

Are You a Part of God's Church? 1 Timothy 3:15

Introduction:

1. Have you ever asked somebody, "What's all the fuss about?" As you read this chapter, you might be tempted to ask Paul, "What's all the fuss about? Why are you spending so much time detailing what to look for in spiritual leaders in the local church?"
2. Paul spent 14 verses, and with great detail he has explained what kind of leaders the church should have in place. Why did Paul feel the necessity to go to such lengths?
3. Verse 15 explains why it is so important. Paul calls it the "*church of the living God.*"
 - The word "*church*" means "assembly."
4. Are you part of God's church? Are you a member of God's assembly? You say, "I joined CrossRoads five years ago." This is not what I asked.
5. You see, you can be a member of this church and not be a member of God's church. Why is this? Because you can fool me, and all the other pastors, and everybody here, but you cannot fool God. God can see a person's heart. He knows if you are a member of His church.
6. God's church is composed of all true believers in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:22-23
 - Paul defines the church as Christ's body.
 - He also taught that every member of God's church is seated in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 2:6). God knows who is truly part of His heavenly church.
7. Local churches should be earthly, visible manifestations of God's heavenly church. We all come together as believers for the purpose of studying God's Word, edifying one another, praying for one another, and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.
8. The most crucial question that every person must ask himself is not "Am I a member of a local church?" But rather, "Am I member of God's church?"
9. Every person needs to be a member of God's church. Why is this? Let's look at 1 Timothy 3:15.

First, because God only has one church

1. I know that when you talk about church here on earth, you can be referring to a host of different things. There are churches of all different flavors. It can be confusing.
 - **Illustration:** Somebody wakes up Sunday morning and says, "We haven't been to church in 25 years. Let's go to church today." They look in the phone book or online. They will be as confused as a termite in a yo-yo.
2. But God only has one church. Notice it says, "*THE house of God,*" and "*THE church of the living God...*" This isn't confusing at all!
3. Ephesians 4:4 proclaims emphatically, "*There is **one** body...*" The body of Christ speaks of a heavenly, called-out assembly of true believers that have been made one with Jesus Christ.
4. You could join every church in this town and be baptized by 100 different churches, but still miss the only one that matters – God's church. All 100 churches may have different requirements, but God only has one. Galatians 3:26
5. Are you a member of God's church today?

Second, because God lives in His church

1. Notice that God's church is referred to as "...*the house of God...*" What do you do in a house? You live in it, right? The church is the house of God. We are not talking about this building.
 - What if the building burned down? Would God be homeless? I think not!
2. Remember, the word "*church*" means "assembly." When we talk about God's church, we are talking about people (believers). We are God's household! Ephesians 2:19, 22
 - "*In whom [Christ] ye [people who have believed on Christ] also are builded together for an habitation of God [He lives in us] through the Spirit.*"
3. You need to be a member of God's church. Why? Because, if you are a member of God's church, it means the living God dwells in you. You have His very life.
4. On the other hand, if you are not a member of God's church, it means that you do not have His life, and you are still dead in your sins. Romans 8:9, 11
5. On paper, you could be a member of multiple churches, but the only way to have His life is to be a member of the church of the living God. When you enter into the church of the living God, it means that you also possess eternal, divine, resurrection life.
6. Have you trusted Jesus Christ to be your Savior? 1 John 5:11-12

Third, because God works on the earth through His church

1. When you are part of God's church, you are part of something that is bigger than any of us, or any one earthly person.
2. Notice that God has designed His church to be the "*pillar and ground of the truth.*"
 - "*pillar*" – a post; support
 - "*ground*" – basis; from the root word which means sedentary; immovable
3. Do you see what Paul is saying? The church (believers in Christ) is the support that holds up God's truth (revealed in His Word). Without the church, truth has no pillar or support to hold it up.
4. So, as the church of the living God, it is our job to hold up and support the truth. What is the truth? Jesus said, "*Thy Word is truth.*" John 17:17
5. The local, visible church is supposed to be composed of individuals that are members of God's heavenly church. Our main business should be teaching, preaching, proclaiming and standing up for the truth of God. We should be a "*pillar and ground of the truth*" here in Daytona Beach.
6. This is how God works on the earth today. He works through His church. He works through people - through local assemblies of people who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, their lives have been changed, and they desire to proclaim His truth to others.
7. A local church is a group of believers like this who work together to lift up and promote God's truth in their local community.
8. This is why Paul was a missionary that went out and sought to plant local churches (not social clubs, or government-funded agencies, or entertainment centers). He wanted those cities to have local, visible, Christ-exalting churches to be a witness for Christ.
 - **Example:** 1 Thessalonians 1:6-9
9. The church is designed by God to be "*the pillar and ground of the truth.*"

10. Now do you see why Paul laid down such stringent guidelines for the office of pastor and deacon? If the church is the very basis and support of all truth, then its leaders must be exemplary in their character, integrity, words, and actions.
11. If not, it undermines all that the church is supposed to do. What a privilege to be a part of the church of the living God! Are you a member of God's church? You can be today! God will welcome anybody into His house.