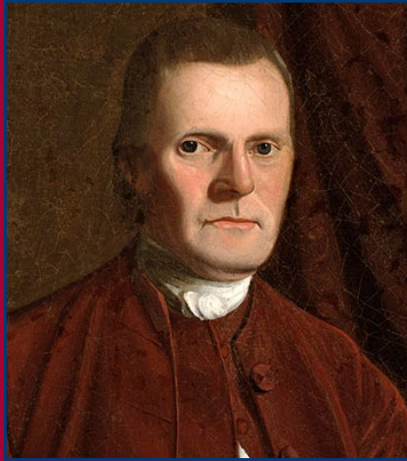


Join a church and make involvement not only a regular habit, but a scheduling priority!





Roger Sherman



“I believe a visible church to be a congregation of those who make a credible profession of their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, joined by the bond of the covenant.... I believe that the sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord’s Supper.... I believe that the souls of believers are at their death made perfectly holy, and immediately taken to glory: that at the end of this world there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a final judgment of all mankind, when the righteous shall be publicly acquitted by Christ the Judge and admitted to everlasting life and glory, and the wicked be sentenced to everlasting punishment.”

— Roger Sherman, signer of the Declaration of Independence; signer of the Constitution; ‘Master Builder of the Constitution;’ judge; framer of the Bill of Rights; U.S. Senator.

Lewis Henry Boutell, *The Life of Roger Sherman* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1896), pp. 271–273.

2. What is the responsibility of believers to the elders (of a church they belong to) per Hebrews 13:17?

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

3. What does 1 Peter 5:3 state elders should not do?

“Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

4. Do believers need to obey elders or others in authority who are acting contrary to the will of God per Acts 5:29?

“But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men.’”

D. DEACONS

The word “deacon” means “servant.” The deacons are to minister to the needs of the flock under the direction of the elders of the church. The qualifications of deacons are stated in 1 Timothy 3:8–13:

“Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in

all things. Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

E. MEMBERS OF THE BODY

1. What does Hebrews 10:25 warn believers not to neglect?

“Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

2. Hebrews 13:7 instructs us concerning those who teach us God’s Word. What should be our response?

“Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.”

3. How should we act toward other members of the body per 1 Corinthians 12:25?

“So that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.”

4. How should those who are appointed to preach and teach be supported?



“So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.” (1 Corinthians 9:14)

“The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.” (Galatians 6:6)

III. FELLOWSHIP IN THE CHURCH

The Bible uses the Greek word *koinonia* to describe fellowship within the body of Christ. The word means “participation with others in a common purpose.” The Latin equivalent is communion, pointing to the communion that is shared with other believers as well as with God.

1. What is God’s desire for every local church per 1 Corinthians 1:10?

“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

In Ephesians 4:2–3 Scripture states:

“With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

2. What will promote unity?
-

3. What is our responsibility?
-

4. What is the key to maintaining unity within the body per Philippians 2:1–4:

“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Christianity is intimacy, not religion. The believer enjoys fellowship with:

God the Father 1 John 1:3
 God the Son 1 John 1:3
 The Holy Spirit 2 Corinthians 13:14
 Other believers 1 John 1:7

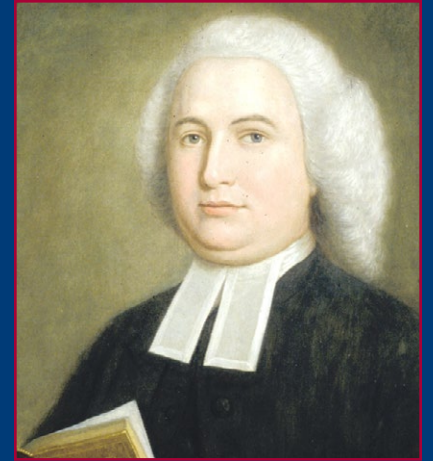
5. However, with whom is true fellowship not possible?

“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?” (2 Corinthians 6:14–15)

6. Fellowship within the body of Christ involves sharing in each other’s lives. List some areas in which Christians should minister to one another:

“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.” (Romans 14:19)

James Manning



“I rejoice that the religion of Jesus prevails in your parts; I can tell you the same agreeable news from this quarter. Yesterday I returned from Piscataway in East Jersey, where was held a Baptist annual meeting (I think the largest I ever saw) but much more remarkable still for the Divine influences which God was pleased to grant. Fifteen were baptized; a number during the three days professed to experience a change of heart. Christians were remarkably quickened; multitudes appeared.”

