



The Examiners

Examining the Scripture daily to see whether these things were so...Acts 17:11

Selecting Your Church

Vol. 4 No. 2

December 2010

How Does A Christian Choose A Local Church?

The Word of God has always been and must always be our norm and standard for decision making. Our decisions must be made upon the basis of the Word of God not the basis of convenience, temporal benefits, connections, associates, family, attachment, involvement, fame, status or position of leadership it offers to you.

Some precaution in selecting a local church:

- Never choose a local church because of what it can give (Rev. 3:17) other than Bible doctrine.
- Never choose a local church that communicates, flattering and ear-tickling messages.
- Never choose a local church that boost human power, intelligence, resources, abilities and talents.
- Never choose a local church by its friendly atmospheric environment.
- Never choose a church because your friends, family members go there.
- Never choose a local church because you appreciate and idolize some personalities.
- Never choose a church that makes you feel like an important member of the family.
- Never choose a local church because some respectable families have been attending for years.
- Never choose a local church because of tradition or sentimental motivation.
- Never choose a local church because you follow the leader of your family.
- Never choose a church because it offers a good program for everyone.

- Never choose a church where your vision and dreams might be fulfilled.
- Never choose a church that brags about its ministries and programs.
- Never choose a church that claimed it knows the purpose for your life when actually they are not systematically studying the Scripture daily.

Consider how they view the authority of the Word of God:

- Does the local church stay true to all the central doctrines of the Christian faith?
- Does the church believe in the historical faith passed down by the apostles given to us through our forefathers?
- Does the church accept the inherent, infallible teaching of the Word of God?
- Does the church believe that all Scripture is God-breathed?
- Does the church believe in the absolute authority of the Bible in all matters related to spiritual life?
- Does the church believe that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20-21)?
- Does the church proclaim pure Bible doctrine apart from man-made doctrines (Isaiah 8:20, Proverbs 30:5-6)?
- Does the church communicate the Word of God based on its original languages (Hebrew and Greek).
- Does the church teach the Word of God using the Isagogic, categorical, and exegetical approaches of study?
- Does the church meet daily for doctrinal studies rather than for fellowship?
- Does the church uphold the Word of God as the absolute authority in all matters of decision and practices?
- Does the church acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the true mentor- teacher?

Consider the church emphasis:

- Does the church focus on Christ and the objective Word of God?
- Does the church put so much weight on the importance of Bible doctrine rather than on their programs, activities, and ministries?
- Does the church prioritize on teaching doctrine rather than in music, drama, fellowship or what they called worship?
- Does the church spend more time in teaching the Word of God than in any programs or activities?
- Does the church encourage endurance in studying the Word of God rather than perseverance in sacrifices?

Consider the church norms and standards for decision making:

- Does the church decide on the basis of biblical norms and standards and not on popularity vote?
- Does the church reject the concepts of corporate system of decision making?
- Does the church reject political system of voting or electing officers?
- Does the church follow the world system of management and leadership?
- Does the Word of God rule in all matters of church authority?

Consider the pastor ministerial training:

- Does the pastor equip himself with spiritual preparation before God in doctrinal study using the Isagogic, categorical and exegetical approach (2 Tim 2:15, Col 1:10, Phi 1:9-10, 20-21, Eph 3:16-19)?
- Does the pastor present himself approved unto God who accurately handle the Word of God (In 2 Tim 2:15)?
- Does the pastor continue to increase his knowledge of Bible doctrine (Col 1:10) while progressively and systematically feeding the congregation.
- Does the pastor operate base in virtue love and continue to do exceedingly by means of metabolized doctrine to spiritual discernment (Phil. 1:9-10)?
- Does the pastor meet the requirement for a spiritually mature believer, skillful in the Word of God, and able to communicate Bible doctrine effectively? (Spiritual maturity

is defined by the amount of Bible doctrine in the soul of the believer, not by number of years in the local church.)

- Does the pastor diligently study and teach the Word of God on daily basis?

Consider the pastor-teacher ministry:

- Does the pastor teacher preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) in season and out of season, (2 Tim 4:2)?
- Does the pastor reprove, rebuke, exhort with divine, delegated, legitimate authority, (2 Tim 4:2)?
- Does the pastor communicate doctrine with authority, without fearing some big icons in the assembly?
- Does the pastor let his statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; (Mat 5:37). He should not be wavering in his communication of doctrine or fearful of the congregation's reaction?
- Does the pastor message lose its sting because he's a coward in the sense that he is not willing to declare the whole counsel of God?
- Does the pastor teach doctrines that are not ordained by God for the Church Age such as officiating wedding, tithing, conducting dedication services, and funeral services?
- Does the teaching of the church result to dependency on God rather than in man?

Consider the music ministry of the church:

- Does the church's concern more with its musician's talent than spirituality?
- Does the church train the singer in Bible doctrine more than in singing?
- Does the church involve itself in entertaining rather than imparting Bible doctrine to the congregation?
- Does the church emphasize that Christians should love the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God more than music?
- Does the church worship center on teaching the Word of God and not in music?
- Does the church sing songs that are doctrinally corrupted and heretical?
- Does the church sing songs that minister to the souls and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and not exalt the emotion?

- Does the church spend more than in the Word of God daily rather than in music?
- Does the church pay attention to the lyrics of the hymns and songs rather than in rhythm or melody?

