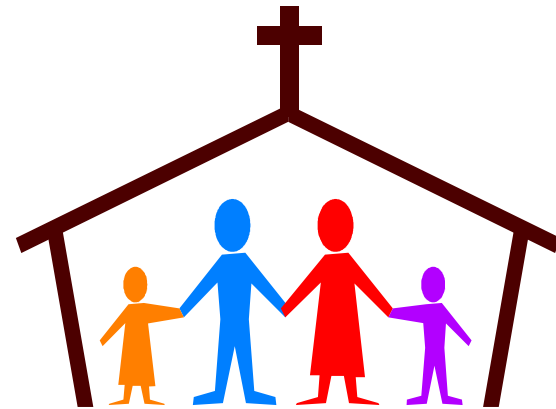


SERMON NOTES SERIES

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY NOTES

The Purpose And Power Of
Church Membership



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SENIOR PASTOR



Hi,

Over the years I have had numerous people ask me for a copy of my sermon notes for their own personal Bible studies. I am glad to be able to present them to you. You have in your hands an exact copy of my sermon notes for your very own personal studies. I pray that as you study the Word, that the Holy Spirit will add even more than what you have before you. Put yourself there in what you are studying. What were they feeling, what were they facing...make the Word come alive by placing yourself there.

I am also including a list of the resources that I use to obtain my information, but I will say this, without the Holy Spirit guiding and teaching you under the anointing all you have is just a bunch of books. I always pray before, during, and upon deliverance of each message I receive. I pray that...***you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (Colossians 1:9).*** I am both honored and blessed that you have selected a Sermon Notes Series and I pray that it will be a blessing to you!

With Much Love,
Pastor John

RESOURCES USED

- * The Companion Bible
- * Dake's Annotated Reference Bible
- * Young's Analytical Concordance To The Bible
- * A Dictionary Of Bible Types
- * Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words
- * The American College Dictionary
- * World's Bible Handbook
- * The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary
- * Nelson's Three- in- One Bible Reference Companion
- * The Word -The Bible In 26 Translations
- * God's Plan For Man
- * Harper's Encyclopedia Of Bible Life
- * Nelson's Expository Dictionary Of The Old Testament
- * Manners And Customs From the Bible
- * What The Bible Is All About
- * Halley's Bible Handbook

These are just a small listing of the study aides that I use. The greatest study aide available is letting the Holy Spirit be your teacher. May you get to know Him!

Words translated from the Gk = Greek and Hb=Hebrew.

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OUR VISION

“My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge;”

Hosea 4:6

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:”

Proverbs 23:7

“...and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;”

Colossians 1:9

“Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.”

Proverbs 24:3-5

“And the Gospel must first be published among all nations.”

Mark 13:10

As the Scriptures speak for themselves, our vision is to empower Believers everywhere to live a victorious abundant lifestyle that can be obtained through wisdom and understanding. If you are willing to change the way you think, you can change the way you live. A renewed mind towards the Word of God established you firmly in the faith and opens the door for the blessings and benefits of God to become evident in your life.

Because We Believe In You,
John and Karen Pelizzari

THE PURPOSE AND POWER OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

2 Timothy 4:3-5

^[3] For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ^[4] And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. ^[5] But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

1. Here we see six things about church folks in these last days:
 - a. They will not endure sound doctrine (verse 3).
 - b. They will increase in lusts and sin (verse 3).
 - c. They will add one teacher to another, or wander about from church to church to find those who will **not insist** on their getting rid of sins and sinful pleasures (verse 3).

- d. They will have itching ears, desire speakers who will tickle their ears and excuse their passions / sins in the name of religion (verse 3).
- e. They will turn away their ears from truth which strips them of sin and demands their wholehearted consecration to Jesus Christ (verse 4).
- f. They will turn to fables / story tellers and false religions that pamper the flesh and condone sin and expect no accountability.

bringing others to Christ. Complete the ministry God has given you.

