

A REFRESHING CONTRAST – JUDE 1:4, 12-16

Today, after introducing so many young new member candidates, we have pleasantly left ourselves with less time for our regular expositional study of Jude. So, it seems appropriate to preach a shortened message on the _____ of the ungodly that creep into the fellowship of believers. Instead, this morning we will briefly touch on the importance of the local church and the remarkable _____ of each member.

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1. The local church

a. What the local church is not

- It is _____ a building
 - We worship God in spirit and truth – Jo. 4:24
 - The physical body of every believer is the *temple* of God – 1 Cor. 6:19
 - The assembly of believers is also known as the *temple* and *household* of God – Eph. 2:18-22
- It is _____ a denominational group of world-wide congregations ruled by one central hierarchy or political structure – Rev. 2:6, 15

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b. What the local church is

- The _____ of Christ
 - A body of men and women who have been saved (born again) and called by God to serve in a specific geographic area. The world can then physically observe the *body of Christ* as it is exemplified or manifest on this *local* level
 - In 1 Corinthians 12:27, Paul, writing to people in a local church, states, “*ye are the body of Christ*”
 - Paul compares the church body to the human body in 1 Cor. 12:14-27:
 - Each member has a different function – verses 14-20
 - No one member can function alone – verse 21
 - Each member’s contribution is important – verses 22-24
 - A properly functioning body operates as a single unit – verses 25-27
- The local church is a separate, autonomous, _____, self-governing assembly of believers, led by a Pastor(s) and served by deacons – Acts 9:31; Gal. 1:2; see the word *churches* throughout NT; Phil. 1:1; 1 Ti. 3:1-13

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c. The main functions of a local church

- The single most important priority of the local church is to _____ *God* (to make God look good.)

He is glorified when his body (the church) is edified (built up, taught, strengthened, perfected, and growing in numbers) – Eph. 4:11-16. Ephesians 3:21 says, *“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.”*

- The first local church was structured in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41-47). The believers there organized their church for the following purposes as a pattern:

The preaching and teaching of the word of God – verse 42a

Fellowship with other believers – verse 42b

_____ – verse 42c

To be a testimony of God’s grace and power – verse 43

For mutual assistance and ministry – verses 44-45

To reach out into the community – verses 46-47

To glorify and praise God – verse 47

Note: It also appears that they observed the two ordinances of the church: Baptism – verse 41, and the Lord’s Supper – verse 42

2. The individual member

- a. During your Christian life you should grow and mature through three _____ stages:

1) Observe and learn – Your first priority is to submit by _____ to the preaching and teaching of the scriptures and to learn to be the person God wants you to be. (One-on-one discipleship enhances this beginning stage or offers a template to mature believers joining our church)

2) Participate – Then, in time, you will naturally mature to the point where you can begin to serve and take on some basic functions through the already established ministries of our church

3) Lead – As your growth continues, you will reach the point where you can begin to minister to and disciple others in the same way you have been ministered to...

2 Timothy 2:2 says, *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*

- b. The extreme _____ of each member:

- Every member is uniquely equipped for service – 1 Cor. 12:27

- Every member has been redeemed by the *precious blood* of Christ – 1 Peter 1:18-19