

Disciple - Committed to and Supporting the Local Church

Acts 2:42-47

- Integrity lived out.
 - I recently have been looking for a new vehicle. I had a salesperson that had the same vehicle. He knew his product well. One thing I like is if a person is selling something that they have and use this product as well.
 - If someone is selling a ford but driving a chevy something is wrong.
 - One of the definitions of integrity is when what you say and what you do line up.
 - In the case of the salesperson when they say they love Jeep and are driving a Jeep then things line up. What they say and the way they live are the same.
 - The person believes in the product.
 - Discipleship series – one of the reasons I like this series we are going over is because we are reviewing the qualities of a disciple.
 - Each week we have a chance to stop and evaluate our lives. We need to see what we believe/ what we say is lining up with how we live.
 - What is one change you can do each week to line yourself up with scripture?
 - Church
 - Today we are going over a basic topic – the church. I don't want to see if you believe what the Bible believes. I want to see if you are living what the Bible believes.
 - Not only are we talking about church, but we are talking about being a disciple. The question one needs to ask is: does one need to be part of a local church to be a disciple of Christ.
 - Is it okay to miss church whenever you feel like it?
 - 63% of Americans claim to be Christians however church attendance is at an all time low. Meaning most people believe they can.
 - Christians are asking do I need to go to church to be a Christian.
 - Will you marry me? Do I have to move in with you? How often do I have to be with you. That is how we get into commitment with Jesus.
- The Church a Gathering or Community
 - Ekklesia (Greek) - gathering or assembly of believers
 - The church isn't a building, the church isn't you or me by ourselves it is us when we are together.
 - We are made for community
 - Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."
 - Hold up. It's not good for man to be alone? He's not alone. He's with God! He's with the animals in a perfect world.
 - The first NT community
 - **Acts 2:38** Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - **Verse 41** Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.
 - Peter preached the very first sermon of the New Testament church. He called his listeners to repent, to be baptized, and to receive the Holy Spirit. All who responded were then added to the local body of believers- called the church.

- If you say I'm part of the church you are saying you are part of the gathering. If you say you are part of the church but you don't gather is a contradiction.
- The Lone Ranger Mentality
 - Our heroes are strong and self-sufficient, they tend to walk alone.
 - Almost every superhero movie is about this one person, by themselves. They don't need help. When there are teams like the avengers, they end up falling apart because they don't know how to work with each other.
 - Very often, the Western church tends toward this type of individualism.
 - We hear Jesus's call to take up our cross and follow Him and we decide to follow no matter what anyone else says or does. While every individual needs to obey Jesus's call to follow, we cannot follow Jesus as individuals, the proper context for every disciple maker is the church.
 - It is impossible to make disciples aside from the church of Jesus Christ
- We should not give up meeting together
 - **Hebrews 10:25** And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another.
 - **Matthew 18:20** For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."
- New Testament is full of commands to do this or that for "one another."
 - This term is found in the New Testament 99 times.
 - At peace with one another, discussed with one another, love one another, pray for one another, encourage one another, teach one another.
 - It's impossible to "one another" yourself.
 - It's impossible to follow Jesus alone.
 - We can't claim to follow Jesus if we neglect the church He created.
- It's easy to think I don't need Community. We were made for community. Gyms, schools, workplaces, have communities. Why because we were made for them.
- Church is a community of believers.
 - The more we gather the more we become family.
 - If you treat church like a commodity and it expect it to treat you like family, there is going to be a disconnect.
 - If you want to be treated like family, you have to treat the church like a family as well.
 - My spouse is the same person who has hurt me the most but has blessed me greatly as well.
 - We want to get at this distance were where I am close enough to receive and give blessing but far enough to give and receive hurt.
 - Those are the same distances. If you re close enough to be blessed you are close enough to be hurt.
- There are 168 hours each week. We sing and preach for 1.5 of them. We are more than 1.5 hours of singing and preaching.

- Body

- **1 Corinthians 12:12-21** The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. 14 Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. 15 If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? 18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. 19 How strange a body would be if it had only one part! 20 Yes,

there are many parts, but only one body. 21 The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.”