2 Timothy 4:3-5 (NLT)

^[3] For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to right teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever they want to hear. ^[4] They will reject the truth and follow strange myths. ^[5] But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at

- 2. So let's cover some sound doctrine and tackle this end time deception head on.

Matthew 16:17

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

- 3. Jesus is telling Peter that he just received a revelation from the Father Himself.

Matthew 16:18

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- 4. **I will build my church** - this is the first time that the word church is used in the gospels.
 - a. It also reveals another agenda that Jesus was assigned to do while He was here.

Church - Gk - *eklesia* - that which is called out; a community of members either on earth or in heaven.

5. Here we see that the church is called out. Called out from what?
 - a. Out of darkness and into light.
 - b. Out of the world and into the Kingdom of God.
6. Now catch this:
 - a. When you are part of a church, the gates of hell cannot prevail against you.
 - b. You are being built while you are in a church.

Prevail - Gk - *katisechuo* - to be overpowered.

7. Meaning all the powers of hell cannot stop a believer from being built up when they are part of the church Jesus is building.
 - a. That is divine protection, a divine covering.

8. What is popular today is being a believer but not being part of a church.
9. This, biblically speaking makes one no different than ordinary devils, because devils believe also, but they are not of the church.
 - a. **James 2:19** **Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.**
10. And like devils, they have no covering. This opens a person up to be dominated, overpowered and subject to the forces of hell.
11. Jesus said that he would build His church...if you are not part of the church, then who is building in your life and what is being built?
 - a. Let's look at another benefit of being a part of what Jesus is building.

Matthew 16:19 **And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

12. When you are part of the church:

- a. You possess the keys to the kingdom.
- b. You have authority to bind and loose.

13. So those outside the church have no access or authority.

Matt 16:17-19 (MSG) ^[17] Jesus came back, "God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn't get that answer out of books or from teachers. My Father in heaven, God himself, let you in on this secret of who I really am. ^[18] And now I'm going to tell you who you are, really are. You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out. ^[19] "And that's not all. You will have complete and free access to God's kingdom, keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is yes in heaven.

A no on earth is no in heaven."

14. We have minimized the authority of the local church because our ideas, feelings and experiences have left a bad taste in our mouth.

- a. Let's see if we can handle more sound doctrine.

Colossians 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Colossians 1:18 (NLT)

Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. He is the first of all who will rise from the dead, so he is first in everything.

15. Jesus is the head of the church. The church is His Body.

- a. So when someone says they have a problem with the church, they are saying that they have a problem with Jesus.

16. If you are using your past church experiences as an excuse or reason not to be a part of the local church now...

- a. Then the truth is that you have unforgiveness, resentment or bitterness.
 - b. All of these open the door for the enemy to wreck havoc in a person's life.
17. So if you don't belong to a church, who is your head and your covering?
- a. Don't confuse attendance with membership.
18. Understand satan's two biggest deceptions:
- a. He has the world convinced that he doesn't exist.
 - b. He has church folks believing that they don't need to belong to a church.

Colossians 1:24 **Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:**

19. The church is His body. The two are inseparable. To belittle or minimize church membership is to belittle the reason Jesus became the head of the church.

Ephesians 3:10-11 (NLT) **^[10] God's purpose was to show his wisdom in all its rich variety to all the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. They will see this when Jews and Gentiles are joined together in his church. ^[11] This was his plan from all eternity, and it has now been carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.**

20. The church was part of God's plan from all eternity.
- a. Even when he called the Jews His elect, He knew that they would not be the only ones.
 - b. **Might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God** (verse 10) - notice that it is the church that is entitled to revelations.
 - c. This should be obvious since the body is connected to the head.
 - d. I am usually real leery when someone who does not belong to a church wants to share a revelation.

21. So what does it mean to belong to the church? Let's make it more clear.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 ^[12] **For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ^[13] For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ^[14] For the body is not one member, but many.**

Members - Gk - *melos* - limbs or parts of a body.

