
Following Jesus -- Course B

Instructions:

Please take all courses in order as listed on our home page (the computer will ask!). If you have not done all the lessons of previous courses, please [click here to go to the beginning](#).

If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (*1*, *2*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

When you have studied the whole lesson and written down answers to all the indicated questions, return to the menu for this course on our web site at www.BibleStudyLessons.com and click on the link for the **answer quiz** for this lesson (or simply click on the link at the end of this lesson). Follow the directions to submit your answers and receive your grade. You will then be given an opportunity to see the correct answers to the questions. Please save this lesson and the correct answers for future reference.

Then move on to the next lesson or the next course in order. **Please study all lessons in all courses in order as listed in the menus on our web site.**

Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

Church Organization And Work – #1

Following Jesus, Course B, Lesson 7

Introduction:

Acts 20:28–31 – Paul warned that some elders would teach error and draw away disciples. The Lord's church has repeatedly departed from God's pattern for church organization and work.

The purpose of this study is to examine the New Testament pattern for the organization and work of the church. This pattern is as much a part of God's word as is the teaching about worship or salvation from sin. We seek to affirm the Bible pattern of church organization and work, while opposing human changes.

I. The Need for Bible Authority

This material summarizes the lesson on **How to Study the Bible**. Please review that lesson before proceeding.

A. God Uses Three Methods to Reveal His Will.

1. Commands and direct statements

Sometimes God states directly what He wants us to do or believe (1 Cor. 14:37; John 14:15; Matt. 28:20).

2. Examples and illustrations

Sometimes God teaches, not by expressly telling us how to act, but by giving instances of Christians acting with His approval.

>>> Please read Philippians 3:17; 4:9. <<<

1 Whose lives served as an example that we should follow? Answer: Paul said he and those who walked like him are our _____.

(1 Peter 2:21; Matt. 16:24; 10:25; 1 John 2:6; 1 Cor. 11:1; 4:16,17)

3. Necessary inferences/conclusions (Scriptural reasoning)

Some teachings simply follow necessarily from what is stated.

>>> Please read Acts 17:2,3. <<<

2 What did Paul demonstrate from Old Testament Scripture? Answer: Paul reasoned from Scripture that Jesus is the _____.

Note that this conclusion was not directly stated in the Old Testament. (Matt. 19:3–9; 22:23–32; Acts 10:1–11:18; 15:6–21; 1 Cor. 15:12–19.)

When we study a subject, we must consider lessons taught by any of these teaching methods.

B. All Spiritual Service Must Be Authorized by God.

>>> Please read Matthew 15:9. <<<

3 What kind of worship is based on human law? (a) acceptable, (b) authorized, (c) vain, (d) all of the preceding. Answer: _____.

>>> Please read Galatians 1:8,9; 2 John 9. <<<

4,5 What happens to those who teach differently from the gospel? Answer: Such teachers are _____ and do not have _____.

God has told us in the gospel everything we should do to please Him (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:3; John 16:13). Human wisdom cannot discover what pleases God (Jer. 10:23; Isa. 55:8,9; Prov. 14:12; 3:5,6). Therefore, if we practice anything not taught in the gospel, we displease God. (Col. 3:17; Rev. 22:18,19; 1 Pet. 4:11)

C. God's Teaching May Be Specific or General.

Everything we do must fit the definition or fall within the meaning of God's instructions. ***When God wants man to do a thing in a particular way, He chooses terms that are specific or narrow in meaning.*** We displease Him if we do anything not included.

On the other hand, ***if God chooses to instruct us in words that are more general or inclusive in meaning, then He leaves us free to choose from any alternative that fits the meaning.***

For example, God told Noah to make an ark of gopher wood (Gen. 6:14). He could not have used metal or other woods, because they did not fit the meaning of "gopher wood." But he could use a hammer or saw to build the ark, because they would fit the meaning of making an ark.

God tells us to use bread and fruit of the vine in the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26). Using hamburger and Coke or partaking on other days of the week would be unauthorized. But we could partake any time on the first day.

We should sing in worship to God (Ephesians 5:19). Instrumental music is unauthorized because it does not fit. However, singing parts (soprano, bass, etc.) would fit the meaning of "sing."

We should have Bible authority for all we do and should oppose all unauthorized practices.

II. Spiritual Emphasis in Church Work.

A "local church" has ***all*** the following characteristics:

- * A group of Christians from a certain locality (1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:2)
- * Rules (the gospel) to guide the body (1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Tim. 3:16,17)
- * Work or function to be accomplished by the group (see below)
- * A system for overseeing the work (elders — Acts 14:23; 20:17,28)
- * Funds belonging to the group to carry out its work (1 Cor. 16:1–4; Acts 4:32–5:11; Phil. 4:14–18; 2 Cor. 11:8,9)
- * Biblical guidelines for determining who is or is not a member of the local church (Acts 9:26–28; 1 Cor. 5; Matt. 18:15–17; Heb. 13:17).

