



# Nonessential church

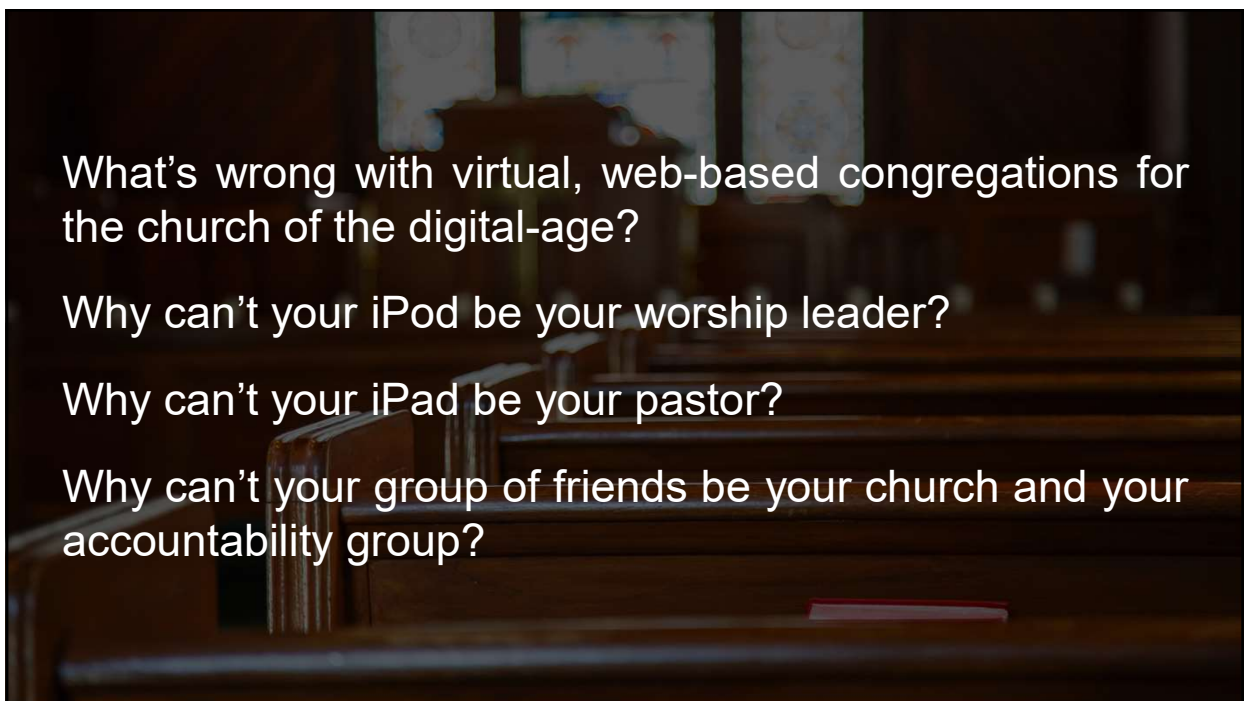
1



2



3




What's wrong with virtual, web-based congregations for the church of the digital-age?

Why can't your iPod be your worship leader?

Why can't your iPad be your pastor?

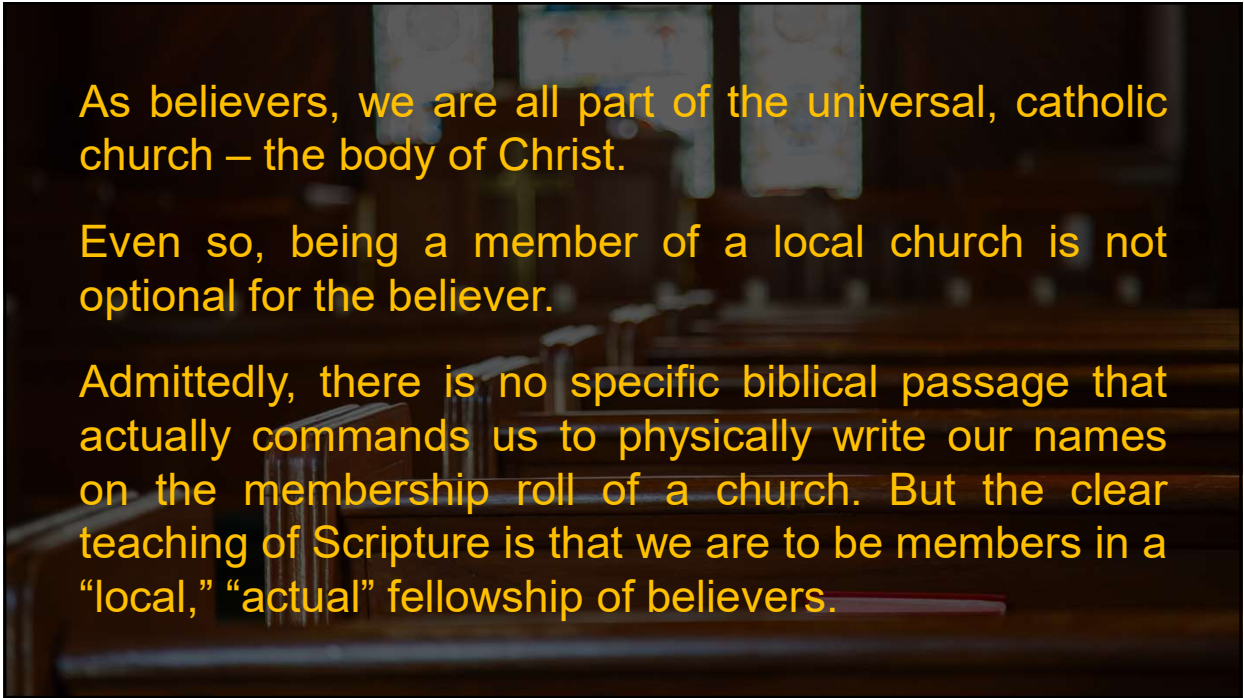
Why can't your group of friends be your church and your accountability group?

4



The answer is simple:  
That's not the way God designed it!

5



As believers, we are all part of the universal, catholic church – the body of Christ.

Even so, being a member of a local church is not optional for the believer.

Admittedly, there is no specific biblical passage that actually commands us to physically write our names on the membership roll of a church. But the clear teaching of Scripture is that we are to be members in a “local,” “actual” fellowship of believers.

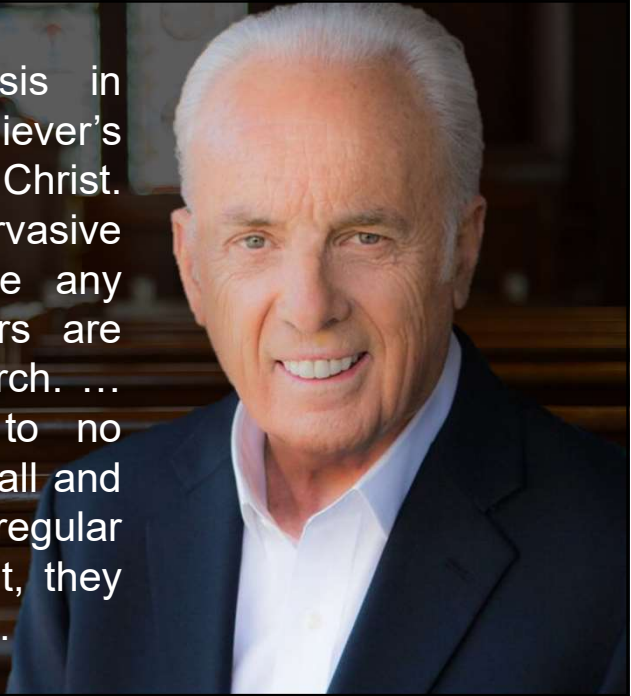
6

A portrait of John MacArthur, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred interior of a church with wooden pews.