- **12:27** All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it.
- Which muscles do I need to throw a good punch?
 - In order to have a power effective punch I need the entire body to work together in unison.
 - As the natural goes so does the spiritual. If we want a powerful fully functioning church we need every part of the church to see their values and work together as one body.
- The Bible says the church is the “Body of Christ” and that each person is like a different part of the body, with something unique to offer.
 - When we “go it alone,” we’re not only hurting ourselves but also hurting the body of Christ. It’s like cutting off a finger or pulling out an eye.
 - Each part is important and necessary.
 - Don’t let yourself think what you do is not important.
- You are part of the micro and macro body.
 - It’s easy to think it’s doesn’t matter if I don’t serve, if I don’t worship, if I don’t come today because you don’t’ move the needle at all.
 - You are needed in the daily mundane things such as worship, prayer, making people feel welcomed etc.
 - You are also needed in the larger areas of service such as teaching, serving, inviting,
- Stop devaluing yourself.
 - Every time you devalue yourself you devalue the church which Christ came to die for.
- **1 Corinthians 12:20-21** Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. 21 The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.”
 - “I don’t need you mentality,” will kill you.
 - How many of you have ever thought that before. When you spouse hurts you immediately think I don’t need you.
 - The Corinthians are having problems they think the solution is to stay separate.
 - The real answer is to find out how to work it out and continue to walk unison.
- Unity in the Body
 - In any community, people will eventually offend one another or let one down. The church is no exception.
 - **Ephesians 4:1-6** Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴ For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. ⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.
 - The Bible puts a lot of importance on the diversity of the church – many different people from all walks of life who bring different gifts and talents to the body of Christ. Yet equally important is an unshakable unity that comes from having Jesus Christ as our common foundation.
- Jesus prayed that we would be united.
 - **John 17:20-21** “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. 21 I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

- God’s instrument

- The church is God’s instrument for advancing His kingdom. He has no “plan B.”

- The church is the only legitimate setting for living the Christian faith. No long-term “lone ranger” can be a true disciple of Christ. All who truly desire to follow Christ must find their place in a church family.
 - If this is God’s plan, what are you doing to be a part of it?
 - Do we have goals for church?
 - We make plans for my body, relationships, finances, when was the last time we made a goal to be committed to and supporting the local church.
- Change Start with You
 - Apathetic churches are a result of apathetic people.
 - Dead churches are a result of dead people. Complacent churches are a result of complacent people. Introverted people, lack of holiness people result in those type of churches.
 - On the other end, passionate people produce passionate churches. Active reproducing members produce active reproducing churches.
 - The church is a result of me.
 - If the church was filled with 100% of people just like you what type of church would we have?
 - If they prayed like you? What type of church would it be?
 - If they read the Bible like you? Would we have a Bible focused church?
 - When it comes to your life of purity and thought life, would the church be pure?
 - When it comes to sharing your faith. Would it be a reproducing church?
 - Are you a disciple of Christ?
 - Do you model it? People will model what you do not just what you say.
 - How you attend and show up says a lot. If you have this new Christian and they see that you are always 15 minutes late and texting during service you are modeling to them the importance or lack importance in the church.
 - I try to worship passionately, love people because I want my kids and the people behind me to see that I’m excited about worship and the importance of church.
 - It’s more than what we say it’s what we model. It’s what’s in our heart that measures what’s in our heart as a disciple. It will be what you reproduce.
- We are the Church
 - We are not made to live the Christian life alone. We were not meant to follow God by ourselves. The early church did nearly everything in community. They didn’t just meet together once a week; they shared life together. They taught one another. Encouraged one another, and met each other’s needs.
 - The church is meant to be a community of people who are helping each other grow close to God. In other words, the process of sanctification, is not something we can do completely on our own.
 - In 1 Peter 2:4–10, the Apostle Peter uses the metaphor of a “spiritual house” or the temple. He says that Jesus is “the living stone” whose followers are “living stones...being built into a spiritual house,” (v. 5). Peter sees the church as the people, and these people exist to “declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (v. 9).
 - Thus, our question misses the point — once again — by assuming: “Here is the church. Here is the steeple. Look inside and see all the people.” More accurately, we should say, “See all the people? There is the church. There is the steeple.” We are the church, and as bricks, we miss the point if we say that we are greater on our own than together. There is something God is doing with his people, and we are meant to be a part of that project — not existing all alone.