



Volume 4 #48

November 24, 2019



Seeking and Saving The Lost...

We are honored and blessed to have you worshipping with us today and we extend our warmest welcome. Our service is modeled after the New Testament pattern of worship. If you have questions or concerns please express them to us. We are all here to serve.

Prayer

Health: Zandra, Gloria, Donna, Ebony, Wanda, Leola & Larry, Sister Irma, Sylvia & Patrick, Thom & Mary Elizabeth, TC, Lenard, Rebekah, Prince, Carol and her mother Loretta, Lorena and family, Mike's family, TC's sister Irene, Prince's sister, Leona's health and well being, Sister Johnson. The health and well being of Kathy Brass.

Also: The family of Leola's friend Sherry as they mourn her passing. Chris's sister Cindy. Wanda's brother Joe. Shannon's sister. The Lasater family. The Evans family as they mourn.

Today's Services

- Singing
- Prayer
- Singing
- Scripture Reading
- Preaching
- Invitation Song
- Communion Song
- Communion
- Offering
- Announcements
- Closing Song
- Closing Prayer

God's Plan of Salvation

Hear	Romans 10:17
Believe	Mark 16:15-16
Repent	Luke 13:3-5
Confess	Matthew 10:32-33
Baptism	1Peter 3:1
Live Faithfully	Revelation2:10

Schedule of Services

Sunday AM Bible Class	10:00 AM
Sunday AM Worship	11:00 AM
Sunday PM Worship	5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Class	7:00 PM



Church Buildings

Louis Rushmore

The early church did not own church property and had no meetinghouses of its own apart from the homes of members and public places. The birthday of the Lord's church in Acts 2 found the church and the other disciples in a public place, probably on the Temple grounds, whereupon about 3,000 souls were able to respond favorably to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. The church frequented the meeting area of Solomon's Porch thereafter (Acts 3:11; 5:12); the apostles had been there previously with Jesus Christ (John 10:23). Later, some disciples had gathered for prayers in the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12). It was also customary for followers of God to assemble in quiet places outdoors, such as among trees and near a river (Acts 16:13).

The New Testament epistles show that the church often met in the homes of fellow Christians. "Likewise greet the church that is in their house..." (Romans 16:5 NKJV). "... Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house" (1 Corinthians 16:19). "Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nympha and the church that is in his house" (Colossians 4:15). "To the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house" (Philemon 2).

Perhaps the first church building of sorts, and it was in a cave, devoted to the assembly of the church is dated

about 200 years after the establishment of the Lord's church.

Archaeologists have unearthed what they believe to be the first Christian church ever built. It's located in a cave underneath the Saint Georgeous Church in Rihab in northern Jordan – where it's thought early Christians fled to escape persecution. Built in 230 AD, Saint Georgeous is believed to be the oldest "proper" church in the world. ("World's First Christian Church")

It is no wonder, then, that the New Testament does not contain any information and reveals no instructions governing the acquisition, maintenance and use of church buildings. It is especially remarkable, therefore, that sometimes our brethren have developed **doctrines** regarding the use of meetinghouses among us. Imagine the devastating effect on any first century family who allowed the local church to assemble in its home, if it were doctrinally impermissible to eat a meal where Christians worship. First century Christians were wholly unaware of such a so-called doctrine, and with apostolic approval, they ate in the same place where they had just worshipped.

Now on the **first day of the week**, when the **disciples came together to break bread**, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking,

he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." Now **when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten**, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. (Acts 20:7-11)

Acts 20:7 shows that the church in Troas assembled to observe the Lord's Supper, and Paul also preached to them. In verse 11, these brethren returned from the resurrection of Eutychus to where they had been worshipping to eat a meal together.

I am amazed at the amount of money that Christians customarily expend on church buildings (i.e., acquisition and maintenance) with little thought that church buildings are not in the New Testament. Of course, the requirement to assemble (Hebrews 10:25) implies the necessity of a place to assemble, and contemporary brethren have opted in their opinion and human judgment to rent or purchase church property. No less astonishing, then, are the divisive doctrines that fellow Christians have adopted to regulate not only the use of their meetinghouses, but they also attempt to regulate the use of the meetinghouses of other congregations.

A church building is a tool to aid in providing a regular place for Christians to worship. It may also be a base from which Christians may launch into the surrounding community to present the Gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16). Usually, meetinghouses are also a place in which Christians edify each other with the Word of God (e.g., Bible

classes, Gospel meetings, lectureships, ladies' inspiration days, vacation Bible School, etc.). A church building may also serve as a tool from which benevolence may be extended to Christians and non-Christians alike (Galatians 6:10). Sometimes, church buildings serve as a place in which Christians and non-Christian guests may gather to further fellowship and congregational interaction outside of worship.

We need to remember that a church building is a tool, much like any other, existing and used at the discretion of human judgment. It exists as an outgrowth of the implication that Christians need to assemble somewhere and of the human inference that a church building will satisfy that need. It may be that a particular meetinghouse exists also for other reasons that further the maintenance of (edification, fellowship) and the expansion of Christianity (evangelism) locally. How a local congregation uses its building or whether it owns church property at all is the sole discretion of those church members. They may not overstep their authority regarding their local membership to interfere with another congregation's decision regarding its meetinghouse, and neither ought other congregations interfere with the decisions of the former church. The Bible is silent about acquisition, maintenance and use of church buildings, and we ought to be as silent about how congregations other than the one of which we are members use their meetinghouses. Let's not make laws where the New Testament does not.