John MacArthur, "The Local Church and Why It Matters"

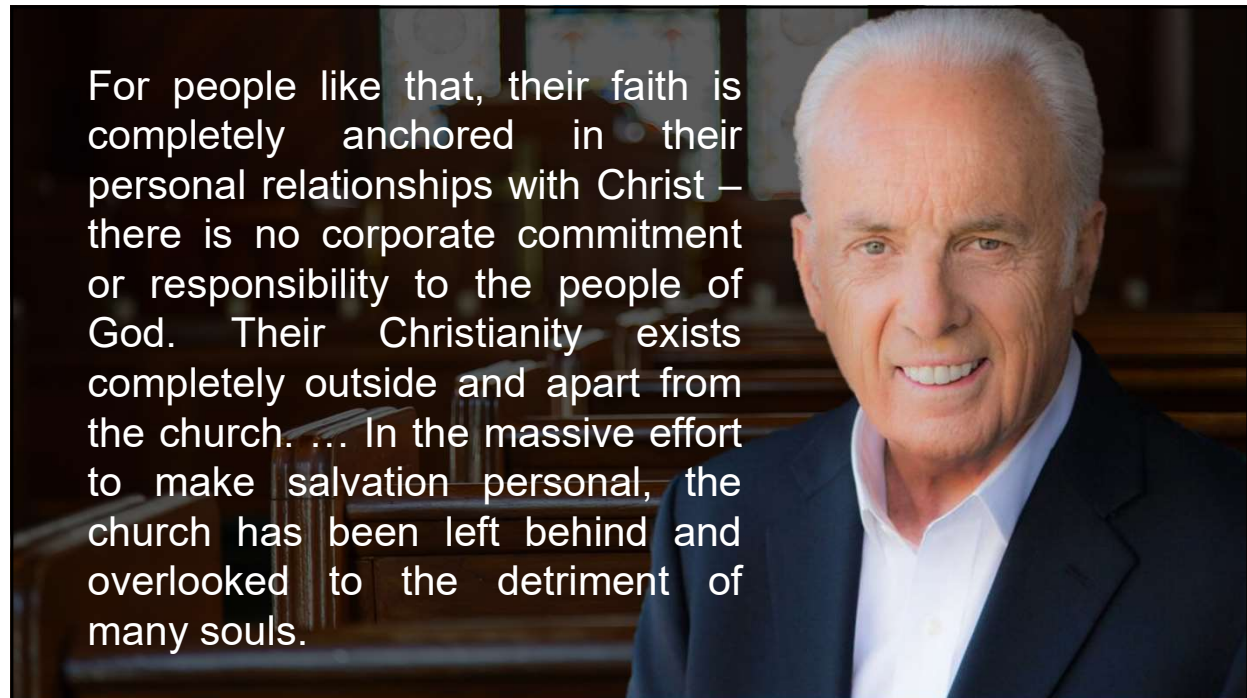
"There was a time when coming to Christ meant coming to His church. As far back as the New Testament, salvation brought you into union with the visible, gathered Body of Christ. Becoming a Christian meant entering into fellowship with the people of God. That's changed.

7

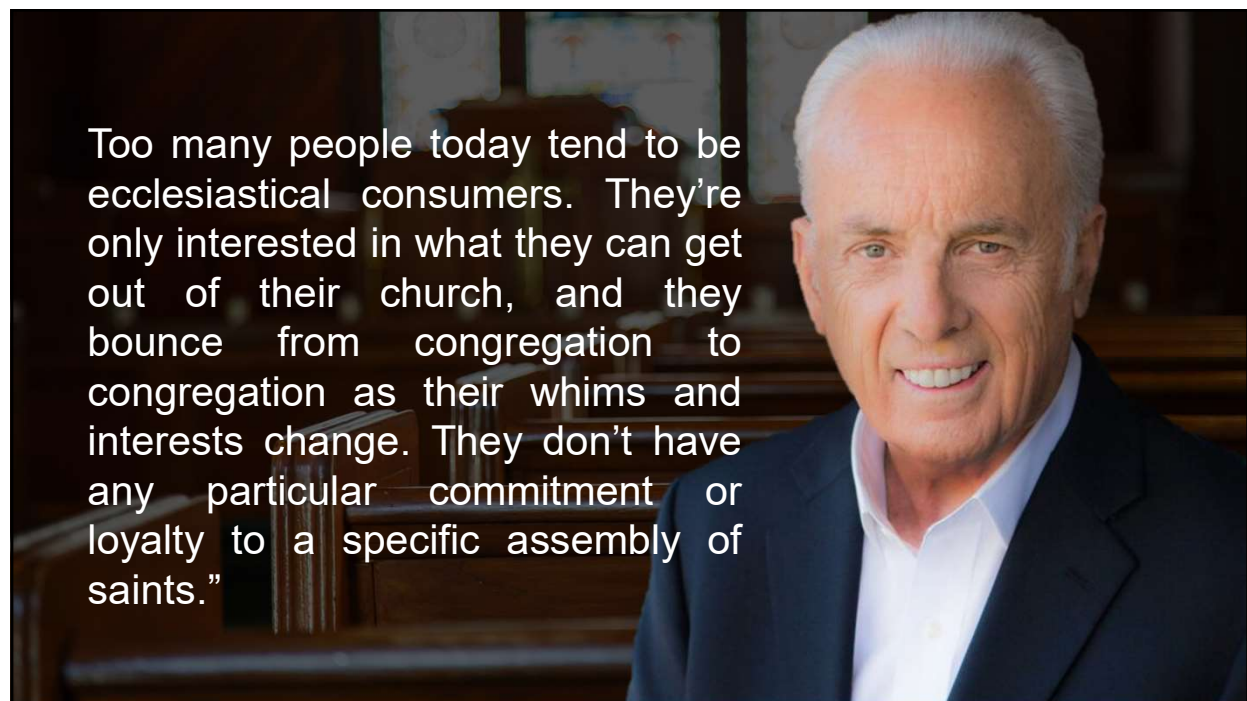
A portrait of John MacArthur, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred interior of a church with wooden pews.

The contemporary emphasis in evangelicalism is a believer's personal relationship to Christ. Individual faith is the pervasive theme, and rarely is there any discussion of how believers are supposed to fit into the church. ... In fact, they have little to no attachment to the church at all and are under no obligation for regular attendance — if they make it, they make it; if not, it's no big deal.

