

member of the church a different role to play in ministering to His people. If we are not in a church we both suffer because of our separation from the people God has given us to minister to us, and we deprive those same Christians of the ministry that God’s developing in *us* too, for *their* sakes!

What role do you wish to play in the Body of Christ? Scripture tells us to desire the best gifts from him, to minister to His people!

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: *I Cor. 12:31*

We CANNOT, “Go it alone!”

Scripture tells us that it is even more important to link up with a church body as the return of Jesus Christ approaches, because of how much sin will increase the closer that days gets!

What role do you wish to play in the Body of Christ?

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, *Heb. 10:24-26*

The above passage tells us that it’s our responsibility and right to encourage and receive encouragement from others, in living holy lives, as turning back from the Gospel means turning back to damnation and so much the more as Christ’s return approaches!

The, “Body of Christ,” or, “local church group,” is God’s vehicle for ministering to both Christian and non-Christian. It is absolutely essential for the Christian to connect up with “God’s organization and support group” in order to both grow in maturity in Christ, and receive God’s help in time of trouble. God could reach down from heaven, with a gigantic hand, and solve all our problems that way, but He’s doesn’t. That method would keep all His people immature and unable to grow personally or in His ways; we’d all just wait for, “Daddy’s,”? intervention. In order to enable

and help us to grow personally God has decided that He would have His people help His people. And He helps His people as they help others.

3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. *II Cor. 1:3-5*

A Christian alone will eventually wither and become totally ineffective in both his personal relationship with God, and in his ability to minister to others. God has determined that He will mature His people by using the context and lives of the other Christians around him. Without that context the individual Christian’s faith becomes mere theory and simplistic ideas; put into the context of the lives of other Christians, with their struggles and triumphs, the life of the individual Christian is made so much easier to fulfill!

But, WHICH church?

Find a church without too much formalism – experience tells us that the less-formal churches usually contain Christians who are most enthusiastic about their faith; these people will be the greatest help to you as you, “grow in Christ.”? Also, the less formalism in a church, and therefore the more you understand about what you are doing in the church service, the more personal and, “real,”? your faith will be to you!

Become as involved as possible in the church. In addition to attending services once or twice on Sunday, attend a mid-week group. These are usually smaller, often in a family’s home, and you will very quickly become quite close to the people who regularly meet there. This will become your core group of friends and support in the church. Without this group (especially in a large church) you will take much longer to, “settle in,”? and become a part, with the resulting friendships, support structure, help, and all things you will need to help you grow in your new faith.

Because God TELLS us to

And, not least of which, God actually commands us to regularly get together with other Christians, for the sake of mutual encouragement in Him.

5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

Deuteronomy 12:5

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. *Heb. 10:24-25*

4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple. *Psalms 27:4*

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising Thee. *Psalms 84:4*

Study the Bible!

God - speaking to YOU!

AS NEWBORN babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. *I Pet. 2:2*

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. *II Tim. 2: 15*

16a Seek ye out of the Book of the LORD, and read: *Isa. 34:16a*

39 Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. *John 5:39*

Scripture - the very Voice of God!

WE HAVE the incredible opportunity, as humans, to actually read the very Words of God Himself!

Every Word in the Bible (except the original Ten

Commandments, which God wrote with His finger into stone) was written by the hand of man, but *under the dictates of God*. For which reason, there is nothing in the Bible that was not intended by God to be accepted as His very Words! God relies on man to write His Words, so the fact that man has written it in no way diminishes God’s Authorship.

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: *Tim. 3:16*

God speaks to man through His Word.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: *II Pet. 1:19*

Scripture is more than just something written thousands of years ago to other people, someone else’s personal letters that we eavesdrop on, reading something written to someone else, and trying vainly to apply to our own lives! Scripture is the raw material for what God says to us!

If we, “listen for voices,” we may hear one of five different voices! We may hear:

- a) God’s voice;
- b) satan’s voice
- c) What we expect to hear;
- d) What we want to hear;
- e) What we fear to hear.

... for which reason we do *not* listen for God’s, “Voice!” (If God chooses to speak to us using a, “Voice,” it’ll be by HIS choice, not ours, and at such a time as HE chooses. And we will KNOW that it’s His voice; there will be no doubt! [The trick, at that time, will be *willing* to accept that as God’s Voice. It’s our *willingness* to accept God’s leading that determines whether or not we believe it is indeed from God!])

