

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Timothy 3:14-16**.
- B. Tonight, I will do another sermon from the Bible question box.
- C. Everything has a purpose or mission--nothing walks with aimless feet. How is one to conduct himself/herself in the church?
- D. This question is answered in understanding the church's purpose and mission. The church is a missionary institution. That is, one who acts and speaks on behalf of another.

I. FALSE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH.

- A. A fundamental law of human nature is that we grasp more easily the negative than the positive. Therefore, let's look at what the church is not.
- B. The church is not:
 1. A society for social prestige.
We are to bring in all lost souls, not just certain lost souls (Jas. 2:1-5; 1Cor. 11:16).
(Jas. 2:1-5) My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with *an attitude of personal favoritism*. **2** For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, **3** and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," **4** have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? **5** Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him*? **(1Cor 11:16)** But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.
 2. A money making institution.
Money is a tool to help do the work of the church (1Tim. 6:10).
For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.
 3. A place to provide entertainment.
Worship is to please God, not ourselves (Jn. 4:24; Ac. 2:42-47).
(Jn 4:24) "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
(Ac 2:42-47) They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. **44** And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; **45** and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. **46** Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.
 4. The building that it meets in.
We do not exist as a church for the sole purpose of maintaining physical structures (Eph. 1:22-23; 1Cor. 3:9).
(Eph 1:22-23) And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, **23** which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.
(1Cor 3:9) For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.
 5. A place for some to take political or social advantage.
The church is not a platform for political reform by would-be government officials (Mt. 22:21; 2Tim. 2:3-6). While we might approve of non-profit groups and their quest to improve the condition of human life, the church (the assembly) is not to be used for that purpose.
(Mt 22:21) They said[^] to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's."
(2Tim 2:3-6) Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. **4** No soldier in active service

entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. **5** And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. **6** The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.

6. A place for the promotion of a business venture.

The story is told of a salesman who transferred his membership from one church to another so that he could effectively sell his product (Mt. 21:13).

And He said[^] to them, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER'; but you are making it a ROBBERS' DEN."

- C. While this list is not exhaustive, it gives a good idea of some things that the church is not to be involved in.

II. THE PURPOSE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

A. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth.

1. No other institution on earth is (1Tim. 3:15)!

but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

2. If the church does not support the truth of God's word the world will not see it (Phil 2:15).

that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,...

B. The church is the glory of God's inheritance (Eph. 1:18).

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,...

C. The purpose of the church is the same as was X's purpose on the earth (Jn. 17:4).

"I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do."

D. Specifically, the mission of the church is to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10; Rom. 5:8; 1Tim. 1:15).

(Lk 19:10) For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

(Rom 5:8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **(1Tim 1:15)** It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,

E. Paul described the mission of the apostles as being ambassadors for X. We can make the application to the church:

1. An ambassador (the church) is one sent on behalf of another (2Cor. 5:20a).

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us;

2. An ambassador of X (the church) looks at the world as does X (2Cor. 5:16).

Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

3. An ambassador of X (the church) has the ministry of reconciliation (2Cor. 5:18-19a).

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, **19** namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them,

4. An ambassador of X has a special message (2Cor. 5:19b-20b).

and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. **20** we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

III. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IN THREE PARTS.

A. With the mission and purpose of the church understood, these are carried out in a 3-fold work from God.

B. First, **evangelism**.

1. See Mt. 28:19-20.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

2. See Mk. 16:15-16.

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. **16** "He who has

believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

3. See Eph. 3:10.
in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

4. See Ac. 8:4.
Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

C. Second, **edification**.

1. See Mt. 28:20a.
teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;
2. See Eph. 4:11-15.
And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. **14** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; **15** but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

3. See Col. 1:28.
And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.

4. See Heb. 5:12.
For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

D. Third, **benevolence**.

1. See Gal. 6:10.
So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
2. See Rom. 15:26-27.
For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. **27** Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

3. See Jas. 1:27.
This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

4. See Ac. 11:27-30.
Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. **28** One of them named Agabus stood up and *began* to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the *reign* of Claudius. **29** And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send *a contribution* for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. **30** And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. In review:
 1. The purpose of the church is to glorify God in everything it does.
 2. The mission of the church is the same as X's, to seek and save the lost.
 3. Both accomplished in evangelism, edification, and benevolence.
- B. By doing these things you will know how to conduct yourself in the church.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.