

CONNECTED TO CHRIST

Why Membership Matters

New Group Study
Wednesdays, June 29 – July 27, 2022
Noon | Online

PETER SPECKHARD



PREFACE & OPENING PRAYER

PREFACE: This study is geared especially to people who may have been raised in the church and might still consider themselves Christians but who do not view official membership in a congregation or regular participation in worship as important.

For active church members, it also serves as a good refresher or general explanation of what congregations are and do.

The book can give regular churchgoers a clearer understanding of what they already experience at church and help them communicate the importance of it to their loved ones who are questioning their need for church.

OPENING PRAYER



CHAPTER 3: MORE THAN “PRAY, PAY, AND OBEY”

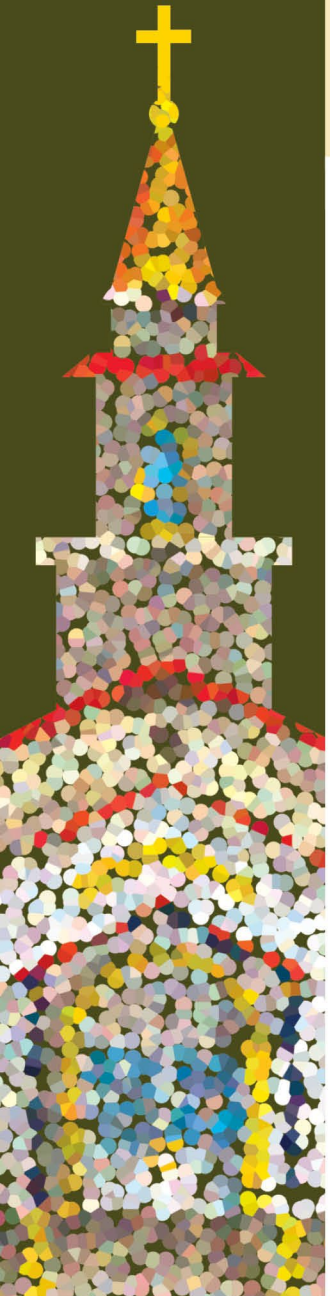
Sometimes what we don't like about a person or thing is actually what is good about the person or thing.

Perhaps you had a teacher whom you didn't like at the time because he or she seemed too difficult and harsh, but now in retrospect you consider that person to have been your best teacher.

Or perhaps as a child you spit out some sharp cheddar cheese for the same reason you might love to eat sharp cheddar now that your pallet is more mature.



CHAPTER 3: MORE THAN “PRAY, PAY, AND OBEY”



When it comes to church membership people often need to get over the same sorts of humps. What they think of as the bad things about it are actually the good things about it once you understand them.

In this session, we will discuss the concepts in ...

Chapter 3: MORE THAN “PRAY, PAY, AND OBEY”

Chapter 3 Discussion

- **Why are our worst fights and disagreements often with the people with whom we have the closest relationships, like family members?**
- **What enables us to make it through the rough times in order to experience the blessings of family?**

Chapter 3 Discussion (Continued)

Perhaps you've heard someone say of their congregation something like, "All they want is for us to pray, pay, and obey."

- What is the person really complaining about?**
- What common complaints have you heard or perhaps made yourself about a congregation?**
- Why do you think the thing being complained about is the way it is?**

Chapter 3 Discussion (Continued)

When people don't see or experience the blessings of church membership, they typically stop showing up regularly. And people who don't show up often generally don't experience all the blessings of membership.

- **Have you seen this cycle at work in yourself or someone you know?**
 - **What starts the cycle, and**
 - **what might turn it around?**

Chapter 3 Discussion (Continued)

- **Have you ever been encouraged, perhaps when going to a new church for the first time, by the presence of other people like you in the church service?**
- **Have you ever benefitted from or been encouraged by the presence of people who are very unlike you (age, race, marital status, etc.) in the service?**

Share some examples.

- **What does that say about your presence being a gift to other people who might be there?**

Chapter 3 Discussion (Continued)

- **When do you typically pray... and for whom?**
- **Could you benefit from having a list of things people might want you to be praying about?**
- **How might a church serve people even in terms of their private, personal, weekday prayer life?**

Chapter 3 Discussion (Continued)

- **What signs of "Itching Ears Syndrome" (pp. 70-71) do you struggle with?**
- **Do you think tithing to a congregation is possible in your case?**
- **What are your thoughts on the relationship between the church and offering plates?**

Chapter 3 Discussion (Continued)

- **What do you think of when you hear the word obey?**
- **Could a church be faithful without reproof, rebuking, or exhorting those members who disregard the teachings of that church?**
- **What aspect of your behavior do you find hardest to reconcile to the teachings of the church?**
- **How might obedience, if you tried it, be a blessing in disguise, and disobedience be adding to your woes?**

Chapter 3 Closing Thoughts

“Obedience is one of the most important and most dangerous things in human society.”

Remember you leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith . . . Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:7, 17)

For Next Session...

We will get a little deeper into some new questions at our next session...

If you have not already done so, read the Book...

Chapter 4: “TRUST, BUT VERIFY”

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer

- Recording is turned off
- Any SPECIFIC Requests for prayer?