

Already a Member of Christ's Church?

Hold Fast The Pattern!

The Holy Spirit commanded through Paul, "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). Obviously, God says there is a pattern that we must hold to. In this brief article, let us consider the pattern for the work of the church.

EVANGELISM & EDIFICATION - God's word states that the mission of the church is to be the "pillar & support of the Truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The New Testament shows how the church sent out preachers who they supported directly (Phil. 4:15, etc). Evangelists are also shown to be working at congregations for extended periods of time building up the saints (Acts 19:8, 10; etc). So, direct support of preachers from individual congregations is Biblical.

But not one verse shows a missionary society, preacher training school, or such like supported by churches. Nor is there even one example of churches giving "through" another church (sponsoring church arrangement). Simply, the local "flock" is the largest "evangelism organization" God gave for his people (1 Pet. 5:1-2; Acts 14:23). Also, what better organization can be created to train preachers & elders? Do we think we can do better than God? How can we think to add to God's word (Rev. 22:18-19)?

Also, since the work of the church is to support Truth - how can we focus on social / entertainment activities? For example, many

congregations have pot lucks & other meals on the church grounds. This practice has gone so far today as to produce "fellowship halls" that are primarily meal halls / cafeterias.

When the Corinthian brethren had turned the Lord's Supper into a self-serving social meal, he did more than just correct their bad attitudes. He went so far as to say, "If any many is hungry let him eat at home..." (1 Cor. 11:34). Paul clearly told them to make a distinction between what they came together to do as a church (11:20) and what they did for their own sustenance. Yet, so many today are involved in social & entertainment practices. What ever happened to: "Let the church be the church and let the home be the home"? We can provide every kind of meal & acceptable entertainment that we want as individuals; but this is not what the church is about!

Why exactly did Jesus die? For food & fun? For coffee & donuts, parties & whatever else? Or did He die for spiritual reasons? As it is written, "...For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). So, what should the church be involved & focus on?

Also, anytime we shift our emphasis from supporting truth to social events, it creates false concepts. For example, modern "fellowship halls" contradict the Bible use of the word fellowship. In the N.T., the fellowship of Christians is always participation & sharing in truth (1 John 1:3, 6; 1 Cor. 1:9, 1:5; etc.). But modern "fellowship" is secular & social. When people invite you to "fellowship" today, your initial reaction may be to salivate or you tummy will rumble. But Biblical fellowship is "in the furtherance of the gospel" (Phil. 1:5), not the appetite.

LIMITED BENEVOLENCE - The pattern of Truth also addresses deeds of charity. As individuals we are to care for widows & orphans

(Jas. 1:27) and for all men (Gal. 6:10) as we have opportunity. The Bible enjoins upon us personal responsibility here. We cannot pay someone else to do what we should be doing ourselves.

The local church, though, is more limited by God in how it may extend benevolence. As individuals we can give to anyone, but 1 Timothy 5 shows that not all widows may be supported by the church. This chapter gives the following requirements: (1) A widow must first look to family for support (5:4), (2) If she has no family to turn to, then she must be a true Christian (5:5), at least 60 years old (5:9), proven to be faithful (5:9-10). Younger widows are specifically to be refused (5:11), because they will face certain temptations (5:12-13) and have alternate means of supporting themselves (5:14). These rules are specifically for the purpose of "let not the church be burdened" (5:16). The church can help saints who are widows indeed, while others are excluded.

Could we rightly say Paul hated widows? Could we call Paul an "anti"? It would be nothing but a lie & slander to do so, for personal responsibility is clearly taught in passages like this. The pattern is consistently that the church's primary work is spiritual, though it can help saints who are genuinely in need when all other avenues of help have been tried first.

It is terrible that bias & division exist anywhere. Jesus prayed that His people would be one (John 17). It is also a shame that many are drifting from the secure foundation of Truth into the social gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). Thus, we invite you & plead with you to seize this day of opportunity. We will gladly sit down & discuss any questions you may have. And in all things we will "Speak as the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent" (1 Pet. 4:11).

Already Attend a Church?



What about those who say...

"I already attend a Church"

"I am already saved"

Jesus diligently sought people to teach & study with (Lk. 19:10). Jesus sent out 70 disciples to teach & study with people in the "limited commission" (Luke 10:1). Then, He sent the disciples out to the whole world in the "great commission" (Mt. 28:19). Jesus was not just the Savior, but also the Teacher.

"And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth. And as ye enter into the house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matt. 10:11-14)

Jesus told his followers to seek out people to talk with who were worthy. Yet, the loving Savior also knew that some would turn down the offer of peace. Some would not receive His disciples, nor the words they brought in His name. Jesus

pronounced judgment against such people.

Furthermore, when Jesus built His church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28), was its design & purpose to hinder teaching & study of the Truth (1 Tim. 3:15)? Can you even imagine Christ living to teach people, dying to save them, then creating His church to oppose and discourage the study of His word? That would make no sense at all. So, dear neighbor, why do many use church affiliations as a reason not to study? "I already have my church" is said in order to turn down the invitation to study God's word. Why turn down such an opportunity?

Friends, we invite you to follow in Jesus' footsteps. We invite you to study the word of God. Let us learn from its light, submit to its glorious wisdom & unite upon its heavenly truth.

What Is The Plan of Salvation According To God?

Hear (Rom 10:17).

Believe (Heb. 11:6).

Repent (Luke 13:3).

Confess (Rom. 10:10).

Be Baptized (Acts 2:38).

Live Faithfully (Rev 2:10).



Come study the word of God!

***Come worship as Christians did
in the first century!***

***Honor & glorify God in the way He
says to honor & glorify Him!***

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Times of Assembly

Sunday Bible Study 9 am

Sunday Morning Worship 10 am

Sunday Evening Worship 6 pm

Wednesday Bible Study 7 pm

