

## Church and Worship?

Jesus made clear in the gospel that He had come to build His 'Church' (Matthew 16:18). The Church is further described in the New Testament as Christ's 'body'. (Eph 5:23) The word 'church' means '**assembly**' or '**gathering**'. The New Testament speaks, for example, of the Church 'in' or 'at' a particular location, like Colossae or Corinth. So the word Church means a gathering or assembling of people in a particular location, who are united to Christ/His gospel and with one another.

The teaching of the New Testament makes equally clear that the Church is to gather together for 'worship'. It specifies a specific 'day' (the first day of the week, ie., Sunday), in distinction from the Jewish day of worship (Saturday) retaining the principle of the Creation Ordinance in the Fourth Commandment. It also specifies the details of such worship, eg., in 1Tim 2-3 . In essence such worship was an act of 'obeisance', ie, of bowing down (eg Psalm 95) – an attitude of humility and reverence in expressing penitence, praise and prayer and 'putting ourselves under' the preaching of God's Word.

God's command to the Church to 'gather' or 'assemble' is tragically being 'set aside' by some. An 'innovative' idea, based on the RSV rendering of Romans 12:1 "I beseech you .. present you bodies as a living sacrifice ... which is your **spiritual worship**", has 'altered' the concept of worship to an 'individualism' that negates (or lessens) the requirement for public assembly! The words "spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1) are an inaccurate and misleading translation of the original, which is more accurately translated 'reasonable service'. Paul, in Romans 12:1 is not speaking about 'public assembly' of the Church but rather, that each individual Christian should 'sacrifice' his/her life in 'service' for God. Is not part of that 'service' public worship?

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