The Church – the Body of Christ

To understand the eternal plan God made concerning Christ and His Church, we will need to look carefully at what Scripture says about it. God's plan for the newborn believer is to make him grow, to perfect him,

to make him like Christ. And He does this through His Word, through the Holy Spirit and with the help of the members who are in the Body of Christ. This plan was made in eternity in Christ Jesus. (According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Ephesians 3:11)

God's plan for the Body of Christ looks to our growth and to our coming unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ! (And he gave some… pastors and teachers; **for the perfecting of the saints… till we all come… unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.** Ephesians 4:11-13)

If we pay attention, we can easily see that no one who turns to God has the fruit of the Spirit from the very start, that is, longsuffering, gentleness, love… These qualities have to be gained through God's work in a person. In this work we have at our disposal the word of Scripture, which works in us, the Holy Spirit, who in turn does His work, and the **Church**, which is the **Body of Christ.**

The Role of the Church

To understand better what role the Church plays in our growth and perfecting, we will highlight a few verses from God's Holy Word that show God's involvement in the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

- "I will build my church…" (Matthew 16:18)

- "He is the head of the body, the church." (Colossians 1:18)

- "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Corinthians 12:27)

- "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." (Ephesians 5:29, 30)

- "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you… for his body's sake, which is the church." (Colossians 1:24)

The Church is identified as the body of Christ. He is the Head of the body, and people born of the seed of God are its members. (He is the head of the body, the church. Colossians 1:18; Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 1 Corinthians 12:27)

God puts together the Body of Christ, and it works much like the human body. (God hath tempered the body together. 1 Corinthians 12:24) He places in the Body of Christ only members who have life from above, that is, people who are born again. (The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:47)

He begins His work in us, and if we remain obedient, He will bring it to completion. (Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6)

He has promised to be with us always, never to leave us for a moment. He will take us by the hand and walk with us to the end of the road. (Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:20; For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Hebrews 13:5)

Scripture shows us the relationship there must be between the members of the Church of Christ, His Body:

- They are closely joined to one another. (From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:16)

- They do not live for themselves. (For none of us liveth to himself. Romans 14:7)

- They are members one of another. (So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Romans 12:5)

- Each seeks the good of others. (But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 1 Corinthians 12:7; Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. 1 Corinthians 10:24)

- They care for one another. (God hath tempered the body together… that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 1 Corinthians 12:24, 25)

- They submit to one another. (Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Ephesians 5:21)

- In humility each one regards the other as better than himself. (In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Philippians 2:3)

- They bear one another's burdens. (Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2)

- The greatest are the servants of all. (He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

- They watch over one another. (And let us consider one another. Hebrews 10:24)

- They watch that no one among them is worldly, and they do not tolerate evil. (Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person. Hebrews 12:16)

- They love one another after the pattern of Christ. (That ye love one another, as I have loved you. John 15:12)

Only in the Church can we experience these relationships, and they are essential to our growth till we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13)

Questions:

- Do we find ourselves in a Body that is closely joined and fitly knit together? (Ephesians 4:16)

- Are we in the Body, the Family, for the good of the other members? (1 Corinthians 10:24)

- To whom are we closely joined, and whose burdens are we bearing? (Galatians 6:2)

- Do we live in submission to Christ and to the other members? (Ephesians 5:21)

- Do we watch over one another so that no one among us is worldly? (Hebrews 12:16)

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