

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Church

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The Importance of the Church

Bill Brinkworth

As Paul concluded his letter to the Roman church, Romans 16 was dedicated to remembering Christians he knew in the ministry. He named 28 individuals and remarked on what they meant to him or how they had served the Lord.

Those people were more than acquaintances to him. The people in the church were close to Paul's heart.

Going to church for us should also be more than just nodding at people as they pass us in the aisle or shaking their hands as we see them in Sunday school. The church is where those of like faith and beliefs gather.

Church should be a place removed from the world where we can be with our kind — Christians. In that place, we are no longer a “peculiar” people as the unsaved view us. We are with members of the family of God.

A church is also where some hear the Gospel for the first time and get saved. It should be a place where the Bible is taught, and people learn more about God's Word.

Believers can also hear what the Lord has laid on the under-shepherd's heart in church and know how they can be better Christians. It should be where people are burdened for needs they see or hear about and get involved in a ministry themselves.

I know I cannot speak for all churches, as too many have too much of the world in them, but the place of worship should be a place where we can be far from godless living and be closer to God.

In church, other Christians can encourage us. All week we are swimming against the current of the world. It can spiritually drain us. Being around our kind can reward us with advice, encouragement, or even seeing how other Christians handle their problems, so we can successfully run our spiritual race.

Those Christians that are not faithful in church attendance miss the help and encouragement of being around their kind. It is not just the preaching, teaching, church dinners, and special events that we need. We need to feel, for the time we are with others of like faith, that we are not alone in this world. We need to know there are others like us. No wonder Paul addressed many

individually. They were important to him because they were part of his spiritual family — the family of God.

“Going to church is family time.” — *Author Unknown*

The Good and the Bad

Bill Brinkworth

Every church has its “good” and “bad” members. I am sure that the church that John was writing to in III John had several of both categories. However, the apostle wrote of three members in his letter.

Two of the members were good representations of what a Christian should be. Gaius was the “well-beloved” (III John:1). He was most likely a friendly person many loved.

Many reports from the church told John how Gaius was a blessing in the church family (III John:3, 6) and how the man attended to the needs of other Christians (III John:5). It was evident by his care for the brethren that he truly loved the members of his church.

Another blessing in the church was Demetrius. John also said good things about him (III John:12).

Those two were an encouragement to the apostle’s heart. It is always good and encouraging to hear how people get saved, get their hearts and lives changed by the Holy Spirit’s work, and do much for the cause of Christ and the people of God.

People like those two encourage others by their proof of love for the family of God. They are sometimes part of the reason many stay faithful in church.

However, even if we are saved, we still have sinful flesh to contend with, and there will often be “stinkers” in every church. In this church, there was one like that. His name was Diotrephes.

Diotrephes had a terrible testimony in the eyes of others. Instead of showing the spirit of meekness the other two outstanding members showed, this man exhibited improper Christian behavior. He was known for always wanting recognition (III John:9).

I can imagine Diotrephes was one of those that always had something to say. He was the one that got much of the attention and the glory.

He refused to accept John the Apostle and any missionaries John sent to the church (III John:10). This discontented man did all he could to talk poorly of John and his

work. Diotrephes even had people kicked out of the church that showed charity to anyone Paul sent to the church.

When man tries to get the glory, which Diotrephes was attempting to receive, the Holy Spirit is grieved. This type of man ruins the testimony of any ministry. The work for Christ in a ministry can come to a screeching halt. That is one reason many once-thriving churches are now spiritually dead and doing little for the cause of Christ. People like this man often become an excuse for many leaving a church.

In every ministry, there are the two types. Good workers are the light in this dark world. They make the church a Christian family.

The evil (III John:11) should be ignored and not be the reason anyone leaves a church. If one goes because of a “Diotrephes,” one can be assured that the Holy Spirit is not involved in the decision.

If you have one or more of “Diotrephes” in your church, do not leave. Get your eyes and ears off them, and keep them on the Saviour. Jesus will never let you down, which is why you should attend anyway!

“If you see the obstacles, your eyes are off the Saviour!” — *Author Unknown*

Should We Go to Church on Saturday or Sunday?

Bill Brinkworth

The fourth of the ten commandments given to Israel by Moses states, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). When the Sabbath day was observed, one could not leave his home (Ex. 16:29), could not build a fire (Ex. 35:3), and could not work (Deut. 5:14). Anyone breaking the rules on Saturday would be put to death (Ex. 31:15). It was serious not to observe that day properly. Because of this seriousness, it is understood why many today wonder, “Should I worship on Saturday?”

To understand why today’s day of worship should be on Sunday, one should first know why the Sabbath was instituted. It was started so that Israel would remember that they were slaves in Egypt and that God had set them free from their bondage: “*But the seventh day [Saturday] is the sabbath... And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day*” Deut. 5:14-15.

Modern-day Christians are not to remember they were freed from Egypt’s hand. The observance of the Sabbath was for the Old Testament Jew. We are not under Old Testament laws: “*But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith...*” Galatians 3:11-12.

One trusting in Christ's finished work on the cross is free from the law's bondage: *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"* Gal. 5:1. This is why the law of the Sabbath is not mentioned in the New Testament; it is not for those living by faith in the resurrected Christ. Nine of the ten commandments are (Mat. 19:18, Rom. 13:9) mentioned in the New Testament, but the one about the Sabbath was not reaffirmed.

The significance of the Sabbath changed when Christ came. Old Testament believers were waiting and looking forward to the Messiah's coming. Those that still hold to the Old Testament's keeping of the Sabbath are saying, by their beliefs and practices, that they are still waiting for Him to come. Christ has come. All changed when He came.

Jesus' resurrection could easily have been on the Sabbath, but it was on Sunday morning, as stated in the gospels (Mat. 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:1). His resurrection and many other important events happened on the first day of the week. Jesus was declared the Son of God on Sunday (Rom. 1:4). Pentecost also occurred on Sunday (Lev. 23:15-16). After Jesus died, there was much emphasis on the first day of the week.

Many teach that Constantine changed the day of worship to Sunday in A.D. 321, but the early church worshipped on Sunday before the New Testament was even completed. The Bible reveals how worship was often every day (Acts 2:46), but soon the main worship day was the first day of the week (Sunday):

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." John 20:19

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Acts 20:7 Notice the Lord's Supper was also observed on Sunday.

After Paul purposed to minister to the Gentiles, the Sabbath was never mentioned. Unless someone was ministering to the Jews directly and met with them in their synagogue (Acts 17:1-2), all early church meetings were on Sunday. Even offerings were taken up on the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1-2).

We are not commanded to make one day holier than another: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it..." Rom. 14:5-6. The Sabbath is still on Saturday, but the emphasis, for one trusting in Christ and not keeping the law, is now on the first day of the week, not the last.

There is no direct Scripture saying that Sunday is now the Sabbath either. We are to put a day aside to make God and His Word a priority, along with fellowshiping with His people. Sunday is the day we need to set aside for the Lord!

“What is your priority on Sunday: fishing, soccer matches, the supermarket, or church?”