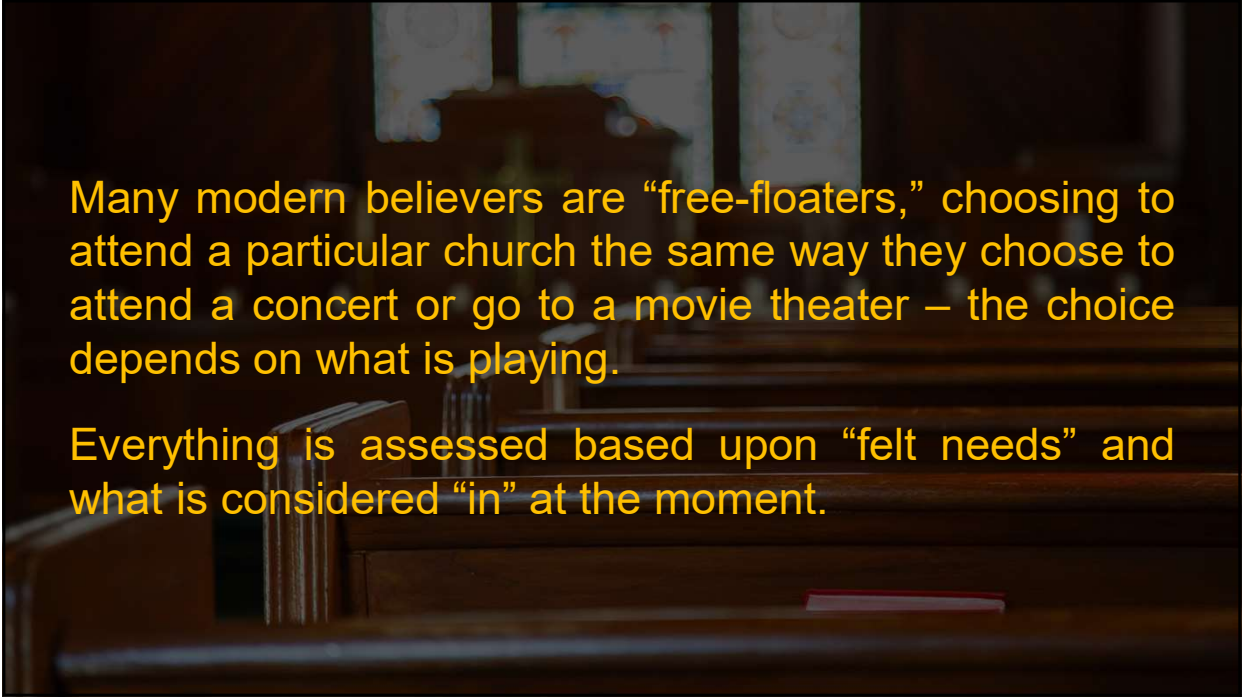
8



9



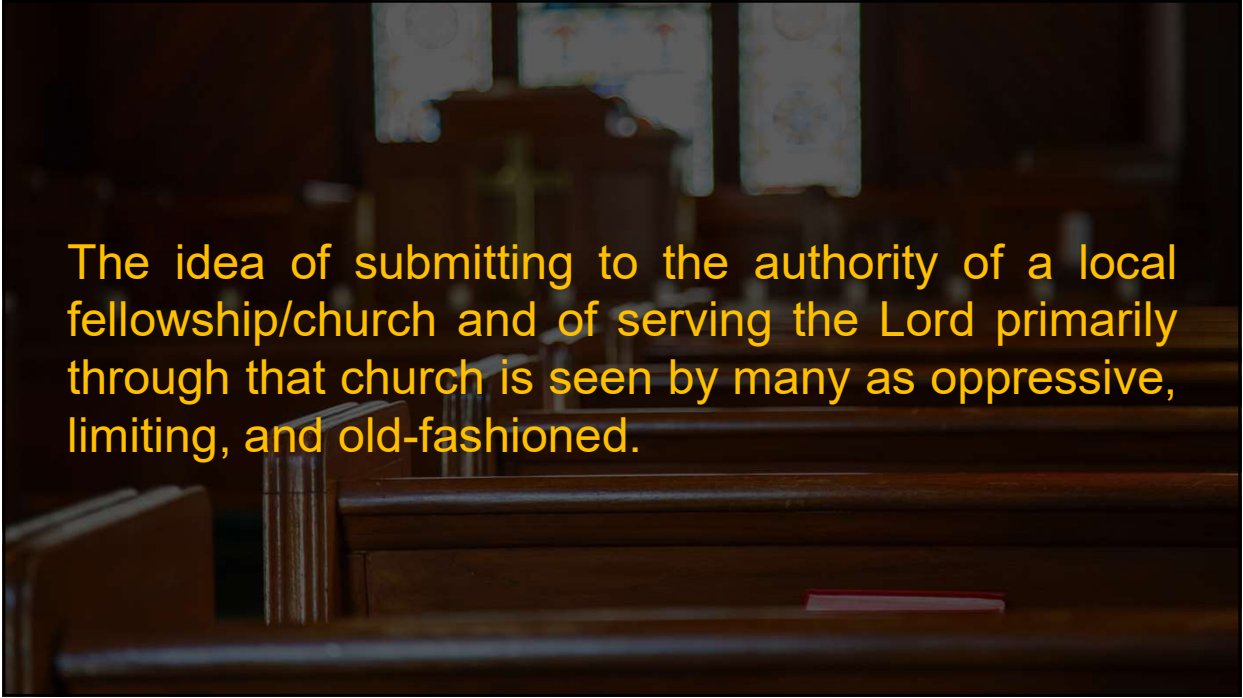
10

A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The lighting is dim, and the text is overlaid in yellow.

Many modern believers are “free-floaters,” choosing to attend a particular church the same way they choose to attend a concert or go to a movie theater – the choice depends on what is playing.

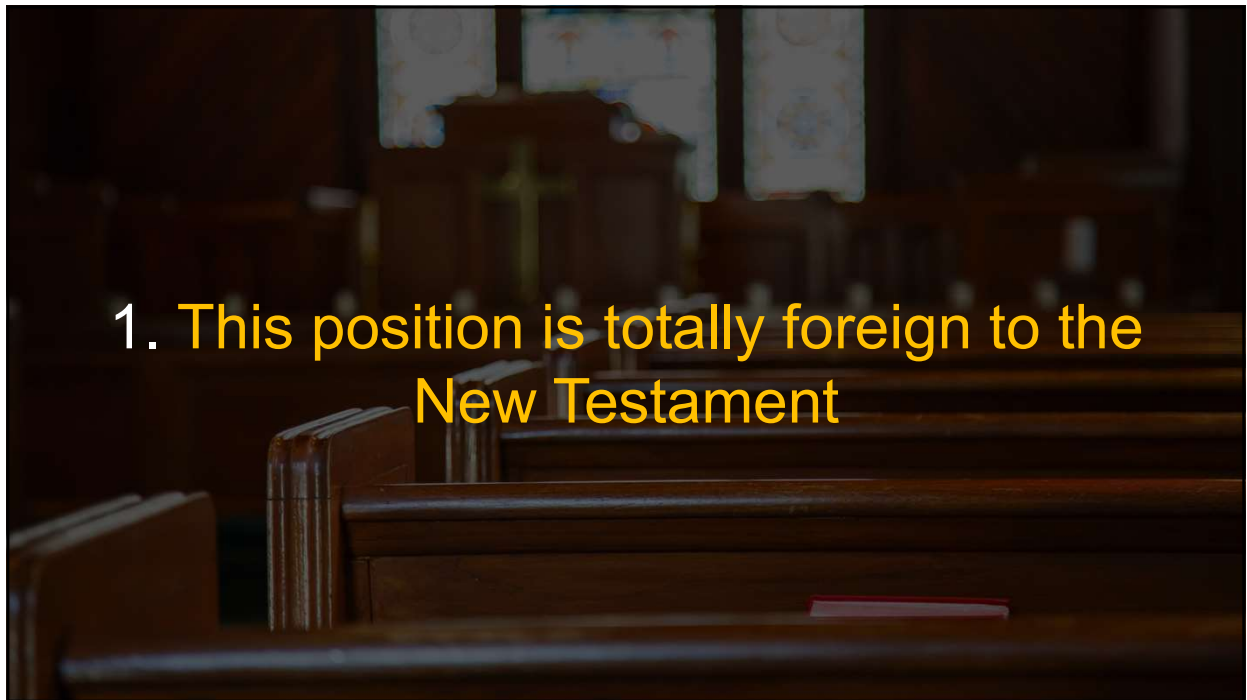
Everything is assessed based upon “felt needs” and what is considered “in” at the moment.

11

A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The lighting is dim, and the text is overlaid in yellow.

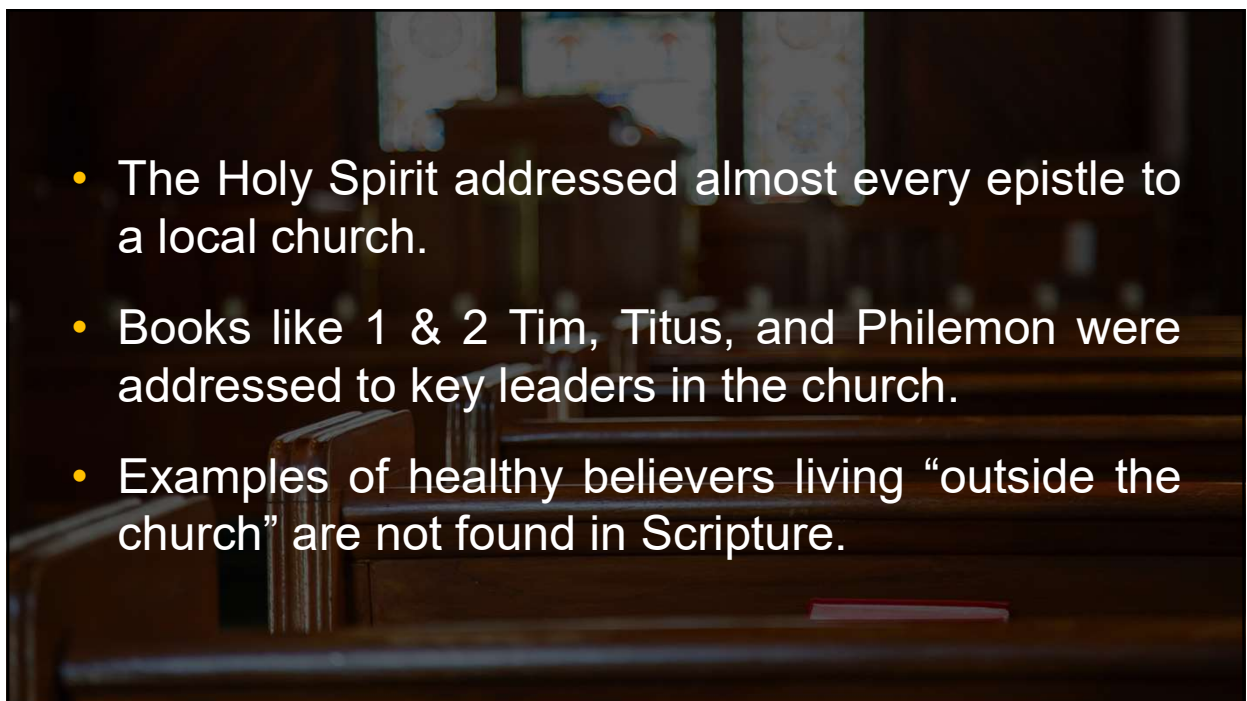
The idea of submitting to the authority of a local fellowship/church and of serving the Lord primarily through that church is seen by many as oppressive, limiting, and old-fashioned.

