

# Honoring the Lord's Church

*"Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name" (Psalm 29:2)*

Honoring Christ as the head of the church will result in respecting the way the Lord has designed and established the church, as well as the way He has organized local churches to function.

## 1—DEFINITIONS

Honor—high respect, as for worth, merit, or rank;  
the privilege of being associated with or receiving a favor from a respected person;  
to worship (the Supreme Being)

Glorify—to honor with praise, admiration, or worship;  
to cause to be or treat as being more splendid, excellent, etc., than would normally be considered

John 17:4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

## 2—IT IS HIS CHURCH

Honoring the **Lord's** Church—let's establish first that it is HIS church.

Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God **which He purchased** with His own blood.

In this place it means that Christ had acquired, gained, or procured the church for Himself, by paying His own life (blood) as the price. The church is often represented as having thus been bought with a price, 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; 2 Peter 2:1.

1 Peter 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,  
19 but **with the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Matthew 16:18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build **My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Ephesians 1:22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be **head** over all things to the church,  
23 which is **His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

**It is HIS church; HE is the head.**

If something is mine, who owns it; who controls it; who decides how and what should be done with it?

We honor the Lord's church because it belongs to Him; it is His church.

### 3—HONORING HIM IN HIS CHURCH

Let's look at His church two ways and how we honor Him through His church—

The universal church

The local church (congregation)

### 4—THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

*This is the individual Christian and his relationship with Jesus Christ as his head.*

In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles, and Peter preached the first sermon. The Jews who had crucified Christ were “cut to the heart” (vs 37) and wanted to know what to do. Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins was Peter's answer (vs 38). That day (matter of hours?) 3,000 were baptized and added to them (vs 41). The Lord added them to the church (vs 47).

Which church? His church. A local congregation—Jerusalem, Bethany, Samaria, Antioch?

These local churches did not exist—yet.

They were added to the ‘universal church’—the saved body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23).

What is our relationship with Christ?

The church is His bride (Revelation 22). We are the church (saved, ex Acts 2). We honor Him as a wife is to honor her husband. Honor (def)—“high respect” (Ephesians 5:33).

We are in subjection to Him (Ephesians 5:22-24). To submit—to yield to the authority of another. Said of children to parents (Ephesians 6:1). Demonstrated by Jesus to His parents (Luke 2:51).

Ephesians 6:2 "Honor your father and mother" Reverence, respect, and obedience are implied in honoring parents. The same words apply as we honor our Master.

Reverence defined as a feeling or attitude of profound respect, usually reserved for the sacred or divine.

Respect defined as an attitude of deference, admiration, or esteem.

Obedience defined as dutiful or submissive compliance.

God has given Him the preeminence (Colossians 1:18). He is first in rank, dignity, honor, and in power.

So, looking at our relationship with Jesus as the purchaser and head of this universal body of saints, how do we show honor to Him and His church?

Acknowledge Him as the Head (emphasis on word ‘the’).

Acknowledge Him as the sole authority.

Submit (completely) to His authority.

Give obedience (submissive compliance) without question.  
Demonstrate an attitude of profound respect.  
Demonstrate an attitude of admiration and esteem.

1 John 3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!

No bounds—

This ‘universal’ church, the body of all saved in a submissive relationship to its Head, is not bounded by time or space. It began on the Pentecost in Acts 2 and will continue forever. Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

It consists of believers from every nation (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:5; Revelation 5:9).

It will continue forever without end. Ephesians 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (KJV)

It has members from the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. It has members from other conversions recorded throughout the book of Acts. It has members from our time and from every age from Acts 2 until now. And, it will have new members added from all over our globe as long as our Father allows this earth to spin.

1 Corinthians 15:24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

## 5—THE LOCAL CHURCH

Look at two areas—

Organization that honors Christ  
Work that honors Christ

### 5A—LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Biblical Pattern—

#### **Elders**

Acts 14:23 So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and **appoint elders** in every city as I commanded you--

1 Timothy 3:1 This is a faithful saying: If a **man** desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

1 Peter 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church

Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

(same group of men called elders and overseers with task to shepherd the church at Ephesus)

Definitions—

Presbuteros (pres-boo'-ter-os)—mature in age and spiritual development

Elder—Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you

Presbytery—1 Timothy 4:14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. (NKJV)

1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (ASV)

Episkopos (ep-is'-kop-os)—ability to rule

Overseer—Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Bishop—Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons

Poimen (poy-mane')—understanding how to care and watch

Shepherd—1 Peter 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

Pastor—Ephesians 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers

Shepherding linked with oversight—

1 Peter 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; (NKJV)

2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; (ASV)

**Deacon**—servant, waiter; one charged with the temporal affairs of the local congregation

1 Timothy 3:8 Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money,

1 Timothy 3:10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.

1 Timothy 3:12 Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

1 Timothy 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons

**Saints**—faithful in Christ

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Philippians 4:22 All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

Colossians 1:2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

Hebrews 13:24 Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.

**Evangelist**—the work of preaching the gospel

Ephesians 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

2 Timothy 4:5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

How do we honor the Lord's church in the church organization?

