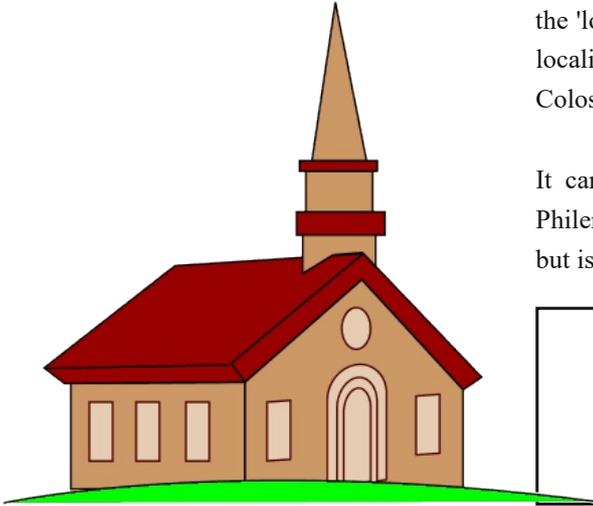


MY PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP

Study 14 The Local Church



We have been considering the concept of the 'universal church.' But what is the 'local church'? The local church is the **visible expression**, in any given locality, of the universal church. (See 1 Corinthians 1:2, Acts 11:22, Colossians 4:16)

It can be big. (See Acts 4:4) It can be small. (See Romans 16:5 and Philemon 2) The local church is a miniature version of the universal 'body' but is a true church in exactly the same way. Write out Matthew 18:20.

DOES GOING TO CHURCH MATTER?

We have seen that the 'church' is an invisible unity of all Christians. Since this is so, should we not bother going to our own church, but just consider ourselves to belong to the overall 'body' instead? See how glad David was when he thought about going up to the house of the Lord. (Psalm 122:1)

We used Hebrews 10:25 in study three but please write it again in the bottom box:

Yes, you should belong to a local church and support it enthusiastically, however here are a few cautions:



Avoid any church which claims to be the **only** true church. They are possibly a cult - a false religion.



Avoid a church that thinks that it doesn't need other members of 'the body.' It suffers from a spirit of elitism, and is conceited.



Don't be poisoned by people who are critical of all churches and try to tell you that you shouldn't belong to any. They are probably bitter from a past experience, or ambitious and trying to start their own religion.

WHY I LOVE MY LOCAL CHURCH

Within most communities we will find Christian assemblies meeting in various buildings, and having different styles of worship and different methods of church government. You may have friends who go to a different fellowship than you do. You don't respect them any less! But why do you love your own local church? Write down some of the reasons why you love your church.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHURCH

So which is the right church? The right church is the church in your locality which does these things. List them from Acts 2:41-42

- 1/ _____ 2/ _____
3/ _____ 4/ _____
5/ _____

You belong to the universal church - the body of Christ. **But also** you belong to your own local church.

I'm glad to belong to the 'body of Christ'!

I'm glad to belong to ...

_____ too!
(Fill in the name of your church here)

More studies (and answers) here:
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