12



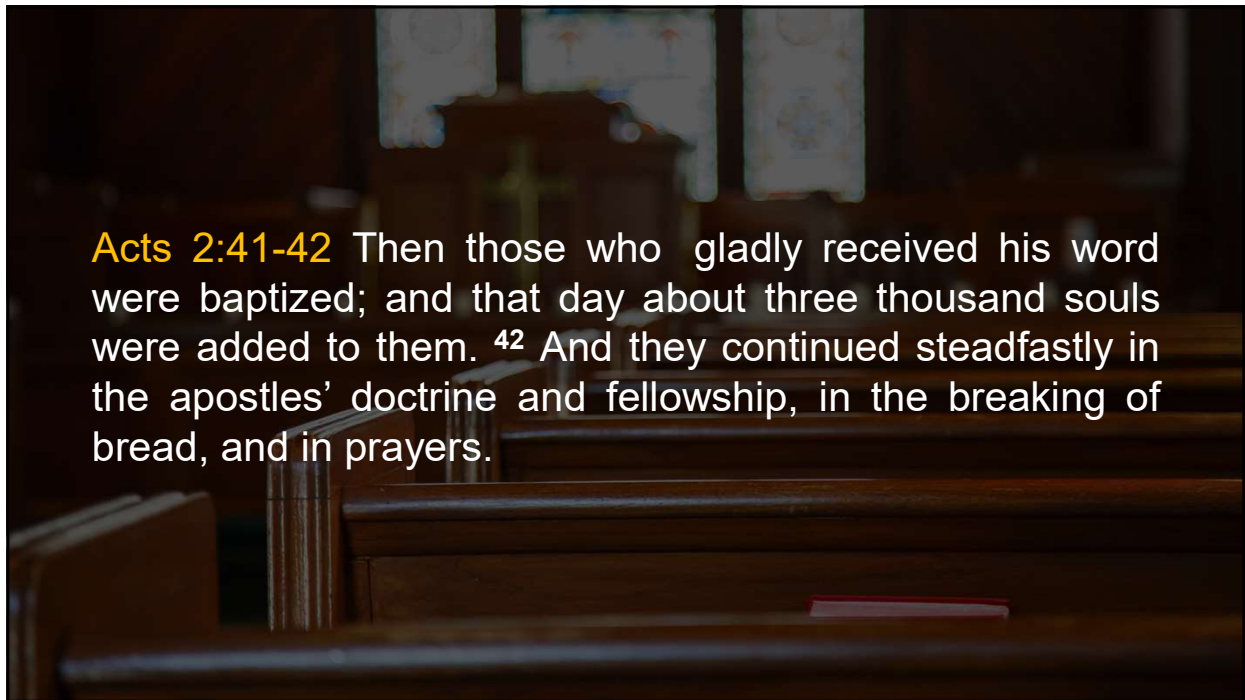
1. This position is totally foreign to the  
New Testament

13

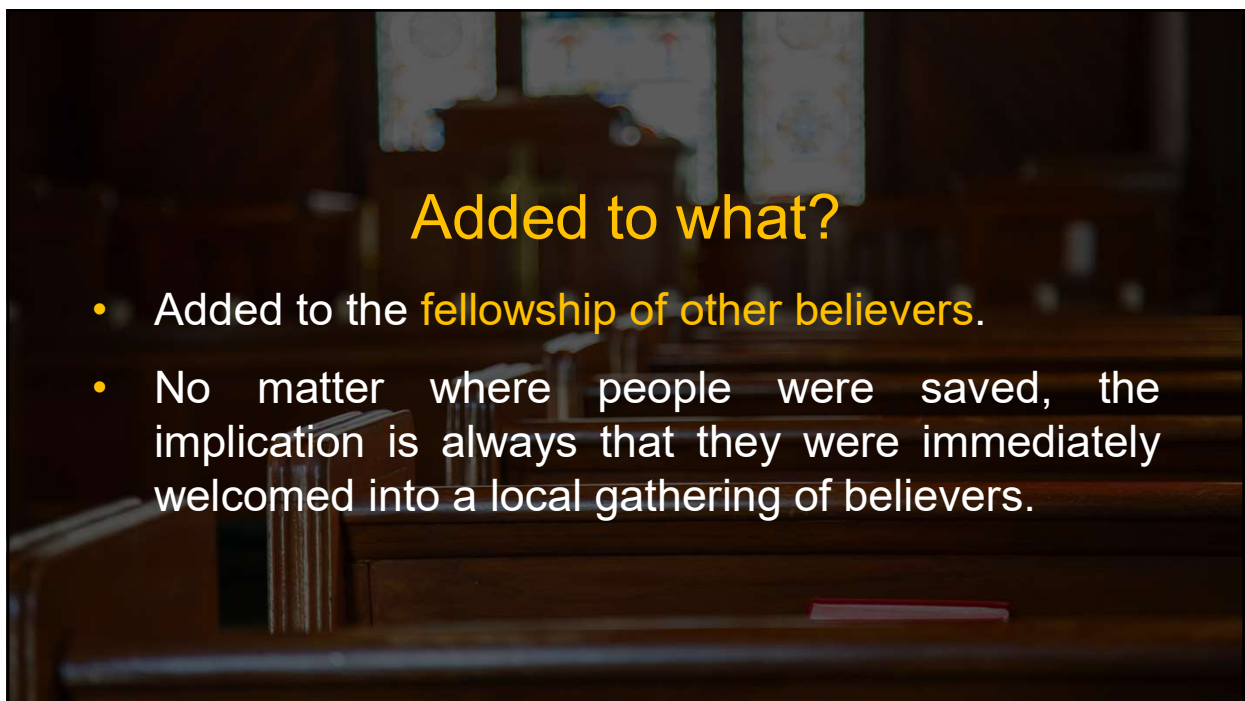


- The Holy Spirit addressed almost every epistle to a local church.
- Books like 1 & 2 Tim, Titus, and Philemon were addressed to key leaders in the church.
- Examples of healthy believers living “outside the church” are not found in Scripture.