Now note the spiritual emphasis in the work of local churches.

A. The Church Is Primarily Spiritual.

The gospel teaches that ***spiritual needs are more important than physical needs*** – Matt. 16:26,27; John 6:63,27. Meeting physical needs has only temporary benefits; meeting spiritual needs has eternal benefits. (Cf. Col. 3:1,2; Luke 12:15–21; Matt. 4:4; 10:28.)

The church has a spiritual Founder, Owner, and Head.

>>> Please read Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23–25. <<<

6 How did Jesus purchase the church and make it His? Answer: Jesus gave His life and purchased the church with His _____.

7 Christ is the Head and Savior of what group? Answer: Jesus is Head and Savior of the _____.

Think: Why did Jesus shed His blood (Eph. 1:7; Luke 19:10; 5:32; Matt. 20:28; 26:28)? If Jesus' blood purchased the church and He is now head of the church, then is the church physical or spiritual in nature?

People enter the church for spiritual purposes.

>>> Please read John 3:3,5; Acts 2:47. <<<

8 How does one enter the kingdom? Answer: To enter the kingdom one must be born of water and _____.

Think: How is baptism connected to salvation (Rom. 6:3,4; Acts 2:38,47; 22:16; Mark 16:16)? If one enters the church at baptism (1 Cor. 12:13), then is the church physical or spiritual? (Col. 1:12–14)

The highest leaders in the church emphasize spiritual work.

>>> Please read Acts 6:2–4; Hebrews 13:17. <<<

9 What work did apostles and elders emphasize? (a) serving tables, (b) prayer, teaching, and watching for souls, (c) caring for widows. Answer: _____.

Think: The apostles did not want to become deeply involved in "serving tables." What does this show about the nature of the church?

The church is a spiritual house, a kingdom not of this world.

>>> Please read 1 Peter 2:5. <<<

10,11 How did Peter describe the church? Answer: We are a _____ house offering up _____ sacrifices.

Jesus said His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). The church is fundamentally spiritual, created to help men be saved and have eternal life. This work is far more important than physical matters – Matthew 6:33. (Cf. Rom. 14:17; 2 Cor. 10:3–5.)

B. Local Churches Are Primarily Spiritual in Work.

Note how the work of the church reflects its spiritual nature.

Local churches should teach the lost.

>>> Please read 1 Thessalonians 1:8. <<<

12 What work did the Thessalonian church accomplish? Answer: They sounded forth the _____ of the Lord. (See also Acts 11:22–26.)

The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). (See Phil. 4:14–18; 2 Cor. 11:8,9.)

Local churches should edify Christians.

>>> Please read Hebrews 10:24,25. <<<

13 What should be accomplished in church assemblies? Answer: We assemble to _____ one another.

See also 1 Cor. 14:19,23–26; Eph. 4:16. Edification also includes church discipline (1 Corinthians 5; Matt. 18:15–17; 2 Thess. 3:6–15).

Local churches should provide opportunities to praise God.

As studied elsewhere this involves Bible teaching, prayer (1 Cor. 14:15; Acts 2:42), the Lord's supper (1 Cor 11:17–34; Acts 20:7), singing (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19), and the collection (1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 8&9).

Local churches should care for certain destitute members.

>>> Please read Acts 11:27–30. <<<

14 How were needy saints here cared for? Answer: Funds were collected and each disciple gave according to his _____.

(Cf. Acts 2:44,45; 4:32–35; 6:1–6; 1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 8 & 9.)

The church did care physically for some members, but the overall emphasis of church work was spiritual. Everything we can now do to help people physically, we could have done had Jesus never died and established the church. But no man's spiritual need could be met without Jesus' death and without the church. **The church is the unique institution God established to meet the spiritual needs of mankind.** It is a serious error to lead the church away from its spiritual work to focus instead on unauthorized material works.

III. Attracting the Lost

Consider now an application of the spiritual nature of church work.

A. God Has Specified the Power We Should Use to Attract People.

>>> Please read Romans 1:16. <<<

15 What is God's power to save men? (a) the gospel, (b) fun and games, (c) entertainment and recreation, (d) politics, (e) all of these. Answer: _____.

(See also 2 Thess. 2:14; Rom. 10:17; John 12:32; Matt. 11:28–30.)

>>> Please read Acts 17:2; 18:4,11,19; 19:8,9; 24:24,25. <<<

16 How did faithful Christians attract people to Jesus? Answer: They attracted people by _____ from God's word.

Think: Did the apostles ever appeal to people's fleshly desires?

The greatest motivating power we have is the story of God's love, Jesus' death, and the hope of eternal life (1 John 4:19; 5:3; Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:18–24; Heb. 4:12,13; Jas. 1:21; Rom. 10:14–17).

B. Churches Should Not Appeal to Man's Carnal, Physical Desires.

Some churches attract people by offering fun, food, entertainment, parties, sports, and recreation. What does the Bible say?

