

*“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).*

## Joining the Church

*by John Isaac Edwards*

There is a sense in which one joins the church. He does not do this in the universal sense, as the Lord adds him to the number of the saved when he obeys the gospel. This occurred on Pentecost, for example, when “...they that gladly received his word were baptized...” (Acts 2:41) and “...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). He then joins the church in the local sense.

### **Classic Examples.**

Soon after the conversion of Saul in Damascus, we find him departing for Jerusalem due to Jews who took counsel to kill him. Acts 9:26-28 informs us, “And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that

he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.” There are several lessons to be learned from this classic example of local church membership:

First, when I arrive in an area, I ought to seek out the Lord’s disciples.

Second, I should try to join myself to the disciples.

Third, if I am in good standing, there ought to be someone who can give a good recommendation to the disciples.

Fourth, I ought to be with the disciples coming in and going out.

Another classic example concerns Apollos. “And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the

disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ” (Acts 18:27-28).

These first-century examples set a pattern for us today.

### **Why Some Don’t**

**Join.** Contrary to the pattern of the New Testament we just observed, there are some today who seem to not want to be a part of a local church. Different explanations are offered. Consider a few examples:

*I am a member of the church “at large.”* I am not sure what they mean by that. The universal church has no organization, work, or worship. Disciples join themselves to work and worship together and to carry out their various duties and responsibilities within the

framework of the local church. There are numerous examples of local churches in the New Testament. A good example is when Paul wrote, "...to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1).

*I don't want anyone checking on me, if I miss the services.* Why not? We knew a sister in the local church of which we were members that missed a service one Wednesday night. When we checked on her, she was found lying on the floor having suffered a heart attack! An ambulance was called, she was taken to the local hospital, and recovered. She appreciated the fact that she was "checked on." We should recognize the full worth of being among a body of members who "...have the same care one for another" (1 Cor. 12:25).

*I don't want to feel obligated or be committed.* There are some who avoid joining themselves to the disciples because they don't want to feel compelled to be faithful. They just want to come and go as they please. Don't overlook the fact that the Lord said, "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

*I don't want to be a subject of discipline.* Discipline is commanded by the Lord for our good. Paul addressed the church of the Thessalonians, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Th. 3:6). This is done so that "...the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). When we

are committed to doing what the Bible teaches, we do not have to worry about being a subject of church discipline.

**Your Invitation to Join Yourself to the Disciples Here.** We appeal to you in the words of Moses unto Hobab, "...come thou with us, and we will do thee good..." (Num. 10:29). We are disciples who love the Lord, His word and one another, and who are wholeheartedly dedicated to doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17) and holding fast the pattern of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13).

As Paul said concerning Onesimus and Epaphras, in his letter to the church at Colosse, "...who is one of you..." (Col. 4:9, 12), why don't you let it be known that you want to be one of us. We trust you can be of help to us and we can be of help to you.

**The Terre Haute **SPEAKER**** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

**Assembling At:**  
4017 E Margaret DR  
Terre Haute, IN 47803  
[Exit 11 (I-70) W on HWY 46,  
W on Margaret DR approx. 1 mile]

**Assembling Times:**  
Sunday @ 10:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.  
Wednesday @ 7:00 p.m.

***Come be with us!***



***We Speak Where the Bible Speaks.***

***We Are Silent Where the Bible Is Silent.***

***We Do Bible Things in Bible Ways.***

**[www.churchofchristatterrehaute.com](http://www.churchofchristatterrehaute.com)**