14



15



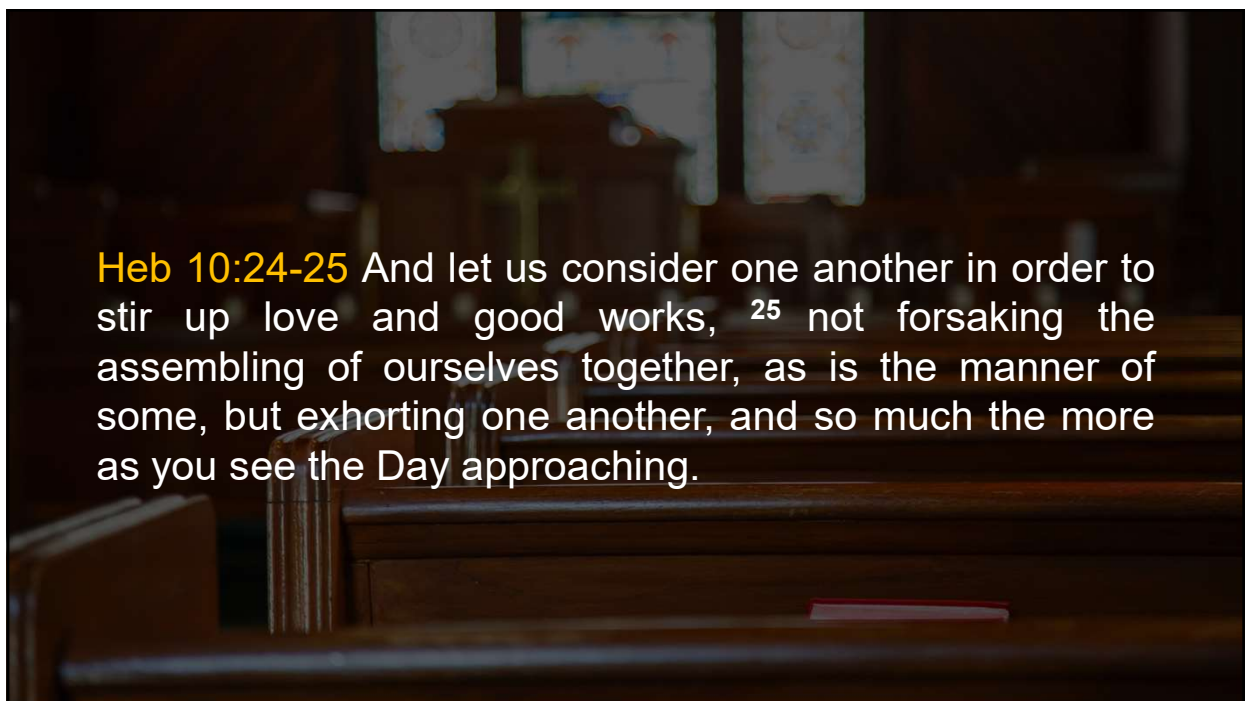
16





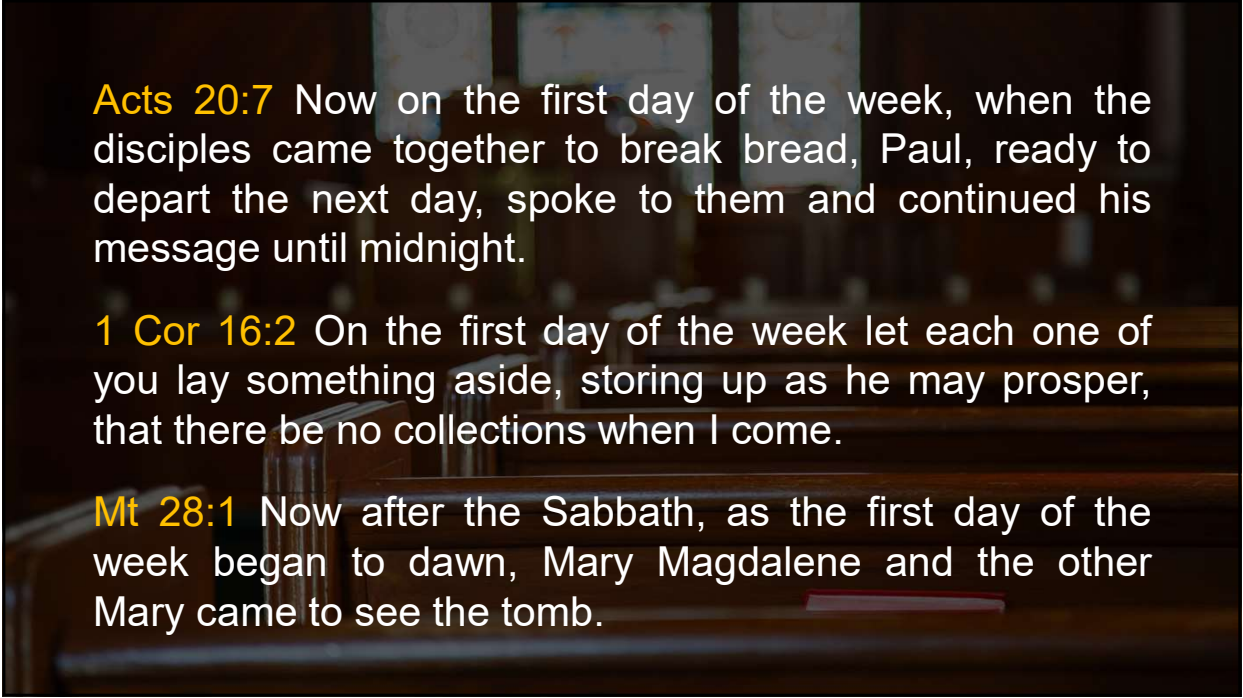
2. This “independent believer” position is expressly forbidden by Scripture

17



**Heb 10:24-25** And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

18

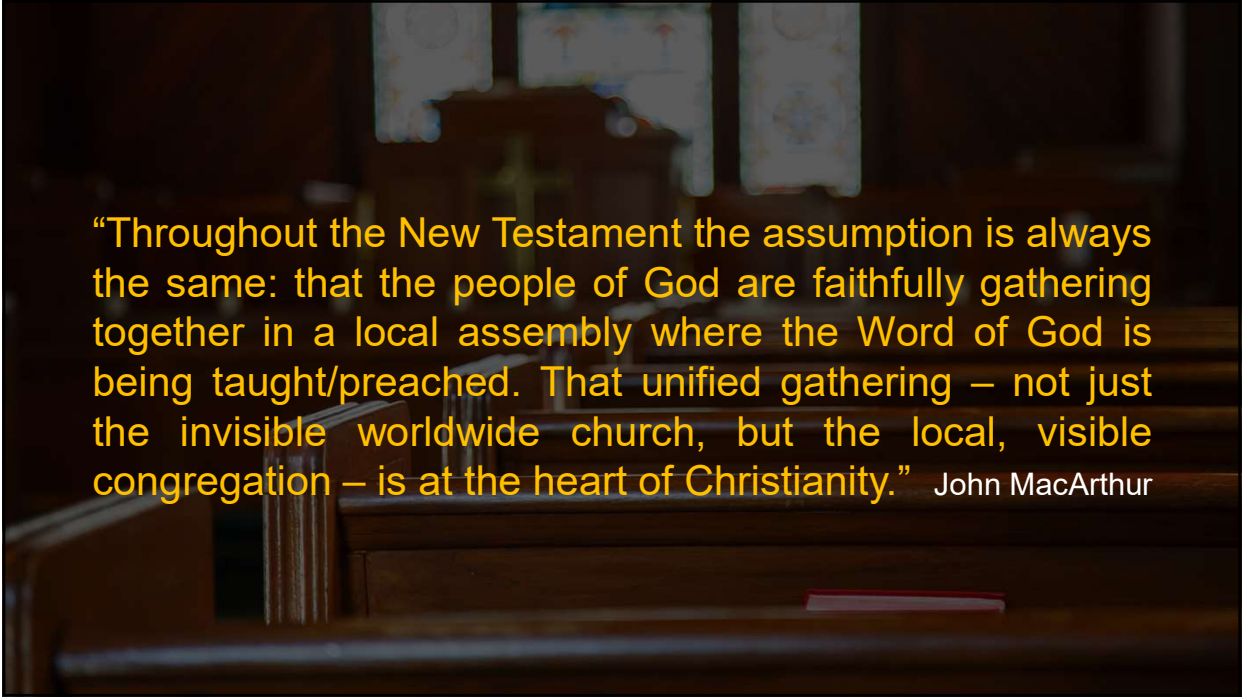
A photograph of a church interior, showing wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The text is overlaid on this image.

**Acts 20:7** Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

**1 Cor 16:2** On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

**Mt 28:1** Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

19

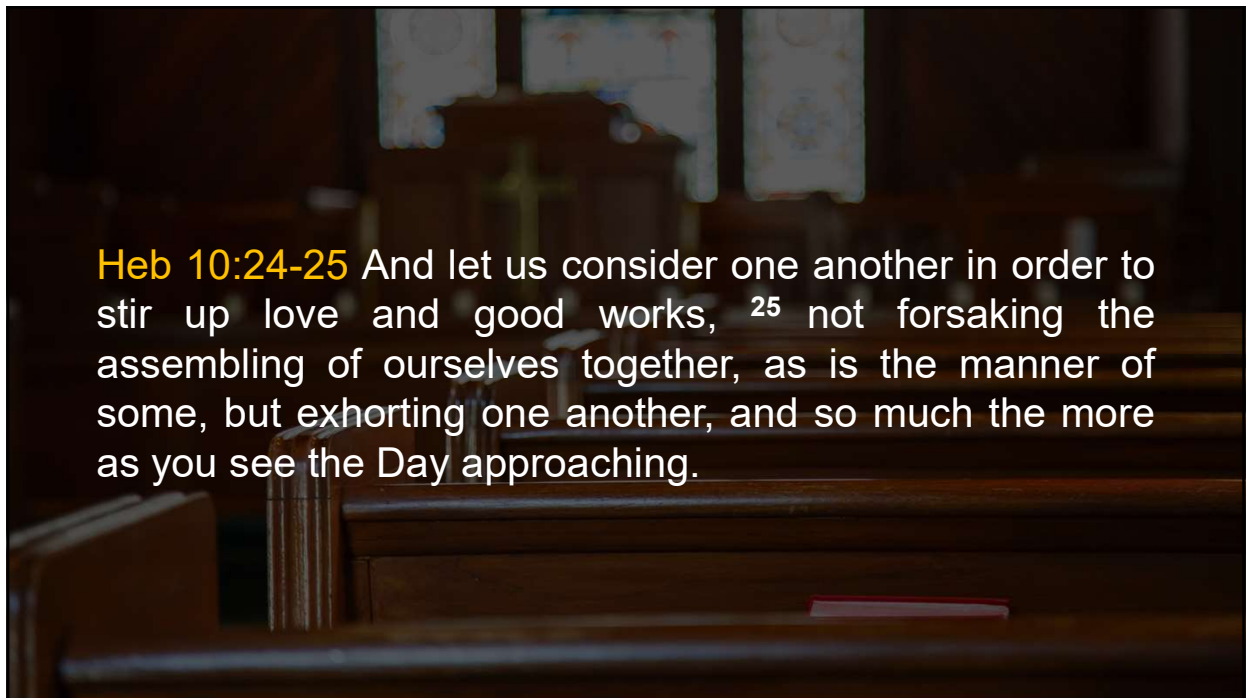
A photograph of a church interior, showing wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The text is overlaid on this image.