22. Jesus is the...head. The Church is His...body. The body has many...members.

23. So, if you are not a member of a church, His body, then Jesus is not your Head.

a. It doesn't get any simpler than that.

b. What does God do with you when you become born again?

1 Corinthians 12:18-20 ^[18] **But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ^[19] And if they were all one member, where were the body? ^[20] But now are they many members, yet but one body.**

24. God sets you in the body by putting you in a church where it pleases Him, but it may not necessarily please you.

Set - Gk - *tithemi* - to place or appoint.

25. Notice that God the Father personally gets involved in placing you in a church, Jesus' body where you will please Him the most.

a. Individually we are called believers; corporately, we are called a church.

26. People are in error when they go looking for a church rather than being led to a church.

27. Notice that every member has a function just like a physical body. That's where your growth comes in.

28. God places the members in the church. It's called church membership. Church membership means active involvement and attendance.

- a. He puts you where you need to be but not always where you want to be.

Acts 2:41-47 (NLT) ^[41] **Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church—about three thousand in all.** ^[42] **They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord's Supper and in prayer.** ^[43] **A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.** ^[44] **And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had.** ^[45] **They sold their possessions and shared the proceeds with those in need.** ^[46] **They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—** ^[47] **all the while praising God**

and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

29. Here is an example of a healthy church.

- a. If you tried to get people to come to church on a daily basis today, you would incite a rebellion.
- b. But that is why they saw more signs and wonders than we do today.
- c. We want the benefits but not the commitment.
- d. It is still part of God's plan. Nothing has changed.

30. Understand, you can come to church but not be a part of that church.

- a. That's the common practice of today.
- b. That way if they don't like something going on or being taught, there's no commitment and one can freely go.
- c. Why is church membership so important?

Ephesians 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

31. Jesus has reconciled both Jews and Gentiles into one body through the cross. Why?

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Ephesians 2:19 (NLT) So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.

32. So that we may become family members of the Household of God.

a. Household means “belonging to the house.”

33. If you don't belong to the house, then you are called:

Strangers - Gk - xenos - one who is unknown or has no personal acquaintance.

Foreigners - Gk - paroik - one dwelling near a sojourner (temporary / occasional pop in); one who stays temporarily; an informal stranger or an outsider.

34. Based on these two definitions, we can now see another side to this verse of Scripture.

Matthew 7:22-23 ^[22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ^[23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

35. One who used to belong to a church but now for some reason do not.

a. They may go to church but they are no longer part of that church by membership.

b. No membership, no body connection. No connection, no covering. No covering, strangers and foreigners.

c. He didn't know them because they were not part of His body.

(Work) **iniquity** - Gk - anomia - lawlessness; gross injustice; violation of right or duty; wicked actions.

NOT WORKING FOR THE KINGDOM MEANS YOU ARE SELF EMPLOYED, WORKING FOR YOUR OWN PERSONAL GAIN NOT GOD'S.

36. Today, that would mean people who are not born again are strangers because they have no personal relationship.
 - a. It also could be church folks who neglect their relationship with Jesus.
 - b. Don't misunderstand - the church does not save you, the blood of Jesus does.
37. Today, believers who are not members of a church have no pastor and are called foreigners.
 - a. They may dwell near, hang around, occasionally show up, but it's only temporary.
38. Another excuse for today is that some people don't believe in organized religion.
39. **First**, you obviously don't know the difference between religion and relationship.

Ephesians 2:21-22 ^[21] **In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: ^[22] In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.**

Fitly framed - means organized.

Ephesians 4:16 **From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.**

Fitly joined together and compacted - means organized.

1 Corinthians 14:40 **Let all things be done decently and in order.**

Decently and in order - means organized again.

40. **Second**, you do err not knowing the Scriptures. Translation, you're just wrong because you don't know what you're talking about.

41. **Third**, you're choosing to be a rebel.

