

How to Love a Church

1 Thessalonians 1:1

According to the Hartford institute of religion research:

- 40% of people say they go to church each week
- 20% actually attend weekly
- 4,000 churches close their doors every year.
- Between 2010-2012, 1/2 the churches in the US did not add one member
- Each year, 2.7 million church members fall into inactivity

"Why Nobody Wants To Go To Church Anymore," gives 4 reasons why:

- 1.) People Don't Want to be Lectured
- 2.) People See the Church as Judgmental
- 3.) People See the Church as Hypocritical
- 4.) People See the Church as Irrelevant

Main Idea: Paul is writing to a church, the church of the Thessalonians.

1.) A **Church is the People of God**

Church- *Ekklesia*

*"This is he who was in the **congregation** in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers..."*

Acts 7:38

*"I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the **assembly** I will sing praise to You"*

Hebrews 2:12

*"Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the **assembly** of Israel the words of this song until they were ended"*

Deuteronomy 31:30

"It seems unreasonable to doubt that in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul is thinking of the Christians of Thessalonica as members of the 'Church of God', and that he is fully aware of the biblical background and theological implications of his use of the term."

-T.J. Deidun

"knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God."

1 Thessalonians 1:4

*"**12** that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **13***

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ...so as to create in Himself one new man from the two... **19** Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."*

Ephesians 2:12-13, 19

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Galatians 6:10

Application Questions: Do you love the people of God? How do you know?

2.) A Church is the People of God in a Particular Place

Universal Church- All of God's people, in Christ, in all places, across all times.

Local Church- Particular people, in Christ, in particular places, at particular times.

*"And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, **13** and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Amount of Times Ekklesia is used to refer the church universal in the NT:	18-19
Amount of Times Ekklesia is used to refer the church local in the NT:	90-91

"I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren"

1 Thessalonians 5:27

Application Answer: You can't really love THE Church , unless you love a church, particular and local.

A.) To the Christian, who is not a member of a local church: Join a church, love them, and labor with them.

B.) To the Christian, who is a member of a local church: Share your heart and life in a way that cost you something.

3.) A Church is the Redeemed People of God in a Particular Place

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

Acts 20:28

"We have heard thousands of people tell us their stories and the common thread is that the average church service is not connecting with them. People want God, just not how the church packages God."

"Why Nobody Wants To Go To Church Anymore"

Application Answer: If you don't want the church, then you don't want the God who has created the church.