

# Spiritual Disciplines Within The Church

## Chapter 3: Why Join a Church?

### **Introduction:**

Have you ever wondered whether or not you are commanded of the Lord to join a church? What if you come to every service and join in worshiping the Lord but are not a member? The following chapter should help answer these and other questions.

### **I. Scripture indicates church membership in New Testament times.**

- A. The instructions for church discipline.
  - 1. How the church should respond when someone within the church persists in living like an unbeliever. (*Matt. 18:15-17*)
  - 2. This formal relationship gives us the right to “put away” an unrepentant person.
  - 3. Church discipline must be done by the “church.” (*Matt. 18:17, I Cor. 5:4*)
  - 4. Must be limited to a specific group—and that must mean the church members.
- B. The meaning of the word “join.”
  - 1. Informal: assumed relationship.
  - 2. Formal: to glue or cement together. (*Acts 5:13*)
- C. The meaning of “the whole church.”
  - 1. “Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place . . .” (*I Cor. 14:23*)
  - 2. Verifiable membership.
- D. The instructions for pastoral oversight and spiritual leadership. (*I Tim. 3:1*)
  - 1. There must be a distinguishable, mutually understood membership.
  - 2. The local church is compared to a family. (*I Tim. 3:5*)
  - 3. He must learn to care for his family first and then the church as if it were his own family. (*I Tim. 3:5*)
- E. The Biblical metaphors used to describe local churches. (*Acts 20:28, Eph. 2:21, I Cor. 12:27*)
  - 1. Flock: The shepherd knows his sheep.
  - 2. Temple: No place for loose stones.
  - 3. Body: Joined.
  - 4. Household: You are either a member or you are not.

### **II. There are Biblical reasons for joining church.**

- A. You prove that you are not ashamed to identify with Christ or His people. (*Mark 3:38*)
- B. You stop being an independent Christian. (*Matt. 18:15-17*)
- C. You participate in a stronger, more unified effort of God’s people.
- D. You have a greater opportunity to use your spiritual gifts. (*I Cor. 12:4-11*)
- E. You openly demonstrate the reality of the body of Christ. (*I Cor. 12:27*)
- F. You participate in a more balanced ministry. (*Eph. 4:11-16*)
- G. You demonstrate your commitment “to the proper working of each individual part.” (*Eph. 4:16*)
- H. You encourage new believers to commit to the local body of Christ. (*Hebrews 10:24-25*)
- I. You encourage a ministry when you consider it faithful and join it. (*Heb. 10:25*)