“Throughout the New Testament the assumption is always the same: that the people of God are faithfully gathering together in a local assembly where the Word of God is being taught/preached. That unified gathering – not just the invisible worldwide church, but the local, visible congregation – is at the heart of Christianity.” John MacArthur

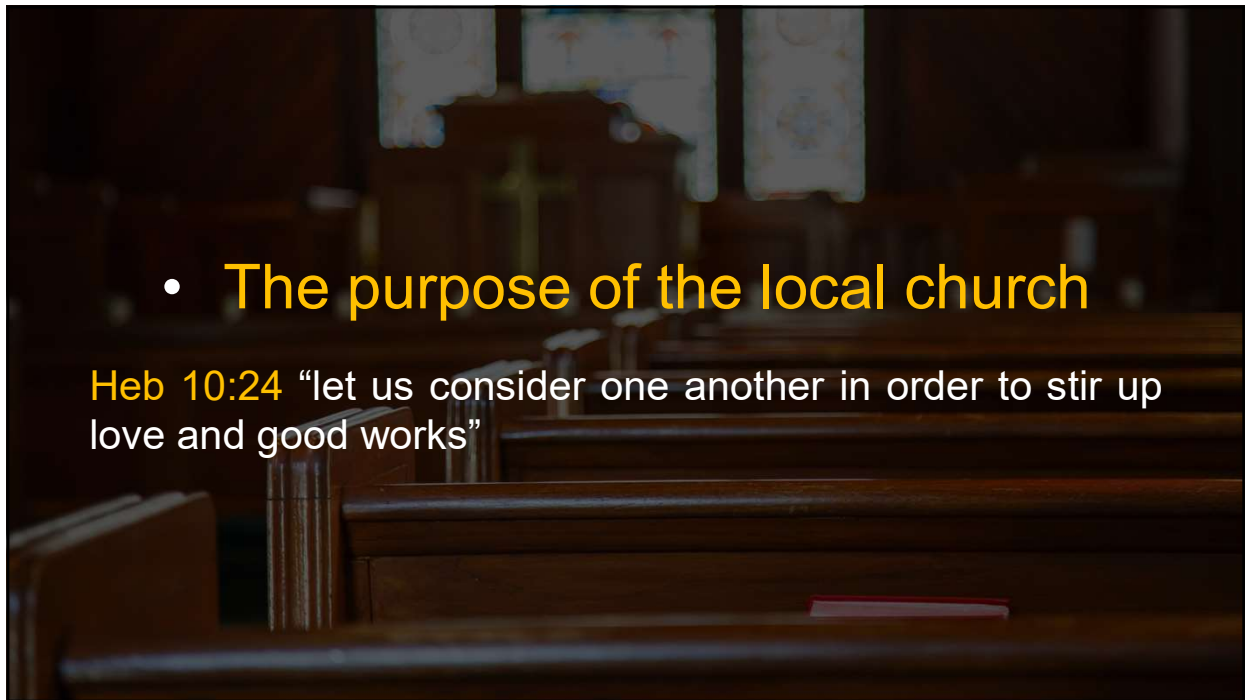
20



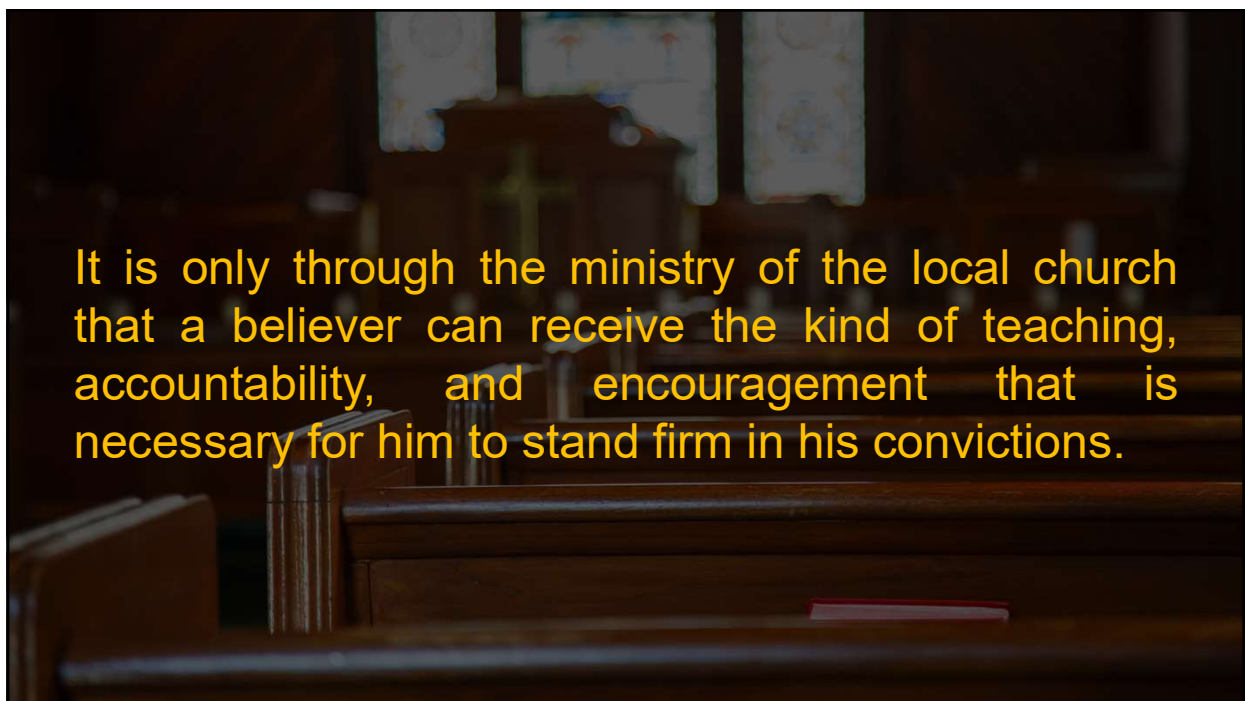
21




22



23



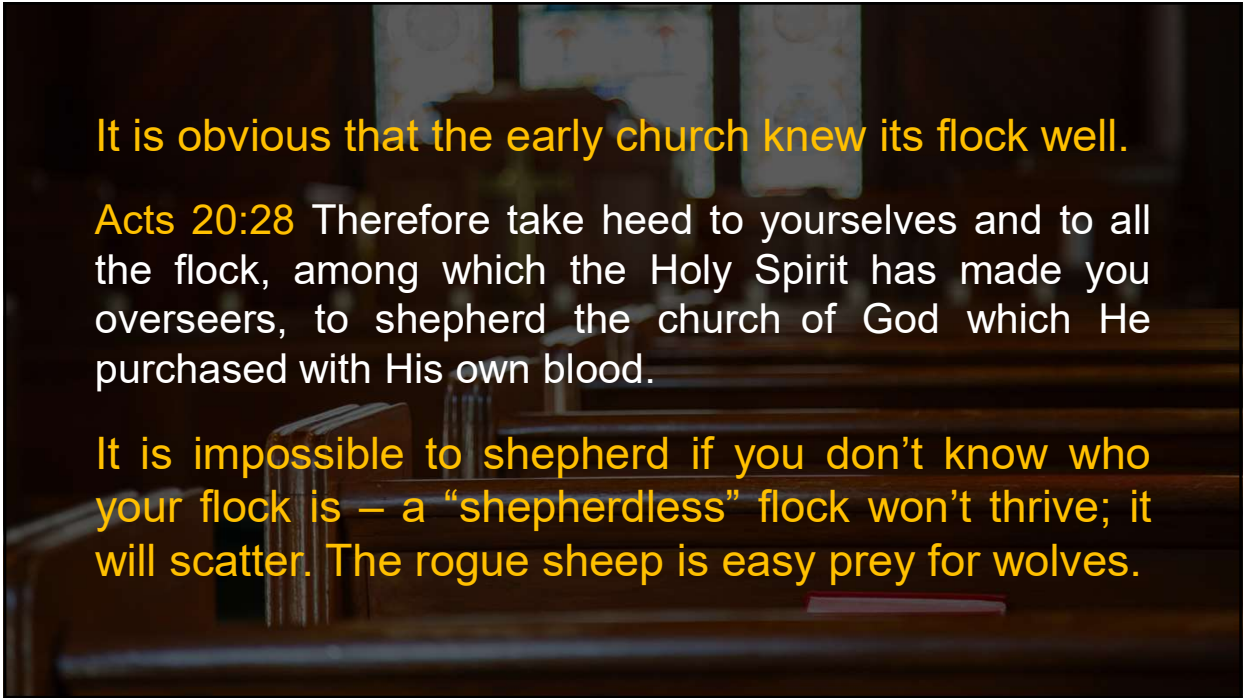
24



What membership in a local church provides:

Doctrinal purity  
Congregational identity

25



It is obvious that the early church knew its flock well.

