

The Organized Church

Do we need organized religion? This study will look at the fact that Christ's Church is an organized church.

I. Order and relationships

A. Personal spirituality

1. Psalm 139:15-16 When does God's relationship with you begin?
2. John 3:18 When does your relationship with God begin?
3. Matthew 10:30 How closely does God watch you?
4. Ezekiel 18:4 To what degree does your faith belong only to you?
5. Romans 7:15 What does this say about personal expectations for order even on the most private level?

B. Spirituality and family

1. Isaiah 43:1 Whom does God really call by name in this passage?
2. Hebrews 2:11 On what level does Jesus relate to us as one who has made us holy?
3. Romans 8:16 Why do you suppose that this passage speaks to us as a group, rather than as individuals?
4. Ephesians 6:2 What kind of authority structure exists within a family?
5. Hebrews 12:5-6 How does the family expectation of order help us to understand God's own expectations of order?

C. Spirituality and friendship

1. John 15:15 How does this describe your personal relationship with Christ?
2. Proverbs 17:17 What is the distinction between brotherhood and friendship?
3. Proverbs 27:10 What are the rules of order for friendship?
4. John 15:14 What kind of order exists in our relationship as friends of Jesus?

As we have seen from these passages, even when we live life at the most personal, individual level, we have the expectation and the need for some kind of order. Indeed, having expectations of ourselves is the only way that we can measure ourselves up to assure ourselves that we are good, decent people.

II. Order and faith

A. The family of the faithful

1. James 2:21-23 How were true believers organized in Old Testament times?
2. 2 Timothy 3:14-15 How does God organize us as believers today?
3. 1 Corinthians 14:40 How important is it to be organized in what we do for the Lord?
4. Hebrews 10:25 What is the purpose for meeting together?
5. Acts 5:12 How does a democratic style help?

B. Examples of good order

1. Acts 6:1-4 How did the early Christians respond to the need for better management?
2. Romans 15:26-28 How did the early Church distribute resources?
3. Titus 3:10-11 What are we to do when someone is disrupting the unity and the order of the Church?
4. Romans 12:4-8 How does God provide for us so that good order is possible among us as Christians?

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We hold to that Defender of the Church who says in Matthew 16:18, "I shall build My Church not upon length of time, nor upon a great number of people, nor upon "so it must be", nor upon the practice or word of saints, nor finally, upon John the Baptist, or Elijah, Isaiah, or any of the prophets, but upon this sole and solid Rock, Christ, the Son of God. Here lies the strength of our faith. Here we are safe against the gates of hell. Jesus cannot lie or deceive, but all men are liars. And when the saints act and speak without this Rock, they, too, are only men. The perfectly true, the only and certain, Word of God must be the foundation of our faith.

— Luther in a letter to King Henry VIII pleading for him to set his new church firmly on the Bible.

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