

# New Testament Church

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## Lesson 9

### Collective Activities of a Local Church

# Individual vs. Church Activity

- We need to distinguish between the individual activities of a Christian and the organized group action of a local church (collective action).
- Chad, Cary, and Andy opened a donut shop a few years ago. Was the church in the donut business?
- Suppose Philip and Christine have a bunch of us over for a meal (1 Peter 4:9). Is the church providing this meal?
- Matthew 18:15–17: “you...them...the church”

# Individual vs. Church Activity

- “If any believing man or woman has widows, let **them** relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that **it** may relieve those who are really widows” (1 Tim. 5:16).
- Distinction seen in how funds are raised:
  - How does a local church raise funds for its collective activities? 1 Cor. 16:1–2.
  - How do individuals gather needed funds? Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10.
  - And one’s individual funds are under his control until relinquished to the group (Acts 5:4).

# Individual vs. Church Activity

- God organized His people into local churches to fulfill very specific, limited purposes.
- Think in terms of a hospital, which exists for a certain purpose. Suppose you donated money to this hospital, only to realize these funds were being used to stage political rallies, or some other activity outside the scope of its purpose.
- Let's make sure, then, that when we study of the activities of a local church, we use passages that address local churches and not individuals.

# One of the purposes for the local church arrangement

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So God's people could assemble together in one place and worship Him, and in so doing, edify and encourage one another (Hebrews 10:24–25).

# In their assemblies...

- What they did on a regular basis, in worship to God.
  - Preached, taught the word—Acts 2:42; 11:26; 15:30–35, 40–41; 16:4–5; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 14:3–5, 26; Col. 4:16; Rev. 2–3.
  - Sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs together—1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.
  - Prayed—Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:14–17.
  - Gave money for Lord's work—1 Cor. 16:1–2.  
\*Limited to first day of the week.
  - Ate Lord's supper—Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17–34.  
\*Also limited to first day of the week.

# In their assemblies...

- What they did as the need/circumstances called for it:
  - Informed brethren of needs—Acts 11:27–30.
  - Gave reports of preaching work—Acts 14:27; 15:4.
  - Appointed elders—Acts 14:23.
  - Commended brethren—3 John 1:5–6; 2 Thess. 1:4.
  - Administered discipline—1 Cor. 5:1–4.

# Other activities

- Primary work: The same as what the church in Thessalonica was commended for: “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth” (1 Thess. 1:8).
  - Harmonizes with God’s **primary** desire: “who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).
- Every local church should strive to be “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15)—to hold up the truth both to the lost and its own (Eph. 4:11–16).



# Other activities

- They supported the **preaching of the gospel** financially (2 Cor. 11:7–9; Phil. 1:3–5; 4:15–18).
- They sent men from their own midst to **preach the gospel** in other places (Acts 11:19–24; 13:1–4; 14:26–27; 15:39–40).
- They provided for the needs of destitute saints, among their own, and in other churches (Acts 2:44–45; 4:32–35; 6:1–6; 11:27–30; Rom. 15:25–27; 1 Cor. 16:1–3; 2 Cor. 8–9).

# Where is the authority?

- For local churches to be involved in political rallies, or other political activities?
- For local churches to provide secular education?
- For local churches to provide entertainment?
- For local churches to provide recreational outlets—gyms, Family Life Centers, etc.?
- For local churches to provide medical care for the general population?
- For local churches to provide “fellowship meals”?