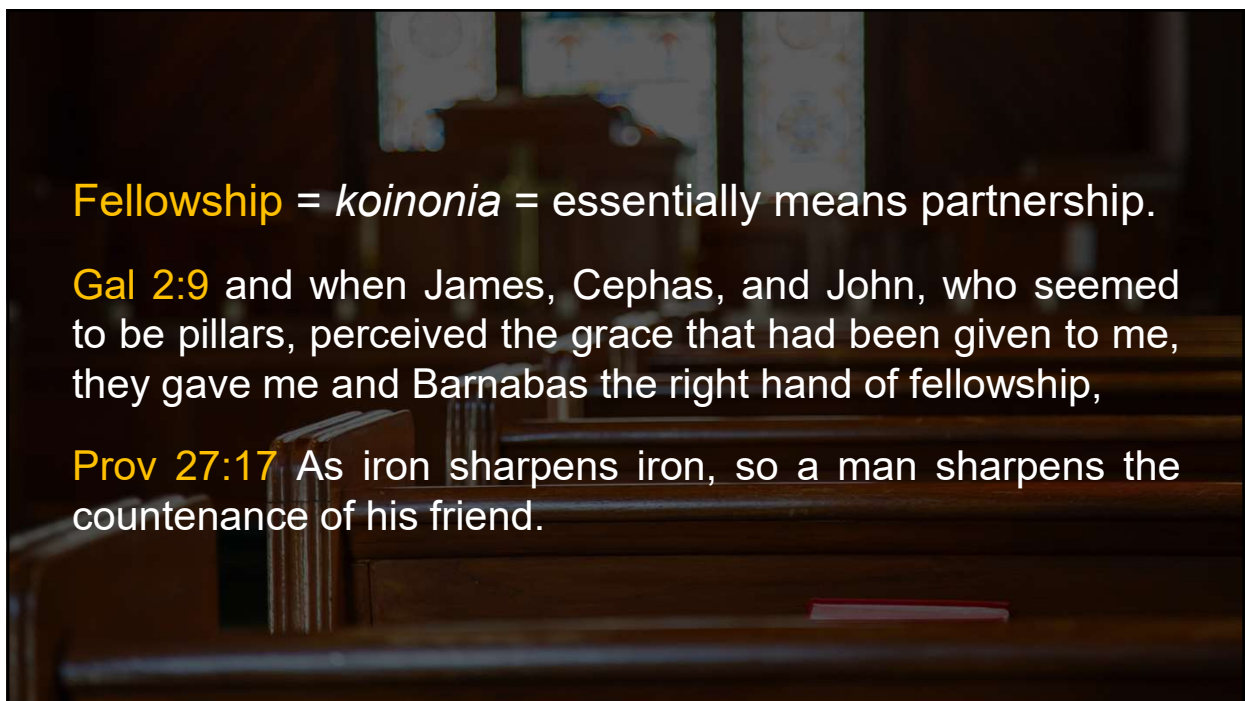
**Acts 20:28** Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

It is impossible to shepherd if you don't know who your flock is – a "shepherdless" flock won't thrive; it will scatter. The rogue sheep is easy prey for wolves.

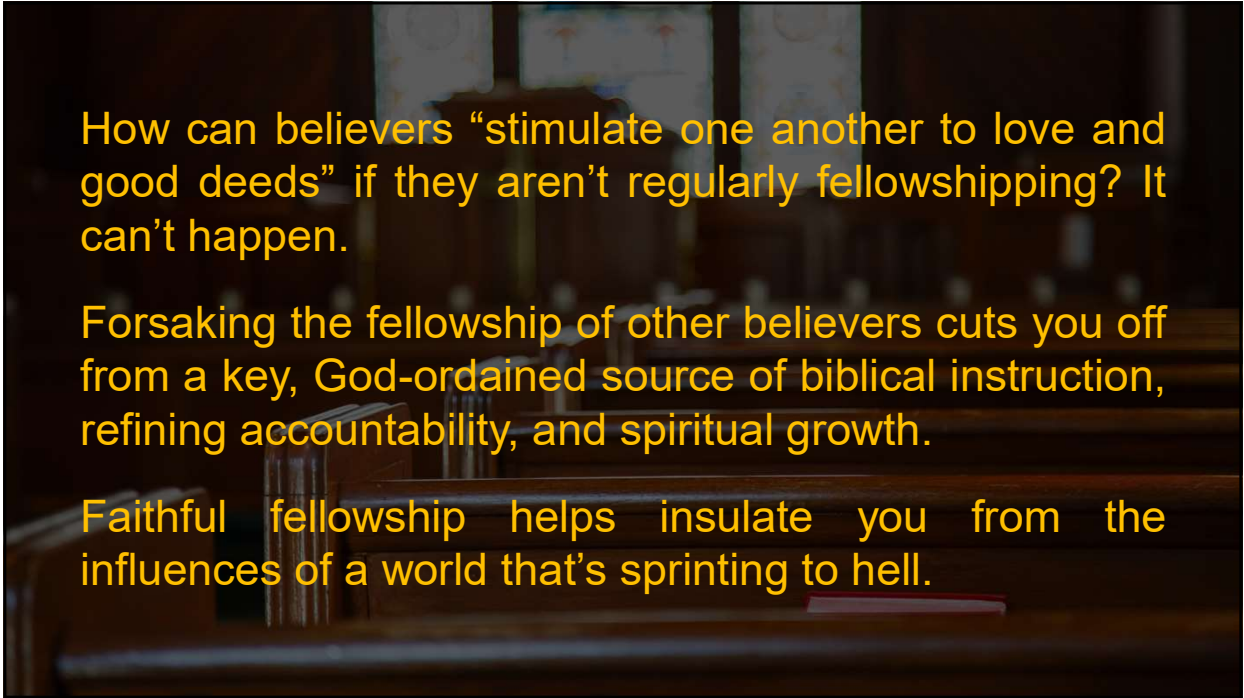
26



27



28


A photograph of a church interior, showing wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The text is overlaid in yellow.

How can believers “stimulate one another to love and good deeds” if they aren’t regularly fellowshipping? It can’t happen.

Forsaking the fellowship of other believers cuts you off from a key, God-ordained source of biblical instruction, refining accountability, and spiritual growth.

Faithful fellowship helps insulate you from the influences of a world that’s sprinting to hell.

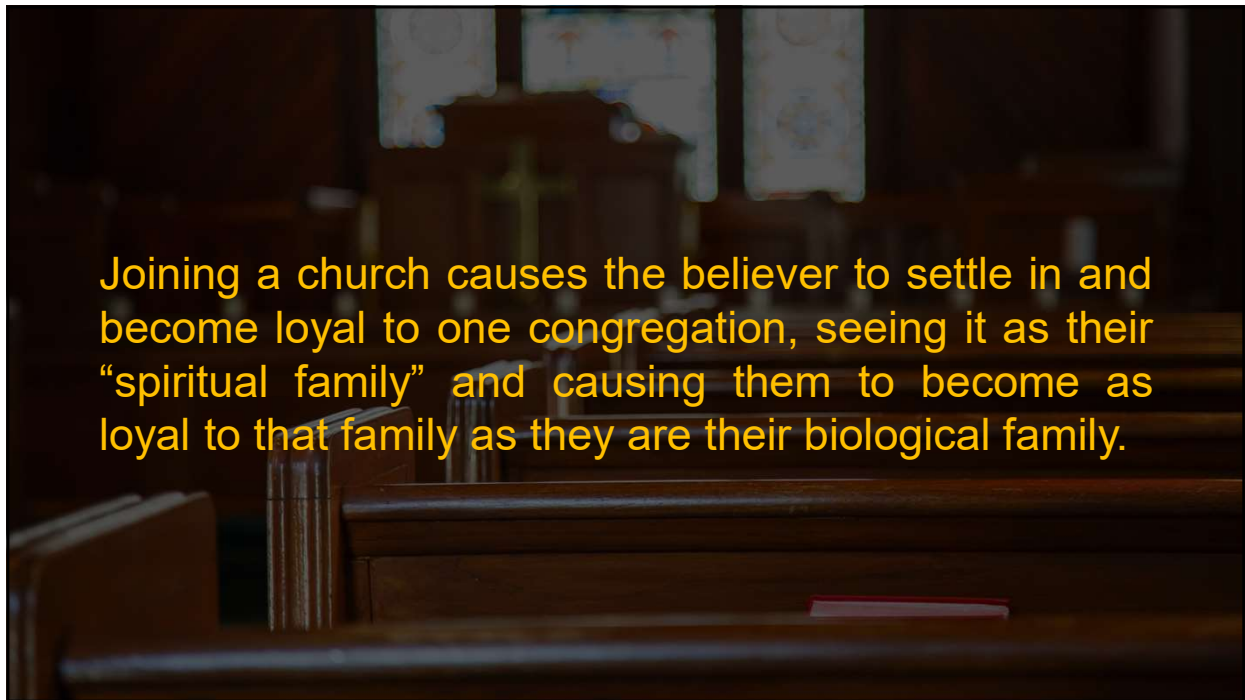
29

A photograph of a church interior, showing wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The text is overlaid in white and yellow.

