

Why I Am A Member Of The Franklin Church Of Christ

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Worship

Introduction:

Two weeks ago, I explained why I am a member of the church of Christ. In a nutshell, the answer was because I am a sinner and Jesus has promised to forgive those who are in His church. But there is a secondary question to ask, why am I a member of the Franklin Church of Christ?

Discussion:

- I. God wants me to be a member of a local congregation.
 - A. In the New Testament, we see Christians in local areas banding together. In fact, many of the New Testament epistles were written to these local communities of Christians. Throughout these letters we learn that God expects Christians in local areas to assemble together regularly in order to stimulate one another (**Hebrews 10:25**). They are to submit to a common leadership (**Acts 14:23; I Peter 5:2; Philippians 1:1**), to work with a common treasury (**I Corinthians 16:1-2; Philippians 4:15-18**) and even to keep their members within certain limits of personal behavior (**I Corinthians 5:4-5**).
 - B. The New Testament speaks about people moving from one location to another joining themselves to the local group of disciples. In **Acts 9:26**, Saul moved to Jerusalem and wanted to join himself to the disciples. In **Acts 18:27**, Apollos moved from Ephesus to Achaia. The disciples in Ephesus wrote a letter to the church in Achaia exhorting the brethren to receive him.
 - C. The early Christians joined together in local congregations. If I am going to be what they were, I must do the same. But why did I choose this one? No doubt, as an evangelist who was asked to move here, I chose this one because I was asked. However, in considering the request made by the elders, there were certain criteria that this church had to maintain before I would consider being a part of this church. It is the same criteria I would hold had I simply moved into the area.
- II. Because this congregation has no creed other than the Bible.
 - A. Different churches teach different things. What I have found is that most churches have guidebooks, manuals, catechisms and creeds that govern what they are teaching. I am a member at the Franklin Church because the only manual or creed used here is the Bible.
 - B. Many people have offered defenses of the creed books for their churches. But, when a church writes a book that is to guide their work and teaching, they will inevitably do one of four things.
 1. They will either have less than what is in the Bible. The scripture warns us over and over again not to take away from God's Word (**Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19**).
 2. They will have more than what is in the Bible. The scripture warns us not to add to the Word of God (**Proverbs 30:6**).
 3. They will alter the teaching of God's Word. We are not allowed to twist the doctrine of Christ. If we do, it is to our destruction (**II Peter 3:16**).
 4. They will rewrite the Bible. But to say that the Bible must be rewritten so we can understand it is a charge against God (cf. **II Peter 1:20-21; Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17**).
 - C. The Bible equips us for every good work (**II Timothy 3:16-17**). We do not need anything else. I am a member of this congregation because it follows the Bible pattern.
- III. Because this congregation worships in accord with the pattern of God.
 - A. Because the Franklin Church simply worships in accord with the Bible pattern. In **John 4:24**, Jesus explained that those in the New Covenant would worship in spirit and truth. Considering the examples set forth by Nadab and Abihu (**Leviticus 10:1-3**), I do not want to worship God in any way other than what He has prescribed. When I examine the scripture and I examine what this church does, they coincide.
 - B. Notice what the scripture teaches regarding worship and how this congregation mirrors that.
 1. In the New Testament, the churches prayed (**Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 14:15, 23**). As you have already seen in this service, this congregation prays in worship to God.
 2. In the New Testament, the churches gathered together on the first day of the week to participate in the Lord's Supper (**Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 10:16**). That is exactly what this

congregation does. When it is the first day of the week, this congregation gathers to break bread and when they are gathered to break bread, it is on the first day of the week.

3. In the New Testament, the church took up a collection on the first day of the week to provide for the monetary needs their work produced (**I Corinthians 16:1-2**). So do we.
4. In the New Testament, the churches sang, accompanied only by their hearts (**Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16**). That is the kind of worship you will find here.
5. In the New Testament, the church read, studied and preached the word of God (**Acts 20:7; I Timothy 4:13**). Again, the Franklin Church of Christ follows this pattern.

IV. Because this congregation works in accord with the plan of God.

- A. This congregation understands that the purpose for this church is to be a pillar and support of the truth (**I Timothy 3:15**). As such, this congregation works in an organized fashion, following the organizational structure that can be found in the New Testament.
 1. First, it is autonomous, submitting only to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. This congregation is not a part of any denomination or association of congregations, for the simple reason that no such organization can be found in the New Testament.
 2. This church has workers appointed to specific roles or offices. There are elders that lead and oversee the flock here (**I Peter 5:1-4**). They do not govern any other churches, nor are they in any way linked with other congregations. There are deacons who are servants in the church (**I Timothy 3:8-13; Philippians 1:1; Acts 6:1-6**). There are evangelists who proclaim the gospel of Jesus (**Ephesians 4:11**).
- B. The work of this church is focused on teaching the gospel of Christ and bearing fruit that glorifies God (**John 15:8**). This church is involved in evangelism of the lost both here and in other places (**Romans 10:13-15; Philippians 4:15-18**). This church is involved in edifying the saints (**I Corinthians 14:26; Hebrews 10:24-25**).
- C. This church recognizes the distinction between the spiritual work of the church and secular, social works, which are only authorized for individuals. Notice in **Acts 2:46** while the Christians ate common meals together, that was something they kept at home. Additionally, we read **I Corinthians 11:17-34**, in which Paul rebukes the Corinthians for making the Lord's Supper a common meal instead of a communion of the body of Christ. Notice the distinction made – there was a spiritual meal that the Christians ate together as the church, but a common meal for social function to fulfill hunger was to be done at home.
- D. This church makes only one exception to this issue of social work. This church understands that it is not a welfare agency for the community. But God has given the church the work of providing the needs for our brethren in Christ. In **Acts 4:34-35**, we find this example set. This congregation takes this duty seriously, not only for Christians here but also for brethren in difficult situations elsewhere (**I Corinthians 16:3**).

V. Because this congregation teaches the truth on the plan of salvation.

- A. What would be the point of being in a church that does not even teach what the Bible says about how to become a Christian? Yet there are numerous churches that teach people to become saved in ways other than can be found in the Bible. I am a member of this church because it teaches just what the Bible says about becoming a Christian.
- B. In **Hebrews 11:6**, we are told that without faith it is impossible to please God. We have to confess that faith in Jesus (**Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37**). We have to repent of our sins (**Luke 13:3,5; 24:47**). Finally, the scripture says we must be baptized for the remission of our sins in order to be saved (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38**). This baptism is a burial, not a sprinkling or pouring (**Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:11-12**). This is what the Bible teaches. And so do we.

Conclusion:

Why am I a member of the Franklin Church of Christ? Because this church submits to God, following his pattern for worship, work and salvation. Why would I want to be a part of a church that did anything less? Does the church of which you are a part follow the pattern of God or does it follow a manmade creed (**Matthew 15:9**)? Today, people say to become a member of the church of your choice. Obviously, it is your choice – but make sure you choose a church that is following God's pattern.