

## We Believe: Church Article #10 “We believe in the local church” Community Group Questions

1. How has your upbringing impacted your view of church?
2. How are you currently serving in the church?
3. What would you like to see our church do to further impact the community?
4. How does it make you feel to know the church is important to Jesus?

When I say the word “church” it may mean different things to different people. Maybe you grew up in an environment in which church was something you were forced to do and did not understand why.

For the first 11-12 years of my life I was brought up going to church, my grandfather was Italian and Catholic and that is how he brought up my mom and uncle and that is how he demanded that they brought their children up.

We went to church every Sunday and we dared not miss. Two times that really stuck out. The first I was 5 or 6 and my mom and brother left without me for church

The second time that is burned in my memory is we all missed church Portuguese Mass (tell story) and my mom saying “it doesn’t matter as long as we are here”

Needless to say I struggled to understand why God would require something like this, it was boring and not fun.

At 12 years old my Grandfather died and we never went to church again. I was happy that we did not have to go to church anymore but what I failed to realize, probably because I was never taught...why

church was important. Many people in our culture do not see church as important.

What I would like to do today is find out why the church should be important to us, why we are important to the church, why the church is important to the community and why the church is important to Jesus

First what is “The Church”- Church is the universal body of believers or more plainly all those that believe in Jesus as their Savior. The Local Church is the voluntary gathering of believers in a community, equal in rank under the Word of God.

***Why should the church be important to me? \*Hebrews 10:24-25 -Assists Spiritual Growth*** (Discipleship)-the church assists us in our spiritual growth. The more we grow the more we truly become followers or disciples of Jesus. The church does not have corner on the market of Biblical teaching but when a local church is established we can know for sure what that church believes and why it believes those things by its “Articles of Faith”

This should be important to every believer because every Christian should want to grow spiritually. And the way we grow is challenging what we know and how we are living.

*Someone once said “If it does not challenge you it will not change you”*

Another reason the church should be important to us is...

**-Meet Other Christians** (Fellowship) Church is a place in which we meet other like-minded people with the same worldview. Not only do we meet them, we befriend them and get involved in their lives. When that happens we have opportunities to learn from them, encourage them and practice the one another passages that I spoke about a few weeks ago. You can meet people by attending worship services,

volunteering for service opportunities, joining a Bible study or community group.

*Charles Haddon Spurgeon said "Some Christians try to go to heaven alone, in solitude. But believers are not compared to bears or lions or other animals that wander alone. Those who belong to Christ are sheep in this respect, that they love to get together. Sheep go in flocks, and so do God's people."*

The final reason church should be important to us is...

**-Worship**-expressing gratitude...when we say "I am going to church" we really are referring to going to worship. And as Christians worship should be important to us...singing praises, hearing the Word, prayer and communion.

Do you have a problem with worship? Maybe you get distracted by things you do not like or things that bother you. Or maybe you are not into the style of music etc. If you have some problems with worshipping listen to this quote from

*Henry Ward Beecher said "I never knew how to worship until I knew how to love"*

When you come to worship think about how much you love the Lord and then you will be able to worship Him better.

Which brings us to our next question...

***Why I am important to the church? \*1 Corinthians 12:14-20***

**-Serve the body** (service)

The truth is we all need each other. You may be asking why can't Jesus accomplish what He wants without me or us? He can, but he chooses not to because He wants us to learn to work together as one body with Him as the head.

The Holy Spirit gives each believer spiritual gifts to use for service in the church to further God kingdom. He leads you to a local church to use those gifts. When we all use are gifts, Jesus is glorified and His purposes are accomplished in our church and it impacts our community. Which brings us to our next question...

***Why is the church important to the community? \*Matthew 5:13-16***

**-Salt** –preservative and makes things taste better.

As Christians we should stand up for righteousness and justice, we should be people others want to be around and make life better for others. There is line that we as Christians should be careful not to cross...Have you ever put too much salt on something? (talk a bit)

**-Light** – illuminates. We should be bringing the truth about who God is and what He has done. GOSPEL

As a part of this church not only are you constantly encouraged to be sharing your faith with those around you but we also give you opportunities to do that along with us. How? Getting involved in evangelistic ministries...NIB

It is interesting because the more importance the church places on the community outside the church the healthier the church becomes.

Why? Because God did not call the church to be inward focused...the Great Commission says “Go” and Jesus knows when we “Go” we share the mission together.

***Why is the church important to Jesus? \*Ephesians 5:25-27***

**-We are His people-** Although this passage is talking about marriage it is using Christ’s death on cross as the ultimate example of love and reminding us that we are His people and He loves His people

The Scriptures refer to the church as the “Bride of Jesus”

Most people understand that the bride is pretty important to marriage and think about this...how important is the bride in a wedding celebration?

We are important to the kingdom of God and one day we will be at the great marriage feast as the Bride of Christ.

When we celebrate communion we are looking to that day...*"we proclaim His death until He comes again"*