

GOD'S PURPOSE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Following is a broad-brush, two-fold statement of God's purpose in the local church arrangement.

First, every local church of Christ is subject to his will and should reflect his glory. Introductory observations to THE REVELATION depict seven churches of Asia Minor as golden lamp stands with the Christ walking among them. The figure is vivid. A lamp, ancient or modern, generates only the light supplied to it by a source of energy exterior to itself. The light seen in the lamps—the churches of THE REVELATION—was not to be of the churches themselves, but of Jesus whom they acknowledged as the Christ (Revelation 1:9-20).

Second, a local church of Christ is an association of the Christians of a given area joined together to be strengthened in the fellowship of Christ and, in him, to support and strengthen one another.

Thus, even as Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, the members of local churches of Christ assemble on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's supper in solemn remembrance of his sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection (Luke 22:19-20; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

They come together, not only on the first day of the week but as often as is expedient, to praise God in song and, in so doing, teach and admonish one another (Colossians 3:16).

Honoring God as the giver of all blessings, their assemblies beseech him in prayer and thank him for his goodness (Acts 4:23-31). And they pray for the well-being of one another (Acts 12:11-17).

The nourishment and strength of the Christian's spirit being dependent on one's knowledge and application of the doctrine of Christ, his disciples also assemble to feed on the riches of his word (Acts 11:25-26; 20:7).

As each member is prospered, and with a cheerful, purposeful heart, Christians give of their means to support the work of preaching the gospel to the lost, the edification of members as they grow in their knowledge of the gospel and to provide assistance to their needy whose circumstances require a helping hand (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-7). This point also observes the scope and simplicity of the work of the local church. However, local churches that devote themselves to it will find more than enough to do.

—Jerry F. Basset