

# **CHURCHES OF CHRIST**

## **WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**



**SUMMARY:** The **church of Christ** in the local sense is the **gathering of two or more Christians** together on a regular basis **to worship God and Christ** in submission to the Word of God. The Churches of Christ are an attempt to restore all the way back to the New Testament teachings. There are characteristic ways to identify a Church of Christ according to the scriptures, both positively and negatively.

The **church of Christ** in the local sense is the **gathering of two or more Christians** together on a regular basis **to worship God and Christ** in submission to the Word of God (Matt. 18:20). The church was established on the day of Pentecost and re-established on earth each time a new congregation is started which is pleasing to God.

The **plea** of the Churches of Christ is **summarized** in the statement "**speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent.**" The reason for this plea is that there are specific things which God through the New Testament requires for us to do to be pleasing to Him. When we remain with his teaching, we are approved of God (II John 9).

This philosophy is a substantial departure from **contemporary religious attitudes** as most people are deciding for themselves what they feel to be adequate for religion (II Timothy 4:2-4). The members of the churches of Christ encourage the **abandoning of human judgment in favor of divine instruction** that comes from the New Testament. We feel that this is the scriptural course to take.

**The basic beliefs** which come about by reading your Bible and submitting to what it instructs are:

1. That **God created** the universe (Rom. 1:20); that the Bible is the inspired Word of God; that no person, organization, or council is authorized to add to or to take away from the Bible (II Timothy 3:16-17; Rev. 22:18-19); that Jesus Christ was the Son of God in human form on the earth (John 3:16-17).
2. That becoming a Christian represents **a new life** with the full assurance of faith, the love and encouragement of other Christians, and the love of God (Heb. 10:19-25 and John 3:16).
3. That we should meet regularly on the **first day of the week** to participate in the **five acts of worship** as indicated in the New Testament: **prayer, teaching, singing, communion, and giving** (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; Eph. 5:19-20; I Cor. 16:2).
4. That repentant believers should be **baptized by immersion upon confession of belief** (Acts 2:37-41 and Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins.
5. That all people are **free moral agents** capable of accepting or rejecting God's Will, ultimately be judged by God for their actions (I Cor. 3:13 & II Cor. 5:10).

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6. That the Biblical organization of **independent churches** under the control of local elders should be followed (Titus 1:5-9 & I Tim. 3:1-13).
7. That the Bible is completely **adequate to guide** us in our faith (II Tim. 3:16-17).
8. That we are **only under the New Testament** in this Christian dispensation; that the old law is no longer in effect (Gal. 3:24-25).
9. That we should follow the attitude "**speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent**" in deciding what are scriptural teachings and actions (Rev. 22:18-19).
10. Use of **acapella music** in the song service. (Command Eph. 5:19 & example by exclusion, see also Acts 16:25, Rom 15:9, I Cor 14:15, Col 3:16, Heb 2:12, Heb 13:15, & James 5:13)
11. Sole **means of support** is contribution of member. (i.e. I Cor. 16:2) (Capital appreciation of needed facilities or interest on needed cash reserves is reasonable, being in business is not.)

**A second means** of understanding what the Church of Christ is, is to see some of the things that the Bible and therefore the church of Christ **DOES NOT TEACH**:

1. Infant baptism and **depravity** of babies.
2. That baptism is **not essential** to salvation (Acts 2:38 & Mark 16:16).
3. That **sprinkling and/or pouring** are acceptable substitutions for scriptural baptism.
4. **Predestination** - you are a free moral agent.
5. That you **cannot fall from grace** (Heb. 6:4-6 & Gal. 5:4).
6. The use of any **church organizations**, councils, papacies, or hierarchies other than local elderships.
7. Observation of **special religious holidays** (Gal. 4:8-11).
8. A **creed** of substitute for the Bible in matters of religious authority (Rev. 22:18-19).
9. That "**faith only**" can save, (James 2:14-26).
10. That **additional revelations** are given to Christians today (II Tim. 3:16-17).
11. Acceptability of **church divisions** or denominations. (I Cor. 1:12-13, Gal 1:6-9)

The **risk** involved in using your judgment and **substituting** other beliefs and practices for simple New Testament Christianity is the difference between an eternity with God in **Heaven** or an eternity with the Devil in **Hell**. **God is the judge** of what will be pleasing to Him, so is it not reasonable to conclude, since His word will judge us in that Last Day (John 12:48), that our

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lives must be brought into harmony with His word as it is revealed to us in the New Testament?

The **choice is yours** on whether you will submit to God's will and follow His Word or follow the world in the attitude that religion can be changed to fit the preferences of the individual. We urge you to consider the risk to yourself and to your loved ones and submit to pure New Testament Christianity.

Please contact any member, elder, or minister of your local Church of Christ for additional assistance in reviewing Biblical counsel for your life and the completion of your conversion to simple New Testament Christianity.