

Attitudes towards the Church

Scripture reading: Colossians 1:9-12

I read a story of the summer resort. Among the thousands of tourists swarms of young people walk both the beaches and streets in their bare feet. Because bare feet track sand and dirt throughout the local stores, merchants put up signs reading, “No shoes, no admission.”, “No shoes, no shirt, no service.” however, there is one store with a sign that reads, “Bare feet welcome!” That sign hangs in the door front of the local sandal maker. He loves bare feet because every set of bare feet presents not a problem, but a possibility, an opportunity, a potential sale. He is the one store that wants what no other store wants—bare feet.

Every church puts up a sign on their front lawn. But I often wonder: what other signs do we put up here at **Sumner Christian Fellowship**? Those invisible signs that quickly become visible to newcomers, outsiders and even those on the fringes of our church.

Some churches have invisible signs that say, “If you have a different skin color you are not welcome here,” or “If you don’t drive a certain kind of car or live in a certain neighborhood, you are not welcome here,” or

“People with problems not wanted here,” or “No trespassing by strangers—violators will be ignored.”

But there are also other invisible signs that say just the opposite, “**You are wanted here,**” and “**We are glad you came,**” “**This place is filled with friends you just haven’t met yet,**” and “**This is an exciting place to be because God is doing some awesome things.**” Whether we know it or not, we are sending out signals to our community. You may recall that 93% of communication is non-verbal while only 7% is in words. That’s why St. Francis of Assisi once said, “**Preach the gospel at all times and, if necessary, use words.**” A more contemporary version of this quote would be, “**I can’t hear what you are saying because your actions are drowning out your words.**”

Who is the church in our mind: the church is the bride of Christ, He died for her, and He is in love with her.

Jesus said, “**I will build my church**” (Matthew 16:18). The church is important to him—he loved it so much that he gave his life for it (Ephesians 5:25). If we have the mind of Christ, we will love the church, too, and give ourselves to it.

A local congregation can give us a sense of belonging, of being involved with other believers. It can give us some spiritual safety, so that we are

not blown around by strange ideas. A congregation can give us friendship, fellowship and encouragement. It can teach us things we would never learn on our own. A congregation can help train our children, help us work together for more effective ministry and give us opportunities to serve that help us grow in ways we did not expect. In general, the value that we get out of a local congregation is in proportion to the amount of involvement we give to it.

No one owns the church

The church belong to Jesus, and no one can say this is my church, the only thing we can say I am a member of the local church. O Boy bear with me please

To be a Church member is to acknowledge our allegiance to God as He is made known to us in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. This act symbolizes the conviction that we want our character and conduct to be Christ-like. It is our way of "being counted" with those who are committed to build a more Christian community.

To be a Church member is to enter a concerned fellowship. Growth in Christian understanding, the sharing of each other's burdens and joys, and the service of others in Christ's spirit – these are all part of a living fellowship of those who follow Christ - and care.

To be a Church member is to give strength and encouragement to others through common worship, prayer, study, and service. Each adds his talent or time or money or prayers to the total work of the Church. Each ministers to the needs of all. There is inspiration in example, and joy in team work for a sacred cause.

To be a Church member is to put the ideals and love of Christ in practice in our lives, our homes, and our daily work.

- Our relationships with other people should be deeper and finer;
- we should be gladdened by goodness;
- we should be happy when others succeed;
- and we should rejoice in the triumph of right because we are members of Christ's fellowship

To be a Church member is to find forgiveness, strength for life's tasks, and assurance of a destiny worth desiring. It is to know oneself a child of the living God! If you are now a member, let these words reawaken in you the desire to serve the Master more sincerely.

If you are not a member - why not make this a call for re-consecration to the family of God?

Our duty to understand who and what the church is?

1. Our need to understand that the church is built upon this one truth: **Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God.**

Listen to this question Jesus Asked “Who do people say the son of Man is” vv13-14

The second question, “but what about you, who do you say I am”

- † Jesus is the Christ, the messiah, the anointed one of God.
- † Jesus is the son of God and fully God. He is of the same being, the same essence as God. Jesus Christ is one with the father, possessing the very same nature of perfection.
- † Jesus is the son of the living God. He is the very source and being of life. He possesses the energy and power of life within himself
- † Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ, is the foundation of the church. Which represent our faith in HIM.

Jesus said:

- † Fact 1 “My church” the church is Christ’s not mans
- † Fact 2 “I will build.” Christ builds the church
- † Fact 3 “The gates of hell shall not prevail” Christ himself will protect the church.

2. We should Always remember What the church is, **the seven**

Pictures God Uses to Describe His Church:

- a. **The church is pictured as a new nation** Ephesians 2:19 “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”

- b. **The church is pictured as a family of God** Eph 2:19. Jesus Christ has brought you and other believers into the family of God. This involves the wonderful privilege of adoption. You have been adopted as a true son or daughter of God. You now live in the same house with God and his family and all the experiences of God's family are now available to you love, care, compassion, help, provision, protection, guidance, training, fellowship, friendship, spiritual bond and unity.
- c. **The church is pictured of God's building** Eph 2:20 “**having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone**” believers are pictured as the building stones being used to construct a building for God. Jesus himself is the chief cornerstone. You and I are the stones that are placed upon the cornerstone of Christ and held up by himself. As the chief cornerstone Jesus is the support and foundation of God's new building, the church. In Christ is the only true foundation upon which you can build your life.
- d. **Church is pictured as a body or growing organism** Eph 2:21 “**in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord**”. The church is pictured as a union of

various parts of the living being of a growing dynamic body. This may seem strange to speak of the building in the biological terms, a building that grows. The point is simply this more and more parts (believers) are brought in and placed into the building as each day passes.

- e. **Church is pictured as a whole world Temple** as the universal Church Eph 2:21 “in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord”. Note the words whole building. All believers make up the holy temple of God and are pictured as a building, And a universal Church being structured for God's presence.

It is God that structures the church it is not our responsibility as members of this church structure it or to decide its future.

- f. **The church is pictured as a local Temple** the local church Eph 2:22, note the word you now uses the word you and referring to the Ephesians church

Church is to allow the spirit of God to live out his life through the ministry of the local body of believers. The Holy Spirit dwells within all believers to help them when they are: troubled all confused, suffering or dying, fearful or doubtful, weary or complacent, discouraged or dispirited, witnessing,

teaching or preaching, and ministry. We believers are assemble together by the spirit of God who dwells within us.

g. **The church is pictured as the bride** of Christ, Eph 5:25-27.

Christ loves the church with a perfect love, loves the church for more than any husband or wife could ever love the other. Just think the relationship Christ once with you is to be closer than that between husband and wife. For this reason Christ gold the church his bride.