Ephesians 1:22-23 ^[22] **And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,** ^[23] **Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**

Ephesians 1:22-23 (MSG) ^[22] **He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church.** ^[23] **The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.**

42. Peripheral means “secondary to.” The world as well as church folks put the church as secondary.

43. So why be a part of the church? Ephesians shows us that He gave authority to the church and put everything under His feet.

- a. Any given church is a collection of believers assigned to a geographic location for a purpose...a vision.
- 44. At the time of the rapture, Jesus is coming back for His church. Many people think He is coming back for believers.
 - a. Devils believe but He isn't coming back for them.
 - b. Worldly people believe but He is not coming back for them.
- 45. He's not coming back for vagabonds, foreigners, strays, those on sabbatical, popper inners, guests, checker outers, visitors, nomads, church hoppers.
- 46. The church is His body. The Father places you in the body. If you have not allowed Him to place you as a member, then are you really part of His body?
 - a. He assigns you to a body to do your part and He gives you His power to do that part.

Acts 20:28 (NLT) **"And now beware! Be sure that you feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his blood—over whom the Holy**

Spirit has appointed you as elders.

47. The church was purchased with His blood. Don't waste the blood by not being part of the church.

Ephesians 5:23-25 ^[23] **For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.** ^[24] **Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.** ^[25] **Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;**

48. Here the church is compared to the most intimate relationship on earth, that of a husband and wife.

49. Notice, Jesus is the head of the church and Savior of the body.

a. And the body, the church is subject to Him.

Subject - hupotasso - a military term meaning to set in order, to set in array (pattern); to set in an organized fashion under the authority of a leader. That shows organizational structure again.

50. You cannot be fully subject to Christ if you are not a member of the body, His church.

1 Timothy 3:15 **But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**

51. The church is called **the pillar and ground of the truth**.

Psalm 92:13 **Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.**

52. True growth comes from being planted in the house of God, the church.

a. It's the ground of truth.

b. If you're not planted, you must be spiritually stuck or stunted.

Psalm 92:14-15 ^[14] **They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;** ^[15] **To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.**

53. Notice how not being planted can affect your prosperity in your latter days.

a. No roots means no fruit.

54. What is the main reason most believers won't commit to a local church?

Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:17 (NLT) Obey your spiritual leaders and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this joyfully and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.

Obey / submit - experiences or incidents from one's past now become their stumbling block.

55. If a pastor cannot identify you as a member, then he is not responsible for you.

Hebrews 10:25 (NLT) And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.

56. Many church folks are helping to fulfill this Scripture by their lack of membership and attendance.

a. Even well meaning believers who love God live compromised lifestyles.

Titus 1:16 (NLT) Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are despicable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.

57. Let's look at some church folks today:

a. **WHOLE HEARTED MEMBERS** - blue ribbon sheep who come to feed every time the doors are open.

1. They are here for everything.

2. They do everything.

3. They support everything.
 4. They come early and stay late.
- b. **MARGINAL MEMBERS** - they show up, feed and go home. Their participation is so weak and unnoticeable that it can hardly be justified as membership.
1. They stay for the food and the fellowship but they won't work or go to war.
 2. They want counseling and ministry but they won't contribute or distribute.
- c. **SUPPORTERS** - they like what they see and hear but doctrinal differences or personal reasons holds them back from membership.
1. They give, show up and partake thereof but spiritually, they are on their own.
- d. **GUESTS** - they frequently show up at the house but won't commit to the house.
1. No commitment, no covering.
 2. They allow themselves an option plan in case something happens in the church.

- e. **VISITORS** - are those looking for a place to call home.
- f. **UNBELIEVERS** - the unsaved.

Acts 16:4-5 ^[4] **And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.** ^[5] **And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.**

58. As the apostles preached what was supposed to be done and how to do it, the church grew and become strong in the faith.

Romans 12:4-5 (NLT) ^[4] **Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function,** ^[5] **so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.**

59. Did you know you need a pastor just as much as that pastor needs you?

60. Stop living outside the body. Let God set you in church today.

E N D