The way God usually speaks to us is by reminding us of a verse of Scripture. Scripture is the language of God; the things He says to us will be given in the form of Scripture. (God does speak to us in various other

manners, such as conscience, our Spirit (see the next passage, “Prayer”), etc., but Scripture is the primary means that God uses to speak to us.) So if we have not read the Word of God, the Bible, and read it regularly, we will have muzzled, to a certain extent, God’s very Voice!

What we read may mean nothing to us at the time; the meaning will become very obvious when God uses that passage of Scripture to speak to us as some later time. He’ll remind us of it in the context of our circumstances at that particular time, and we’ll understand exactly what it says, because God will be: i) enlightening our Spirit as to the passage’s meaning and, ii) using that passage to speak to us about our present circumstances. Scripture is the very language of God!

How to read your Bible

It is important that you get to know the Word of God. Even just a few minutes a day. Begin with the Book of John, and read just one chapter a day. Later, you’ll want to read more... you’ll find you won’t be able to get enough!

The work of Scripture

Scripture (The Word of God) saves us:

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. **Rom. 1:16**

Scripture purifies us:

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed according to Thy Word. **Psalms 119:9**

Scripture gives us hope!

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. **Rom. 15:4**

Scripture is a guide to righteous living:

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **II Tim. 3:16**

Scripture increases our faith:

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. **Rom. 10:17**

16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts. **Jer. 15:16**

103 How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! **Psalms 119:103**

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.
15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. **II Tim. 3:14-17**

Pray Regularly!

Talk with GOD!

WE CAN actually *talk* with the God of the universe! And He talks back to us!

God wants simplicity in our prayers

God is a lot less formal than we are. He doesn’t require a lot of fancy words from us when we pray. Just a simple honesty. “Lord, help me!” is the simplest prayer recorded in Scripture! Jesus provided the example of, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” in one of His parables.

In fact, God doesn’t want fancy-schmancy prayers; He came for the *real* people, the humble people!

9 And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:
10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.
11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God,

Attend Church!

Receive encouragement and support!

LORD, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth. **Psalms 26:8**

“To fulfill all righteousness”

JUST AS Jesus was baptized, He also regularly attended worship with God’s people every week. Jesus, (God Himself!) did not need to be baptized, but did so because God had commanded it! For the same reason, He attended worship regularly (“as His custom was”).

16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. **Luke 4:16**

Doing all that God expects of His people was important to Jesus:

“It becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” **Matt. 3:15**

“The pleasure of God’s house”

What constantly delights this author, though, is the fact that, time after time, he finds that what’s best for God is always what’s also best for His people!

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. **II Cor. 4:15**

To survive, grow as a Christian, and fulfill God’s plan for our life we must link-up with other Christians! So, not only is church attendance expected of our Saviour, it’s absolutely essential to our personal growth? and it’s enjoyable!

1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. **Psalms 122:1**

10 For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. **Psalms 84:10**

Mutual ministry

God has determined that His Gospel be preached by

people, not angels, and He’s decided that He is going to minister to His people through other Christians. The local church body of believers is where God’s declared He will establish His Presence through the persons of His believers.

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? **I Cor. 12:25-30**

The Scriptural passage, above, tells us that:

- 1) The members of the church body care for each other;
- 2) The church suffers with a suffering member;
- 3) The church rejoices with a rejoicing member;
- 4) Each member of a church body is a part of the Body of Christ!
- 5) God has given each member of the body of Christ a different role from the rest;
- 6) Through the church body we receive ministry from:
 - a. Apostles,
 - b. Prophets,
 - c. Teachers,
 - d. Miracle Workers,
 - e. Healers,
 - f. Helpers,
 - g. Leaders,
 - h. “Tongues” speakers with messages from God.

God asks, “Are all Christians able to do every one of these things?” Of course not! God has given each

Tell Someone!

Make your decision FIRM!

GOD WANTS us to talk to not only Him, when receiving our salvation, but also to talk to someone else anyone else!

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Rom. 10:9-10

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. *Matt. 10:32-33*

Making a confession of our faith to others cements within us the decision we've made. Until we confess Him to others, our decision's merely ours; when we tell someone else of our decision we take a stand for what we've done we become known as a child of God. And it's also a requirement of God. Jesus said,

15 If ye love Me, keep My commandments. *John 14:15*

Don't give a sermon! Jesus isn't telling you to be a great evangelist; all He's asked you to do is surrender your life to Him, and let Him do the rest! Just tell a friend of your decision! Be a witness as to what Christ has done for you! This is an exciting time for you; share that excitement with someone! You may even see this make a positive impact upon their life!