— James Manning, member of the Continental Congress; president of Brown University.

Letters of Delegates to Congress: November 7, 1785–November 5, 1786, Paul H. Smith, editor (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 1995), Vol. 23, p. 337, James Manning to Robert Carter on June 7, 1786.



John Adams



“Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in polite company: I mean hell.”

— John Adams, second president of the United States; signer of the Declaration of Independence; judge; diplomat; one of two signers of the Bill of Rights.

John Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States*, Charles Francis Adams, editor (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1856), Vol. X, p. 254, to Thomas Jefferson on April 19, 1817.

IV. WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

The English word “worship” was originally spelled “worthship” meaning to acknowledge the worth of someone or something. We worship when we give honor to God relative to His attributes, who He is. Worship acknowledges God’s Person, nature, characteristics, and works. It stems from a grateful heart and renders attitudes, actions, and emotions of adoration, devotion, and submission to God.

A. GOD SEEKS GENUINE WORSHIPERS

Read John 4:23–24:

“But an hour is coming, and now is, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His Worshipers. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

1. How are we to worship God?

If we are to worship God in truth—versus erroneously—it follows that we must seek to know Him by learning about His attributes and actions.

B. WE WORSHIP GOD BECAUSE ONLY HE IS WORTHY OF OUR HIGHEST DEVOTION

Read Revelation 4:10–11:

“The twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and

“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)

“Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (James 5:16)

Given the fact that as an elected official you live in a fishbowl, how do you think you can fulfill the above?

7. What has God given to each Christian to help him or her minister to others within the church per 1 Peter 4:10–11?

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”



honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

1. What is God worthy to receive?

2. Why?

C. WORSHIPPING GOD INVOLVES PRAISE

“All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name.’ Selah.” (Psalm 66:4)

1. How did the psalmist say God should be worshiped?

D. WORSHIPPING GOD INVOLVES REVERENCE

1. What did Moses do when he worshiped God per Exodus 34:8?

“Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.”

2. How is reverence for God revealed in the following verses?

“When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum. And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, ‘He is worthy for You to grant this to him; for he loves our nation and it was he who

built us our synagogue.’ Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, ‘Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.” (Luke 7:1–7)

“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last.” (Revelation 1:17)

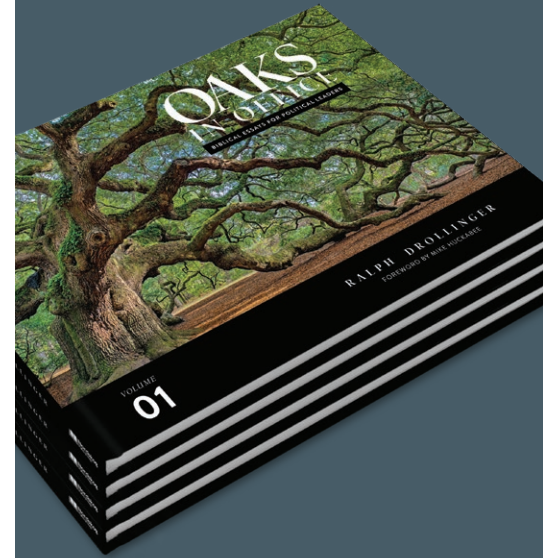
“O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods, in whose hand are the depths of the earth, the peaks of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, for it was He who made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” (Psalm 95:1–6)

E. THE LORD’S SUPPER

The Lord’s Supper, or communion, is one of two ordinances given to the Church by Jesus Christ, the other being baptism. The Lord’s Supper is an act or remembrance of Christ’s death. It is an act of worship, or reverence.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23–26:

“For I received from the Lord that which



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I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

1. The bread is in remembrance of:

2. The cup is in remembrance of:

Every time you partake in Communion you proclaim the Lord's death per 1 Corinthians 11:26:

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

3. In light of that truth, what is the warning stated in 1 Corinthians 11:27–30?

"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."

V. APPLICATION

1. Are you a member of the body of Christ?

2. Are you a member of a local assembly of Christians?

3. What have you learned from this study to improve your worship of God?

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