Consider the church structure:

- Does the pastor serve as the chief administrator and communicator of Bible doctrine (Eph 4:11-16, Titus 1:5,7)
- Does the church have an executive body that governs and rules the church?
- Does the church operate with deacons that function rather than rules (1 Tim 3:8-13, Act 6:1-6, Phi 1:1).
- Does the church practice the delegated authority of pastor to deacons?
- Does the church produce an atmosphere where people know that God loves them in adversity, tribulation, persecution, as well as when they sin?
- Does the church teach the Word of God in a loving atmosphere so that everyone experiences that God loves each individual with the same kind of love?
- Do the church members love each other with unconditional love?
- Do the members who belong to God's royal family love one another with God's unconditional love or are they petty, indifferent, judgmental, resentful and reactionary?
- While they practice this beautiful love of God, does the ministry also take a stand against sin, and unrighteousness?
- Do they live by the conviction that Christians are ministers of grace and love?
- Does the ministry teach that faith is the only way to please God?
- Does the local church practice the importance of being members of the body of Christ, (1 Corinthians 12:12-14)?
- Do the believers in the church lay down their lives to bare one another's burden fulfilling the law of love, (Gal 6:2, 1 John 3:14).
- Do they practice divine order of grace in church discipline not imposing rigid legalistic manmade taboos and regulation?
- Does the ministry teach that Christian should mine their own business?
- Does the ministry train, prepare, and exercise the believers to become winners in

the Angelic Conflict and not clowns in the cosmic system?

- Do they practice accepting an accusation only when there are two or three witnesses, (Deut 19:15)?
- Do they totally forgive and forget? What happens if the person repents?
- Divine forgiveness always forgives and forgets, (Mat 6:12, Eph 4:32, Col 3:13).
- Do they love one another impersonally, without condition and string attach?
- Do they make a practice of repeating a matter to others, Proverbs 17:9 (gossiping and rumors mongering)
- Does the church set some legalistic restrictions that are outside the policy of grace?
- Do they practice what they preach?
- Do they live by grace orientation and doctrinal orientation?

Consider the principle of the vision and the goals of the local assembly.

- Do they have a vision in word only or in power of application?
- Does that local ministry seek God's kingdom first, (Mat 6:33), or do they seek to build luxurious edifices with diverse programs?
- Are they after people for themselves or are they after people for God? Do they use people or do they love people?

These points on how to choose a local church are provided in order to make a mature choice before God. Just as the wrong choice for a partner produces an unhappy marriage, a wrong choice of church produces miserable Christians.

The local church should have categorical doctrine, but it should also dogmatically believe that Christ has finished the work of redemption forever, (John 19:30), and that we cannot do anything to add to that.

A ministry that doesn't understand the nature of God and His workings of grace cannot express impersonal unconditional love to its members. The work of salvation is by grace alone, grace plus nothing, (Rom 11:6), we receive grace for salvation, (Eph 2:8-9), and we receive grace for growing in (2

Peter 3:18). We are saved by grace and we grow by grace of God. The spiritual death of Christ on the cross is the price for our spiritual birth. The price of our spiritual growth is our death daily to self. To pick up your cross daily is to live your spiritual life in the light of God's grace inside the predesigned plan of God.

Whenever a church adds works to grace, its people inevitably become involved in other systems that are not from God, such as legalism, status symbols, and religious works, all of which will characterize the ministry of Satan and not of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another principle that is relevant in choosing a local assembly involves the practical application of the whole counsel of God. When choosing a local assembly, be on the alert!

Learn to detect false teaching by applying the Word of God to every aspect of life within the Church. The most fundamental belief in Christianity is the unlimited atonement and eternal security. We are eternally secure as believers in Christ's Finished Work on the cross.

Yet many churches deny the principle of the unlimited atonement and eternal security, and by doing so directly attack the nature of God. Make it a point to find out if the church believes in eternal security. If it does not, it cannot reveal God's character, and it a result, it will destroy your capacity to think and live with God. Eternal security must be understood from the standpoint of practical application and daily operation of truth. Anyone who does not believe in eternal security will inevitably put other people under bondage.

The wrong choice for a church may produce a limited, ignorant or an unhappy Christian life, and lost of all blessing in time and eternity. A genuine but lukewarm (those without Bible doctrine) Christian church can only produce loser believers.

There will never be a "perfect church" because we are all sinners, but we must learn to repent and recover when we fail. All churches have defects; all have flaws in some areas.

The local church, which is growing in these areas, striving to return to the right point of reference by rebound and returning to the infallible Word of God, is a local church on the right path.

The local church must point to a daily cross, if it doesn't, it is the wrong church. A local church isn't perfect, but it better start out with the Finished Work message and keeps on that road.

The congregation should never idolize the pastor-teacher, nor put him before the Lord. At the same time, they should realize that he has been gifted by the Lord to help further that church in its spiritual growth. The Word of God that he preaches needs to be received as the Word of God.

Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will lead those seeking the right local church into "all truth" and that He will guide them to the right decision.

Learn to evaluate.

- Evaluate yourself if you are in the faith.
- Evaluate your spirituality.
- Evaluate your work.
- Evaluate your doctrine, or teaching.
- Evaluate your priority.
- Evaluate your local church.
- Evaluate everything.

Many will lose their reward at the Bema Seat, because they haven't chosen the right pastor-teacher and the right local assembly, simply because they did not care. Spiritual passiveness and ignorance is costly!

Believers are challenged not to waste their time in endless church activities and church programs, but instead to get soak on Bible doctrine. Over-active believers will crack when the tension comes. Soaking on Bible doctrine is getting rooted and grounded in the Word of God providing the believers divine problem solving devices.