Be Baptized!

Fulfill all righteousness!

THERE ARE few things that God outright commands us to do; baptism is one of them!

Jesus said,

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. *Mark 16:16*

The Apostle Peter said,

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 2:38

In other words, "baptism," is said in the same breath as, "repent." The two are intended by God to be engaged in together; they are inseparable.

Baptism is, in fact, so necessary, that Jesus Himself, recognized its necessity and felt obligated, even as God Himself, to, "fulfill all righteousness," by being baptized! If God Himself, therefore, considers it necessary to obey this command of God, how much more, must we!

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of Him.

14 But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he allowed Him. *Matt. 3:13-15*

Baptism is not something that happens in infancy; baptism is a public declaration of the decision we've made to follow Christ. No commitment to Christ as our Saviour is possible when we're a mere infant; we can't understand nor make such a commitment! Therefore a, "baptism," made before we were old enough to make the choice is just as invalid as a driver's license issued to someone of that age.

Baptism is full immersion into water to symbolize our death (with Christ 2000 years ago on the cross) of the, "old man," or, "person that we were before we received salvation," and our rising out of the water to symbolize our resurrection from the dead (with Christ 2000 years ago from the tomb) into new life (being, "born again"). Our old, sinful, nature died when we were born again, and we have become a new, sinless (regarding, "sins unto death" - I John 5:16-18) person.

While most churches today neglect to baptize until whenever the new Christian, "is ready," or, "understands what it means," or, "has proven themselves," God expects us to make the two almost synonymous, performing the two in close succession.

Baptism is no optional nor unimportant boring and ritual; this is a commandment of God!

I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

15 And they brought unto Him also infants, that He would touch them: but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein. *Luke 18:9-17*

God wants us to pray about EVERYTHING

10a For who hath despised the day of small things?

Zech. 4:10a

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. *Phil. 4:6*

God is not concerned just about the big, momentous things in the world and in our life! He cares, also, for every little thing in our life! Those are the things He wants us to bring to Him, each and every moment of every day!

17 Pray without ceasing.

II Thes. 5:17

Develop the habit of, under your breath or in your mind, praying for everything that enters your mind, or that occupies your hands. Imagine the arrogance of saying, "I need God's help in this area, and in that area, *but for these small things over here, I don't need any help from God?*" Imagine the utter arrogance of even suggesting that there might be something, anything at all, that we can do without the help of God! Whatever it is, large or small, ask for God's help in it. Become utterly reliant on God's Presence and working in your life! Our God *wants* to be intimately present in our life!

Jesus died for each, and every *one* of us! He didn't die for a group, a nation, a planet; He died for *individuals!*

14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: *Jer. 3:14*

In other words, God died for you, and you personally! God is concerned about every intimate area of your life! Make God intimately involved in every tiny detail of your life. He expects it!

God wants us to spend time alone with Him

God wants us to take time alone in prayer. Despite the necessity of maintaining a constant attitude of prayer there's nothing that will replace taking time alone with God on a regular basis.

Scripture tells us that Jesus (God Himself!) went off alone to pray.

35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. *Mark 1:35*

46 And when He had sent them away, He departed into a mountain to pray.

47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land. *Mark 6:46-47*

16 And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed. *Luke 5:16*

Jesus instructs us:

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father Which is in secret; and thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. *Matt. 6:6*

Jesus said that group praying adds power to our prayer!

19 Aain I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. *Matt. 18:19*

Prayer develops relationship with God

The best way to get to know someone is to spend lots of time with them. We spend time with God by praying to Him.

Be Filled With the Spirit!

Receive GOD's power!

BEFORE JESUS returned to heaven after His resurrection (after He rose from the dead) He commanded His disciples to wait for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. When we are born again (receive salvation) we receive *a portion* of God's Spirit; receiving that Spirit is what saves us. But God wants to give us *the fullness* of His Spirit! This comes when we surrender fully to God's working in us.

The first sign of the Holy Spirit's infilling, the experience after salvation, is the gift of personal tongues. That is, the gift of being able to speak to God in an angels' language. But the first most *important* result of His infilling is God's developing in us the, "fruit of the Spirit."