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 10:3–5; Eph. 6:10–18. <<<

17 What kind of warfare are we engaged in (6:12)? Answer: We fight against _____ wickedness in high (heavenly) places.

18 What kind of weapons do we use in the battle? Answer: We use, not carnal weapons, but the _____ God provides.

>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 1:18–25; 2:1–5. <<<

19 What power do we have to produce faith and save men? (a) human wisdom, (b) preaching Jesus and His death, (c) fun and games. Answer: _____.

Exalting human ability and wisdom leads people to place faith in man. Exalting Jesus' message leads people to place faith in God

Think: What is the difference in principle between attracting people with fun, food, recreation, etc., and just offering them \$10 to come?

God is spirit (John 4:24). His kingdom is spiritual. Man's greatest need is spiritual. Our enemy is spiritual. Our eternal reward is spiritual. Therefore, God gave us spiritual drawing power: the gospel.

Carnal attractions are unauthorized because they are different drawing power from what God specified. They pervert the spiritual nature of Jesus' church. (Rom. 14:17)

IV. Distinction between Individuals and Churches

A. Local Church Work Is Not Always the Same as that of Individuals.

Some people say that whatever individual Christians must do, the church may do likewise. But note the following passages. ***In each case ask whether the church and the individual are taught to do the same things or different things.***

>>> Please read Matthew 18:15–17. <<<

20 Who should speak to a brother about his sin? (a) one brother alone, (b) then 2 or 3 brethren, (c) then the church, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Note that church action is distinguished from individual Christians.

>>> Please read Ephesians 4:28; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2. <<<

21 How do individuals obtain an income (cf. 2 Thess. 3:10)? Answer: Individuals get funds by _____.

22 How does the local church obtain a financial income? Answer: God instructed the churches about the _____ for the saints.

Note that individuals are commanded to obtain funds by a method not authorized for the church and vice-versa.

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 9:6,7; Acts 5:4. <<<

23 Who decides how much an individual should give to the church? (a) the church, (b) the preacher, (c) the giver, (d) all of these. Answer: _____.

24 Who controls the individual's money until he gives it (Acts 5:4)? Answer: Peter told the giver that, the money was in his _____.

>>> Please read 1 Timothy 5:4,8,16. <<<

25 If one refuses to care for needy relatives, what is his condition? Answer: One who refuses is worse than an _____.

26 If individuals fulfill their duty, will the church be burdened with caring for the relatives of those individuals? (yes or no) Answer: (Yes or no) _____.

Consider some other examples:

* Individuals physically marry and raise children. Do local churches do this? (Heb. 13:4; Gen. 1:28; Eph.6:4)

* Individuals may wear the names of men, such as Peter, Paul, Mary, John, Martin Luther, etc. May local churches (1 Cor. 1:10–13)?

* Individuals may sing secular songs accompanied by instruments (Luke 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:7; Matt. 11:17). May churches do so?

* Individuals may wash in water for purposes other than remission of sins (Acts 9:37; Luke 7:38). May local churches, as such, do this?

A business corporation does not necessarily do everything done privately by their employees. So the Bible distinguishes the church as a unit from the individual members. The church is not just one member, but an organization of many members functioning as a unit (1 Cor. 12:14).

Sometimes the work of the church is similar to that of members, but just because a passage authorizes or requires individuals to do a thing, that does not prove the church is authorized to do the same.

B. Individual Responsibilities Should Not Be Shifted to the Church.

The "Social Gospel" involves the church in material pursuits that God gave to individuals, not to the church. Consider some examples:

Businesses, hospitals, secular education, & politics

Individuals may participate in these for their own good and that of their families (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:7ff; Acts 18:2f; 1 Tim. 5:8; Matt. 22:21)? But what passage authorizes local churches to own, operate, or sponsor businesses, hospitals, colleges, schools, day-care centers, or political campaigns?

Recreation, entertainment, social activities

Again, individuals may be involved in these for themselves and their families (1 Tim. 4:8; 5:8; Mark 6:31; 1 Cor. 11:22,34). But what passage authorizes local churches to organize or sponsor ball teams, gymnasiums, boy scouts, camps, parties, carnivals, stage productions, concerts, kitchens, or dinners?

The church is a spiritual body to worship God, preach the gospel, and care for certain destitute members. Individuals have additional duties that God never gave to the local church. To divert the church into pursuing "Social Gospel" interests is to practice unauthorized church activities. It perverts the spiritual emphasis of the church, and permits individuals to shift their own responsibilities to the church.

Personal application questions:

(These questions are for you to ponder. Your answers will help us understand your thinking, however they will not affect your "score.")

27 How do you view the importance of spiritual matters as compared to physical matters?

28 Should the church emphasis be spiritual or physical? _____

29 What means should the church use to attract people? _____

30 Should churches operate businesses, schools, political campaigns, gymnasiums, camps, carnivals, etc.? _____

When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, [click on this link to submit your answers.](#)

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