

# **Dedicating Ourselves and Our Church to God**

## Introduction

- A. It is important to keep in mind that the Church, is the body of Christ, and composed of all believers (I Cor 12:27; Eph 1:22,23).
- B. We are exhorted to dedicate ourselves to God and work together as dedicated people (Romans 12:1-21). We are warned not to violate this principle (I Corinthians 3:1-23; I Timothy 3:15; II Timothy 2:23-26; Revelation 3:14-22).
- C. It is helpful to bring these truths into sharp focus in our life by personally and corporately dedicating ourselves, as a Church, to God (Romans 12:1,2; I Corinthians 6:19,20).

## **The Biblical Basis for this Dedication**

- A. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church.
  - 1. Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20; Acts 2:33,41-47; Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:23,24; Col, 1:18
  - 2. These passages teach that every believer, in our individual and corporate relationship, belong to God. We may not conduct ourselves as individuals or as a Church -- as though we belonged to ourselves.
- B. The Holy Spirit is the Administrator of the Church.
  - 1. Scripture: John 16:13,14; Acts 2:33; 13:1-4; I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:1-16; Rev. 2:7
  - 2. The Lord Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to us, personally and corporately, to lead us into the truth of how to live and serve. We may not grieve and quench Him by ignoring His presence and ministry (Ephesians 4:30; I Thessalonians 5:19).
- C. The Church is Inseparably Related to the Revelatory and Redeeming Work of Jesus Christ.
  - 1. Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20; John 10:1-18; Acts 2:14-36; 20:28-32; Ephesians 2:10-22
  - 2. The Church, as the Body of Christ, came into existence through the power of God's Word and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. We may not substitute our human wisdom in the place of the Bible or our fleshly efforts in the place of the power of God.
- D. The Church is Primarily an Organism, not an Organization.
  - 1. Scripture: I Corinthians 3:16,17; 6:16-20; 11:13-27; Ephesians. 2:18-22
  - 2. There is one redemptive life that unites all believers to the Lord Jesus and to one another. We may not live as though our relationship with God or with one another is of human origin and under our control.

- E. The Church is Primarily a Spiritual Organism, not a Social Organization.
1. Scripture: I Corinthians 3:1-23; Ephesians 2:18-22; I Peter 2:5-10
  2. The believer and Church is "spiritual" in that our basic characteristic is spirit by creation, redemption and the presence of the Holy Spirit. We may not live by naturalistic priorities and goals, nor for naturalistic pleasures, nor by naturalistic methods.
- F. The Church is Primarily an Anointed, Spiritual Organism, not a Social Organization Dependent on Human Effort.
1. Scripture: Acts 1:8; 2:33; 4:31-37; I Corinthians 12:7-31; II Corinthians 1:21-24
  2. The Lord Jesus has given the Holy Spirit to the Church to be her source of wisdom and enablement. We may not live and serve in a fleshly way -- depending on our own wisdom and power.
- G. The Church is Primarily an Anointed, Spiritual Organism, Commissioned by Jesus Christ, not a Social Organization Dependent on Human Direction.
1. Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20; 28:18-20; John 17:18; 20:21-23; Acts 20:28
  2. As believers and as a Church we serve under orders to be true witnesses of the Gospel. We may not live as though our life, time, money, and talents were our own. Our commission is a great privilege as well as responsibility.
- H. The Church is Primarily a Divine Institution Directly Related to the Spiritual World, not a Social Organization Reflecting Human Culture.
1. Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20; Ephesians 3:10; 6:10-18; I Peter 2:5-9; Revelation 2:1-7
  2. God created us in His image as spiritual people, that image was reborn in the new birth, and reflected in the character of the Church. We may not live as though life were largely horizontal and natural with human cultural goals.
- I. The Church is Primarily a Spiritual Organism, representing the Kingdom of God as a Triumphant Army Invading the Kingdom of Satan.
1. Scripture: Matthew 12:22-30; Luke 4:16-21; 9:1,2; 10:17-22; Ephesians 6:10-18
  2. While Satan, in the permissive will of God, gained control of the human race through subtlety and deceit. He and all his host were defeated by the Lord Jesus in His redeeming work. That victory has been given to us as individual Christian and as a Church. We may not live as though we are not in a battle.
- J. The Church is Primarily a Group of Redeemed Sinners, Related to Jesus Christ and to One Another by Love and Grace.
1. Scripture: Matthew 6:9-15; John 13:34,35; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 2:1-22; 4:1-32
  2. God has not dealt with us according to our sins but in love and mercy. We may not live by any other standard in our relationship with one another. In spite of how we may have been hurt -- we must forgive.

Conclusion: We must confess how we have deviated from this standard and dedicate ourselves to God.

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