

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study 9:00 A.M.
 Worship 10:00 A.M.
 Training Class 5:00 P.M.
 Worship 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 P.M.



Weekly Bulletin
 April 1, 2018

Back to the Beginning: A Study of Local Churches in the New Testament (Part 1)

by Bryan Gibson

“Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father” (1 John 2:24). Back to the beginning—wouldn’t it be great if we did that to settle religious questions today? Let’s go back to the beginning to see what was true of local churches in the New Testament, and what should therefore be true of churches today. Study carefully, and then compare your church to what was taught “from the beginning.”

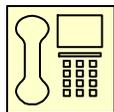
New Testament churches were taught the same doctrine—the apostles’ doctrine, or the doctrine of Christ. So whatever they did in terms of organization, work, and worship, they were taught to do so, and their instruction came from the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:17; 7:17; 14:34-35; 16:1-2; Colossians 4:16; Acts

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2:42; 20:26-27; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 4:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). Want to know how your church should be organized, what it should do in worship, and what its work should be? Go back to the beginning, to the pattern given and followed by these New Testament churches.

New Testament churches were sternly warned against following any other doctrine (Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 2:8, 19, 22-23; Revelation 2:14-15). How can a church claim to be “of Christ” if it does not follow the doctrine of Christ? Remember the passage at the beginning of this article: “...If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you will also abide in the Son and in the Father” (1 John 2:24).

New Testament churches raised money for their work by the voluntary contributions of their members (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; 11:8). No other method was used, and they certainly didn’t solicit the support of those outside the church. Have you thought about all the different methods used by churches today to fund their work? They sure didn’t go back to the beginning to find them.

The work assigned to these **New Testament churches** was distinguished from the work assigned to individuals within the church (1 Timothy 5:16). The argument, “anything the individual can do the church can do,” is completely opposed to the teaching in the New Testament. Yes, there is some overlap in responsibilities, such as support for the preaching of the gospel (Philippians 4:15; Galatians 6:6), but this still doesn’t mean that the church can involve itself in anything and

everything. Want to know what the church is supposed to do, with its collective resources? That’s right. Go back to the beginning. Look at the pattern in the New Testament and follow that.

New Testament churches had regular worship assemblies, and these were conducted according to the instructions of the Lord. A distinction was made between what should be done “at home” and what should be done “in church,” or in the assembly (1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 34; 14:34-35). Let’s go back to the beginning, observe what they did in the assembly, and then be content with that. To do otherwise would be to go beyond the word of the Lord, and we are specifically forbidden to do that (2 John 1:9; Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-9). *(To be continued next week).*

The Burden of Sin

“O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure! For Your arrows pierce me deeply, and Your hand presses me down. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger, nor any health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are full of inflammation, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and severely broken; I groan because of the turmoil of my heart” (Psalms 38:1-8).