



SESSION 1 — Loving the Local Church

- Pastor Phelps -

Timothy Dwight, the grandson of Jonathon Edwards and President of Yale during a time of great revival, wrote the song, “I Love Thy Church, O God.” Does your heart move with the same passion that moved his?

*I love Thy church. O God; her walls before me stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye, and graven on Thy hand.
For her my tears shall fall, for her my prayers ascend;
to her my cares and toils be giv'n till toils and care shall end.*

The sun came up this morning in order for the precious promise of our Savior to be fulfilled. Jesus said, “I will build My church!” (Matt. 16:18)

CONSIDER THE PATTERN

The historical record is clear. The Spirit of God has extended the witness of the gospel through the building of the church. The book of Acts is the historic record of the planting of local churches.

CONSIDER THE PROMINENCE

We find the word “church” and “churches” over _____ times in the New Testament. The overwhelming majority of the times that this word is used, it references the _____ church. It is clear that the Paul’s passion was to spread the gospel through the building of local churches (II Cor. 11:28; Eph. 4:13, 5:17).

CONSIDER THE PRIORITY

That which was a “mystery” in times past, has been manifest in the present (Col. 1:26-27; Eph. 3:1-6). God has made the church to be the primary witness of Himself in this post-ascension age.

CONSIDER THE PECULIARITY

The local church is uniquely called, “The assembly of God” (I Cor.1:2); “The assembly of His body” (Eph. 1:22-23); “An habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22); and “The _____ and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15).

CONSIDER THE PURPOSE

The church bears unique and distinct responsibilities. The stewardship of the _____ (I Tim. 3:15), the operation of the _____ (I Cor. 11:23f). The local church collectively has oversight over:

1. Send out _____ (Acts 13:1f)
2. Select officers (Acts 6:1-6; Acts 14:23)
3. Guard against heresy (Acts 15:1f)
4. Exercise _____ (Matt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5).
5. Maintain financial stewardship (I Cor. 16:1f).

CONSIDER THE PEOPLE

The church is a body (I Cor. 12-14), and every part of the body is essential. Specifically, when the Savior ascended, He gave gifted ones unto the church (Eph. 4:8-16).

CONSIDER THE PURITY

Early in the history of the church, the Lord made it clear that hypocrisy and falsehood would not be tolerated (Acts 5:1-5). That same burden for _____ continues today (I Cor. 3:17).

CONSIDER THE PROMISE

The Lord is preparing the church for a wonderful day of presentation! He longs to present the church to Himself as a “glorious church without spot or wrinkle” (Eph. 5:27).

CONSIDER THE PRIMACY

The doctrine of church primacy has long been forgotten in a generation of “Christianity lite.” But in this dispensation, that which was created after the home and government takes on a role of primacy.