

GROWING UP IN GOD'S FAMILY

The Church: Who Needs It?
Matthew 16:18; Romans 12:4–13



LET'S BEGIN HERE

As we enter adulthood in our faith, one of the most significant realizations to dawn upon us is a healthy understanding of and appreciation for the church. Most go through real battles in coming to this conclusion. The church, during our growing up years, suffers the brunt of our criticism and the bulk of our complaints. We go through periods where we ignore the church and resent the church on one hand; then on the other hand, we go to the extreme of virtually worshiping the church. In this message, we want to come to terms with the role of the church, its importance in our lives, some of the major reasons for its effectiveness, and why Christ established it in the first place.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. People's Comments about the Church

- Identity—how people “see” the church and its role
- Criticism—disappointment and/or disagreement
- Expectation—what it should/could do

The *ekklesia* is . . .

- Universal: organism, worldwide, invisible

- Local: organization, local, visible



Quotable

*It is an error when
believers think
they need to be
“members” only of
the universal— not
the local— church.
It's both.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. Christ's Statement on the Church

Matthew 16:18: "I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."

- The project is Christ's.
- The church belongs to Him.
- It *will* survive, regardless.

3. Paul's Commitment to the Church

- Romans: healthy relationships
- 1 Corinthians: unity and compassion
- 2 Corinthians: generous financial involvement
- Galatians: liberty, love, service
- Ephesians: prayer
- Philippians: servanthood
- Colossians: gratitude, forgiveness, grace
- 1 Thessalonians: moral purity



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LET'S LIVE IT

Why do you go to church? As you consider your reasons, compare them with some of the main points of the message, and if necessary, reevaluate your motives for being involved in your local church.

How can you make going to church more meaningful for yourself and your family?

Our Involvement in the Church Membership Expectations

How easy it is to think of one's church involvement as a passive relationship . . . a once-a-week activity that requires little more than a slight passing interest. On the contrary, becoming a member of this local church carries with it certain expectations that dare not be diminished. As we consider the areas of greatest significance, no less than eight expectations are important enough to mention.

Each member of this local church body is expected to:

1. Assume responsibility for his or her own spiritual nourishment through personal and corporate Bible study and prayer
2. Participate in the weekly worship services on a regular basis
3. Join the family life of the church in a congregational and / or small group context
4. Exercise his or her spiritual gifts in specific areas of involvement
5. Support the variety of ministries of the church through prayer and service
6. Contribute financially to the church in a consistent, generous manner
7. Share his or her faith personally while supporting others who proclaim the gospel around the world
8. Respond positively to the leadership in matters of church policy and discipline

By maintaining these expectations, our lives can be sufficiently nurtured, our church will remain a vital force in this world, and our God will be glorified.



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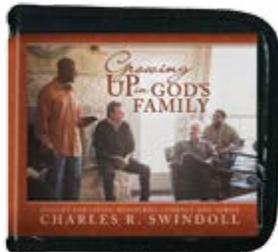
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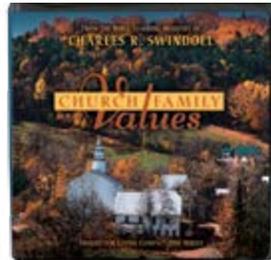
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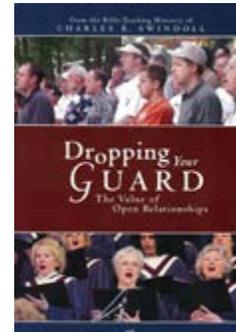
Tools for Digging Deeper



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