Elders must remember they answer to the Chief Shepherd and thus do their work accordingly, doing everything with this in mind as they honor Him.

1 Peter 5:1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

Feed the flock "among you" – don't try to run the brotherhood, or even the congregation down the street. Don't be overly influenced by what other congregations are doing. Just because it is good for them doesn't (necessarily) make it good for you. It could.

Serve "willingly" and "eagerly" – not having to be pushed to the "good work" (1 Timothy 3:1).

Serve by being a "good example" to the flock, not trying to always exercise your authority.

Serve looking for the eternal reward that comes from **servi**ng honorably.

The congregation has a responsibility to honor the Lord by obeying the elders. This applies to doctrinal matters, as long as the elders are following our Lord's teachings, and in judgmental matters. These men have been selected and installed to this office for this purpose.

*When members associate themselves with a local congregation they, by default, agree to submit themselves to the oversight of the duly appointed eldership.*

Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

We honor the Lord and His church by being properly organized ("set in order") then submitting to and working with the leadership.

## 5B—LOCAL CHURCH WORK

Paul's desire for the church in Thessalonica was that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ would be glorified in them and that they would be glorified in our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

By glorifying (honoring) the name of a person we honor the person. Paul wants them to honor our Lord Jesus Christ and then when He comes in judgment they would be honored by Him.

Glorifying the name of Jesus “is the end we should aim at in everything we do and desire, that God and Christ in all things may be glorified. Our own happiness and that of others should be subordinate to this ultimate end. Our good works should so shine before men that others may glorify God, that Christ may be glorified in and by us, and then we shall be glorified in and with him.” (Matthew Henry)

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

## **Evangelism**

Evangelism is accomplished through the sharing of the gospel message by members sharing it and/or by supporting others who work at evangelism.

The Holy Spirit had a work for Barnabas and Saul to preach the gospel.

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

As Paul neared the end of his life he told his son in the faith, Timothy, to “Preach the word!”

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

Local churches give/send money to men who are preaching the gospel of our Lord.

2 Corinthians 11:8 I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.

9 And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.

**Edification** is accomplished through teaching the word and in worship. When we come together to worship, in an orderly manner, we teach and edify one another.

1 Corinthians 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

1 Corinthians 14:26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

2 Timothy 2:24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach

**Helping needy saints** is accomplished by churches taking care of the needy saints among them (1 Timothy 5:8-16) or by sending relief to churches where there are needy saints (or brethren). (Acts 11:29-30; Romans 15:26-31; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 and 9). There is a definite pattern here. Be careful to study and follow it.

*Care for needy saints (widows) locally*

1 Timothy 5:9 Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man,

16 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.

*Care for needy saints at other places*

Romans 15:26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

We honor the Lord and His church by eagerly and dutifully accomplishing the work He has assigned and authorized.

## 6—CLOSING

A local church honors Christ when they teach the truth and walk in love and unity.

1 Timothy 3:15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

2 John 1:5 And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.

6 This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

Ephesians 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us

We honor and glorify Christ by doing the work in the local church that He has specified for us to do. Anything else would not bring honor to him and will lead us to spiritual damnation. (See the following lesson about Nadab and Abihu from David Maxson [bold emphasis by wmh]. Even though you know the narrative, read this carefully and apply it to our work and worship today.)

## **Title: Holy Worship for a Holy God**

### **Reading for February 3rd: Leviticus 8-10**

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace. Leviticus 10:1-3

This is a tough reading. These two men came to WORSHIP, and they DIED! That's not easy to read, but we need to think carefully about what this means to us.

It helps to understand the context. Back in Exodus God revealed himself in an awesome and terrifying pyrotechnic display on Mount Sinai. The people trembled at the foot of the mountain, completely awestruck and overwhelmed by their God. Nadab and Abihu were not only there, they were given a front row seat getting to ascend the mountain and view God (see Exodus 24:9-11).

Then in Leviticus 8-9 Nadab and Abihu are consecrated as priests. They offer burnt and sin offerings (ch 8). Then they wait at the entrance of the tent of meeting for seven days (8:35). They can't go into the tent of meeting (because they aren't fully cleansed), and they can't go back to the people (because then they would have to repeat the whole process again). So what do they do for those seven days? Sit and think. What do they think about? The holiness of God.

Then on the eighth day we reach the glorious conclusion (ch 9). After more offerings, fire comes down from the LORD to consume their offering. God approved of their worship. And I love the reaction of the people: "When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces." (v 24)

**This context is important. Nadab and Abihu knew better. They knew how holy God was, but they offered unauthorized fire anyway. They were without excuse. Their disobedience, seen in this context, is much more serious than it might appear on the surface. They were willful and rebellious.** As God's priests they had to be made an example. They were to defend and promote the holiness of God before the people, and they profaned him.

So what about you and me? Are we seeking to do everything as God has commanded in our life or are we disregarding his commandments? We are God's priests and it is our job to glorify and sanctify him. We do that through careful obedience.