

What Part Do I Play In The Church?

April 14, 2021

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:1-12

Summary: "Who Runs the Church".

Examines the part members play in the life & ministry of the church.

What Part Do I Play In The Church?

What part do you, as members, as baptized believers, play in the church?

I. YOU ARE THE MATERIAL OF THE CHURCH

1 Peter 2:5

5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

How often do people mistakenly talk about a church as though it is nothing more than a building? People talk about going to “church” or meeting at the church. Since we continue to meet virtual, some have even said that we are not a real church.

I want you to understand that you are the church. Verse 5 says that you are living stones.

You are the material with which the church is built.

How sad it is, that people often forget that the first century church usually did not have buildings of their own. The early Christians met in parts of the temple, or the Jewish synagogues. They met in people’s homes and in the tombs. They met on the river bank. They met wherever they could and yet even without a building people complained “They’re turning the world upside down.”

I am looking forward to having everyone back in the Sanctuary place to worship, but my friends, if we forget that it is you and I who make up the church, all the buildings in the world will not be a help.

In the Old Testament, we read that God, in a special way, dwelt first in the tabernacle, and then later in the Temple. In the New Testament we read that we are the temple that God's Spirit dwells in.

> 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

Let me tell you, today that church has a nice, new building, but they are no longer reaching the children in the community. They are no longer reaching the youth of the community. They are sitting there enjoying their building because they have forgotten that the church is not a building. It is people. Ephesians says Jesus laid down His life for the church. Jesus died for people. He didn't die for buildings.

I don't care if we stay virtual forever, if I am convinced that's what the Lord wants.

Jesus dies for you and you are the material of the church.

When we think of leadership in the church we remember that you are the material of the church, but we must also remember that Jesus is the head of the church.

II. JESUS IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

- 1 Peter 2:6-7

6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7. Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

Jesus is the chief cornerstone. We may be the material the church is made of, but we are not the ones the church is made for. The church is the Bride of Christ. He is the Chief Cornerstone.

- Ephesians 5:22-24

22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

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 everything.

When we conduct church business, when we are “doing church” our goal and purpose is not to make ourselves happy or comfortable.

Our goal is not to do what we are accustomed to.

Our goal is to seek God’s will.

Our goal is to seek what Jesus wants.

He is the Head of the church. It’s not about me. It’s not about you.

It’s about Jesus Christ.

One day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus, not you or I, that Jesus is Lord.

You are the material of the church. Jesus is the head of the church. You are priests in the church.

III. YOU ARE PRIESTS IN THE CHURCH

- 1 Peter 2:5, 9

5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

9. But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called

you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

- Revelation 1:5-6

5. And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

**These passages mention what we know as “The priesthood of the believer.”
My friend, you are a priest in God’s church.**

In OT times, the people needed priests to come to them on God’s behalf and to speak to God on their behalf. The priests of old came from 1 family, the Levites. Of that tribe, only the high priest could go into the holy of holies and he could do that only 1 day a year.

In Matthew 27 we read that when Jesus was crucified, the earth shook, the sky was dark, and the veil in the temple that separated man from the holy of holies, the veil that separated God from man was torn from the top to the bottom.

With priesthood there comes many privileges.

Since you are a priest:

A. Privileges of Priesthood

1. You can come face to face with God.

> 1 Timothy 2:5

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, a man, Christ Jesus,

> Hebrews 4:16 Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.

2. You can pray directly to God in Jesus’ name.

> John 14:13-14

Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

3. You can confess your sins directly to God.

> 1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

4. You can understand the Bible yourself.

- John 16:12-15

12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14. His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

5. You need no one to make a sacrifice for you.

- Hebrews 9:12-14

12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

13. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The “Priesthood of the Believer” does not mean, “You are your own priest, and you can do whatever you want to.”

It does not mean you can be divisive.

It does not guarantee long or regular “business meetings” nor does it even grant everyone the right to speak their mind.

In fact, Christianity is far more about servanthood than it is about personal rights.

It does mean, however, that every believer is capable of directing to God directly. Because we are all part of the priesthood of the believer, it also means that many decisions in the church involve group consensus.

- Acts 15:22

22. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

Since there are so many privileges that come with priesthood, we must realize that there are responsibilities that come with this position as well.

B. The Responsibility of Priesthood

1. You live holy lives.

- 1 Peter 2:1

1. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

Rid yourself of wickedness.

2. Desire God’s Word

- 1 Peter 2:2

2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

> 2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn’t need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the Word of truth.

3. Offer spiritual sacrifices

- 1 Peter 2:5

5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

a. Sacrifice praise

- Hebrews 13:15

15. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.

b. Sacrifice materials

- Hebrews 13:16

16. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

c. Sacrifice Yourself

- Romans 12:1

1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your* reasonable service.

1 Peter 2:11-12

11. Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

So if we are a believer, Jesus Christ dwells in us. We are a priest.

You don't need me nor anyone else to pray, to have access to God, nor to be forgiven of your sins. You can approach God directly.

With that honor comes great responsibility.

Jesus, the Great High Priest.

Not My will, but Yours.