

Church Membership Pt. 3

Ephesians 3:4 – 7

I. Intro

A. READ Ephesians 3:4 – 7

B. ASK: How does this passage relate to church membership? All believers *servants* of the Gospel; all believers – the body of Christ (the church)

C. Comments on statement from book: *The strange thing about church membership is that you actually give up your preferences when you join;*
ASK – What does that say to you?

D. Chapter entitled: *I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires;* other words – my church membership is not about me

E. Jesus to His 12 disciples: Mark 9:35 (NIV)

³⁵ ... "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

F. Later argue over who will be greater in God's kingdom

II. Servant in Scripture

A. Word *servant* occurs 57 times in NT; word *serve* occurs 58 times

B. ASK: Does being *last of all* and *servant of all* sound like most church members?

C. Refer v. 7: To be a servant a gift; especially, servant of the Gospel

D. FACT: You'll never be happy in any church when seeking to have things YOUR way; Ironically, we find the greatest joy when we choose to be last – when we choose to give up our rights and preferences and serve everyone else

III. Survey of Self-focused Churches

A. 10 dominant behaviors of inward focused church

i. **1** – Worship wars: one group demanding certain style music; order of service set in stone; certain instruments required, others prohibited

ii. **2** – Prolonged, insignificant and meaningless meetings: inordinate amount of time spent in meetings; Great Commission and Great Commandment rarely topics of discussion

iii. **3** – Facility focused: highest priority in church is protection and preservation of rooms, furniture, other visible parts of church's décor, buildings and grounds

iv. **4** – Program driven: at times doing ministry certain way can take on programmatic status; program becomes an end instead of means to greater ministry; programs that have no benefit on salvation of people

v. **5** – Inward focused budget: disproportionate share of budget used to

meet needs and comforts of church members instead of reaching beyond the walls of the church

- vi. **6** – Inordinate demands for pastoral care: all members deserve care and concern, especially in times of need or crisis; but problem is when members have unreasonable expectations for even minor matters; even includes expectation of regular pastoral visit just because person is church member (not include homebound)
- vii. **7** – Attitude of entitlement: one of demanding and having a sense of deserving special treatment – due to length of time being a member or amount of money being given to church, etc.
- viii. **8** – Greater concern over change, or not changing, than the sharing of the Gospel: more passion expressed over a change taking place than over the spread and work of the Gospel for changing lives
- ix. **9** – Anger and hostility: consistent anger; commonly heard/expressed hostility toward church staff or other members
- x. **10** – Evangelistic apathy: Few members sharing their faith on regular basis; more concerned about their own needs than eternal needs of others in community and world

B. Biblical church membership is about servant-hood; being *last of all* and *servant of all*

IV. The Christ-like Church Member

A. READ **Philippians 2:5 – 11**

B. ASK: From passage, what characteristics would describe a Christ-like church member?

- i. **1** – Our relationship with Christ, part of body of Christ not to be used for our own advantage
- ii. **2** – Emptying ourselves of pride, selfishness and taking on the *nature of a servant*
- iii. **3** – Humility
- iv. **4** – Obedience; no matter the cost, *obedient to death*, sacrifice – *even death on a cross*

C. ASK: For a Christ-like church member, what does v. 5 say?

D. Famous line for JFK inaugural address: *Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country*; Same true for church membership – ask not what your church can do for you, but what you can do for your church

E. ASK: Church membership is all about what? It's not about what?

V. Close

A. Questions and Pledge

B. Next week – praying for church leaders

Church Membership – Pt. 3

Pledge and Questions

Pledge 3:

I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires. That is self-serving. I am a member in this church to serve others and to serve Christ. My Savior went to a cross for me. I can deal with any inconveniences and matters that just aren't my preference or style.

Will you commit this pledge to yourself, your church, and your Lord today?

Questions:

- 1. Show from key Bible verses the difference between church membership and country club membership from the perspective of personal preferences and desires. Of course, the Bible doesn't speak of country club membership, so you will need to assume the benefits of belonging to one.**
- 2. Find and explain key passages in the Bible that talk about Christians being like servants. How would you describe a servant as it applies to being a member of a church?**
- 3. Why do many churches have “worship wars”? What does that have to do with the right or wrong attitude about church membership?**
- 4. Describe someone in your church that best fits the description of having the mind of Christ and a servant attitude. Find key New Testament passages that would fit him or her.**
- 5. Go verse by verse through Philippians 2:5 – 11. Explain how the attitude of Christ in each verse becomes a pattern for us as church members.**