

## Is There An Elite Church?

In our many years as God-loving Christians, tragically, we have known of many churches or denominations that claim to be the chosen church; the only church who serves God faithfully; the only church with the truth; the only church God can be bothered with. That thought is absolutely wrong and there were problems like that in the early church too. The plain fact is: there is no perfect church; there are truths and errors in every church; there are strengths and weaknesses in every church; and from experience we can say honestly, that there are born-again believers in every Christ-based church. There are also those within those same churches, who pretend to be genuine sheep and who are false; they are wolves in sheep's clothing. We have encountered a pastor who hated and refused to speak to the pastor of another church, of the same denomination, in the same town. The second pastor tried unsuccessfully for years, to bring that carnal pastor to fellowship but it never happened. Strange as it may seem, because God is impartial and full of grace, He blessed and enlarged both churches, in spite of one pastor's bad attitude. We need to remind ourselves, we are not in competition with one another. We are to grow together, in unity and harmony, as one body of Christ in the Kingdom of God. Paul said in I Corinthians 11:18; 'I hear that there are cliques, divisions and factions among you'.

For any person in any church to have the opinion they are elite, they are deluding themselves because we are all part of one body – the body of Christ. Some scriptures to back this up can be found in Romans 12:4 & 5; 'For just as in one physical body we have many parts, all of these parts do not have the same function. So we, as numerous as we are, are one body in Christ and individually we are parts, one of another'.

One Corinthians 12:12, 13 & 27 says; 'For just as the body has many parts, and all the parts, though many, form one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Holy Spirit we were all baptised into one body, and all made to drink of one Holy Spirit. Now you are collectively Christ's body, and you are members of it, each part severally and each with its own function'.

Ephesians 3:6 says Gentiles are fellow heirs with the Jews, members of the same body and joint partakers in Christ. These scriptures show us that we are all many parts of one body, and one should not hold himself up as being more important than another. See Galatians 2:6; 'God is not impressed with the positions that men hold and He is not partial to external distinctions'. In other words – God is no respecter of persons. He does not consider one man more important than another.

Paul told the Corinthian church not to divide themselves into separate parts as the modern church has done. In 1 Corinthians 1:10 to 13 we read; 'I urge you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in perfect harmony and in full agreement and that there be no dissensions, factions or divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in your common understanding and in your judgements. For it has been made clear that there are contentions and factions among you. Each one of you says "I belong to Paul, or I belong to Apollos, or I belong to Peter, or I belong to Christ." Is Christ the Messiah divided into parts?'

Then read 1 Corinthians 3:4; 'For when one says, I belong to Paul, and another, I belong to Apollos, are you not proving yourselves unchanged men?' Paul goes further in 1 Corinthians 4:6 to 21 and really tells the Corinthians off for dividing the body. '...Learn to think of men in accordance with scripture and not go beyond that which is written, that none of you may be puffed up with pride and boast in favour of one against another. For who separates you from the others? Who makes you think you are superior and sets you apart from another?' And so Paul goes on till the end of the chapter, calling them arrogant, conceited and pretentious and ordering them to stop considering themselves superior.

In 1 Peter 3:8 & 9 we see that; 'All of you should be of one mind, loving each other; for know that for this you have been called, that you may yourselves, inherit a blessing'. 1 Peter 4: 8 & 9 continues with; 'Practice hospitality with brotherly affection for the unknown guests, the foreigners, the poor and all others who come your way, who are Christ's body'.

We can see that the divisions became apparent in the early church, but in the modern church, we should aim to become one in unity, regardless of what denomination you choose or how you refer to yourself. No denomination is better than another; nor is one denomination worse than another; as long as all believe in the saving blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:28 says; 'There is now no distinction ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus'.

It is very sad to hear about individual Bible – believing churches, who excommunicate people, often to the point of dividing families. That is hardly the behaviour of Christ - loving Christian. We are called to love each other as a witness to the world. John 13:34 & 35; 'I give you a new commandment: that you should love one another. Just as I (Jesus) have loved you, so you should love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another'.

Does that scripture mean, if you excommunicate fellow Christians from your church, then you can't claim to be Christ's disciple? If you are not Christ's disciple, then whose disciple are you? You must love your neighbour. Romans 13:8; 'Owe no man anything except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbour, has fulfilled the law'.

We are taught by God to love each other, so if you excommunicate people from your church, then you are not being taught by God. If that is the case, then who is teaching you? It's not God because He teaches us to love each other. See 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 'Concerning brotherly love for all other Christians, you have been personally taught by God to love one another'. 1 John 3:11; 'This is the message which you have heard from the first, that we should love one another'. 1 John 4:7, 8 & 11; 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and he who loves his fellowmen is born of God and is coming to know God. For he who does not love, does not know God, for God is love. Beloved, if God loves us so much, we also ought to love one another'.

For the very few Christians who attend churches that excommunicate people, and who think they are God's elite, think again. You may be very religious, but this behaviour puts you at odds with scripture and you will be called a liar and a murderer by God Himself. You are not Christian, according to God's word, and you are in darkness, which we know, leads to hell. Does that sound harsh? It's the truth. Read 1 John 2:9; 2:11; 3:15 & 4:20 & 21; 'Whoever says he is in the Light, yet hates his brother is in darkness, even until now'. 'He who hates his brother is walking in darkness. He is straying and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes'. 'Anyone who hates his brother in Christ is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding within him'. 'If anyone says "I love God", and hates his brother in Christ, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, Whom he has not seen. And this command we have from Him, that he who loves God shall love his brother also'.

We can see by these scriptures, that there is no one elite Christian church, so anyone who thinks they attend an elite church, and refuses to acknowledge other Christians and Christian churches, is as the scripture above says: a liar, a murderer, blind, in darkness and has no eternal life. The only "elite" church, according to the Bible, is the Christian church as a whole. Every Christian denomination, who has Christ as its head, anywhere in the world, is God's elite. It is God's elite body, His elect, His church, without spot or wrinkle, that Jesus is coming back for at His return, and they will be gathered up from all over the world. See Ephesians 5:27; Matthew 24:31 & Mark 13:27.

Most Christian churches do many good things for people, and they have mostly dedicated Christians who regularly attend, but none of the churches are perfect or elite, nor should they consider themselves as such. We, that is all Christian churches, are parts of the whole of the body of Christ, and it may come as a surprise to some, that God does not consider them more important than the others. We are all important to God, He loves us all equally, He works equally in our individual lives, and He works in every Christ – based church, no matter what church we choose to fellowship in, as long as it is a Christian church.

Amen and God bless you.

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