The FIRST-most important result of the Holy Spirit's infilling:

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23.

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Meekness
- Self-control

This list describes the very personality and nature of Jesus, and is what God wants to develop in us: it is what will bring God the most glory! Being born again initiates this process of becoming more like Jesus, as we at that point receive a portion of the Holy Spirit (part of God), and the process is made fully-functional and, "brought up to speed," with the Holy Spirit's *infilling*.

In addition to *fruit*, which bring greater glory to God (our primary responsibility and privilege), the Holy Spirit's infilling also provides the Christian with *gifts*, which enable God to minister to those around us with far greater effectiveness. These are:

The SECOND-most important result of the Holy Spirit's infilling:

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit - I Cor. 12:8-11, 28

- words of wisdom
- words of knowledge
- faith
- gifts of healings
- miracles
- prophecy
- discerning of spirits
- different kinds of tongues
- the interpretation of tongues
- apostles
- prophets
- teachers
- helps
- governments

So important was the infilling that Jesus commanded His disciples, freshly-taught, trained, experienced, and anxious to get ministering, to remain in Jerusalem until they received this most essential component of Christianity of all: the Holy Spirit Infilling (also called, "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit"). This is why Jesus told His disciples:

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In MY NAME shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. *Mark 16:16-18*

Many Christians have not experienced the Holy Spirit's Infilling and do not believe that it is for the modern-day Christian. As their churches do not recognize the experience, they cannot take the new Christian on in his Spiritual life to the point at which they have

received everything God has promised to bless them with, and be able to serve God to the full extent that He intends! It is essential to find a church body to attend that does indeed believe in the doctrine, and that can help you mature in God! Churches that do obey God's command, and so do help their people move forward in Spiritual maturity in this area, are usually referred to by such terms as:

- Charismatic
- Spirit-Filled
- or various other, regionally unique names.

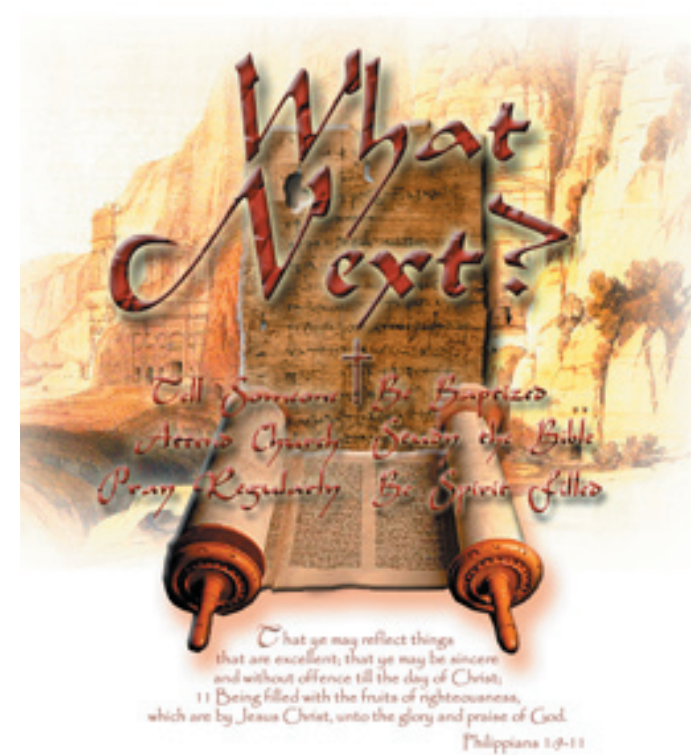
Also, the following terms are also sometimes used, but may refer more specifically to a *particular* Denomination (organized churches) [if you ask for a church, using one of the following adjectives, you may be told that one of *those* churches is not in the area, when in fact there are Spirit-filled, or Charismatic churches to which you could be directed]:

- Pentecostal
- Full-Gospel
- Apostolic
- and other, regionally-unique names or Groups.

Find one of these churches to attend; they will help you develop in your Spiritual maturity completely. They will not exclude an absolutely essential part of your relationship with God!

If you have questions about anything you've read in this brochure, or for questions about living your new life in Christ, contact your local church, talk to your pastor, or e-mail us at www.Alelujah.com.

This is an exciting time for you!
Welcome to the Kingdom of God!



A GUIDE TO GROWING IN CHRIST FOR THE NEW CHRISTIAN