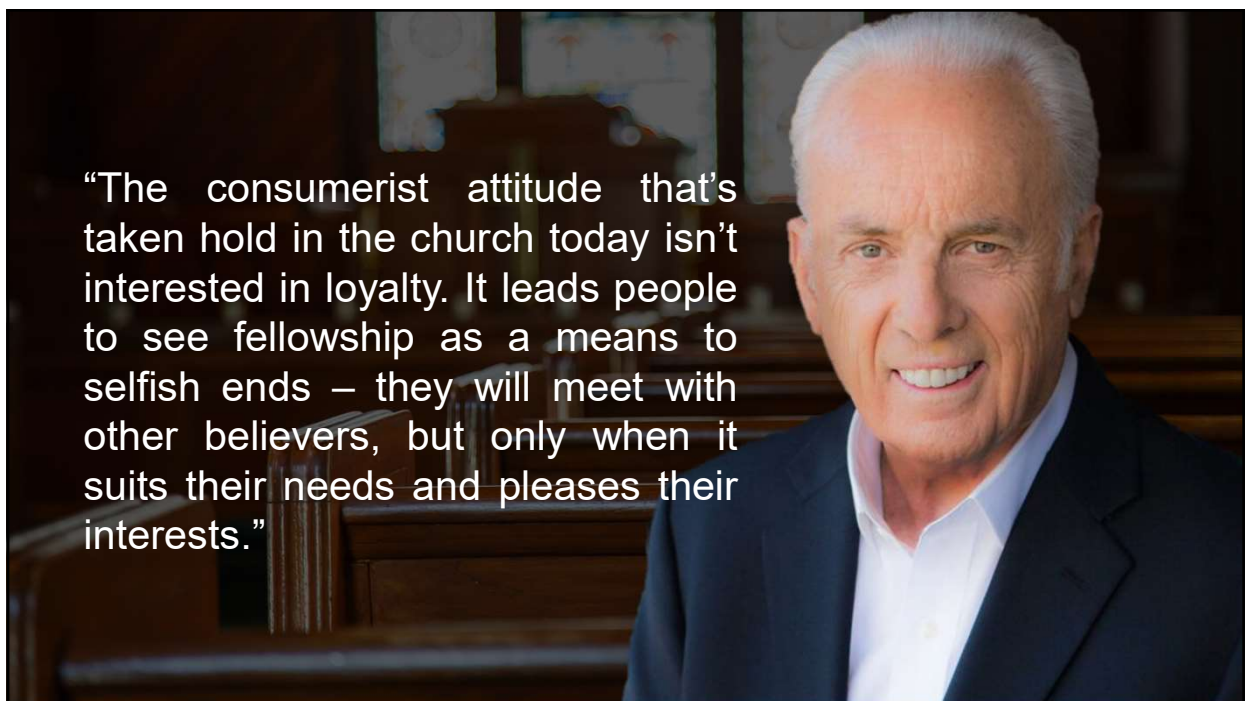
What membership in a local church provides:

Doctrinal purity  
Congregational identity  
Spiritual fellowship  
Organizational loyalty

30




31



32

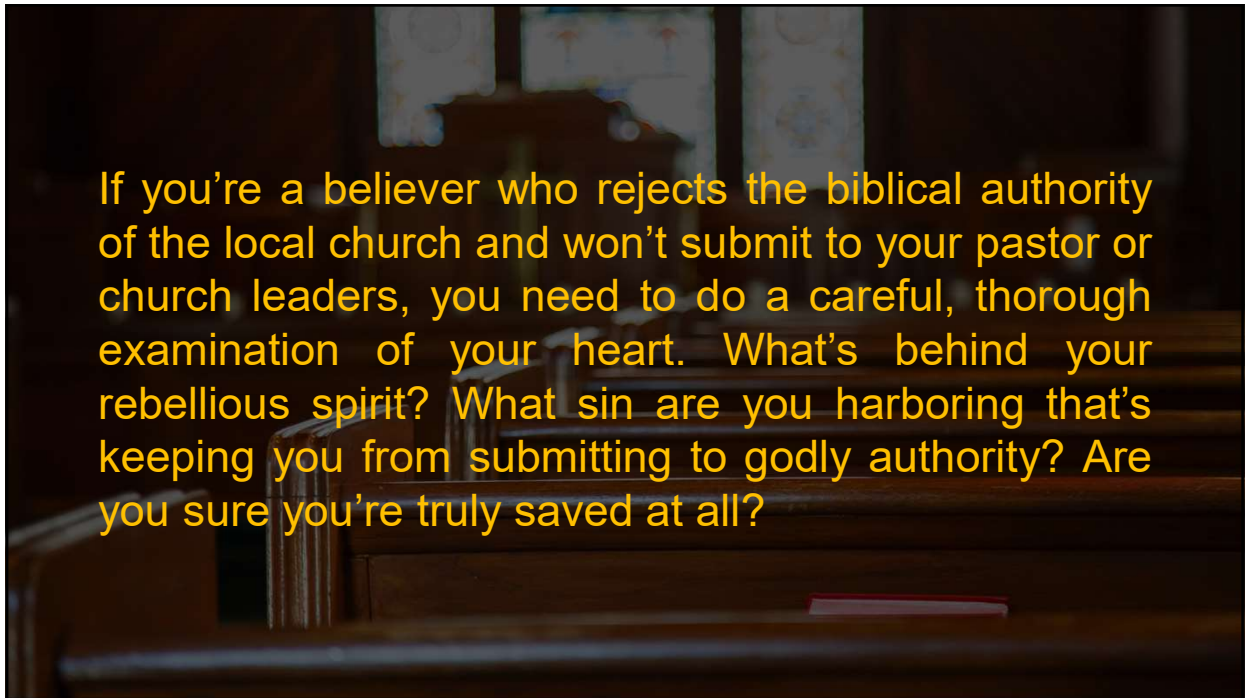


A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The lighting is dim, creating a solemn atmosphere.

What membership in a local church provides:

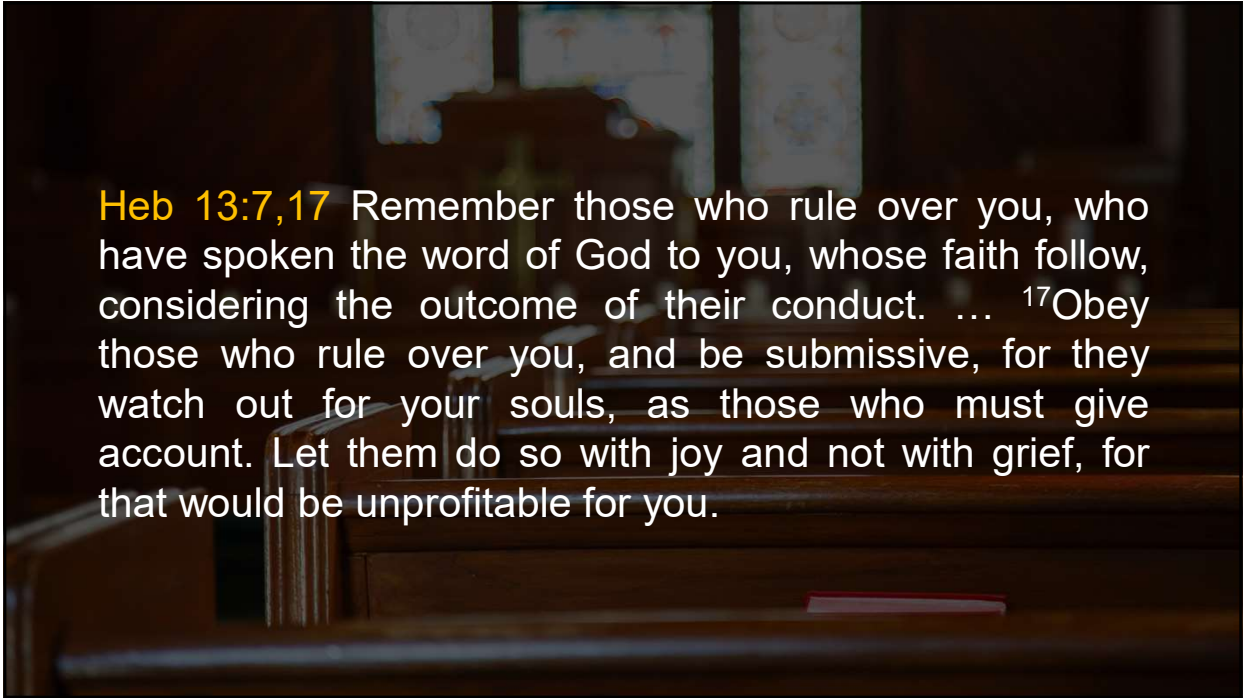
Doctrinal purity  
Congregational identity  
Spiritual fellowship  
Organizational loyalty  
Mutual submission

33

A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The lighting is dim, creating a solemn atmosphere.


If you're a believer who rejects the biblical authority of the local church and won't submit to your pastor or church leaders, you need to do a careful, thorough examination of your heart. What's behind your rebellious spirit? What sin are you harboring that's keeping you from submitting to godly authority? Are you sure you're truly saved at all?

34



**Heb 13:7,17** Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. ... <sup>17</sup>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.

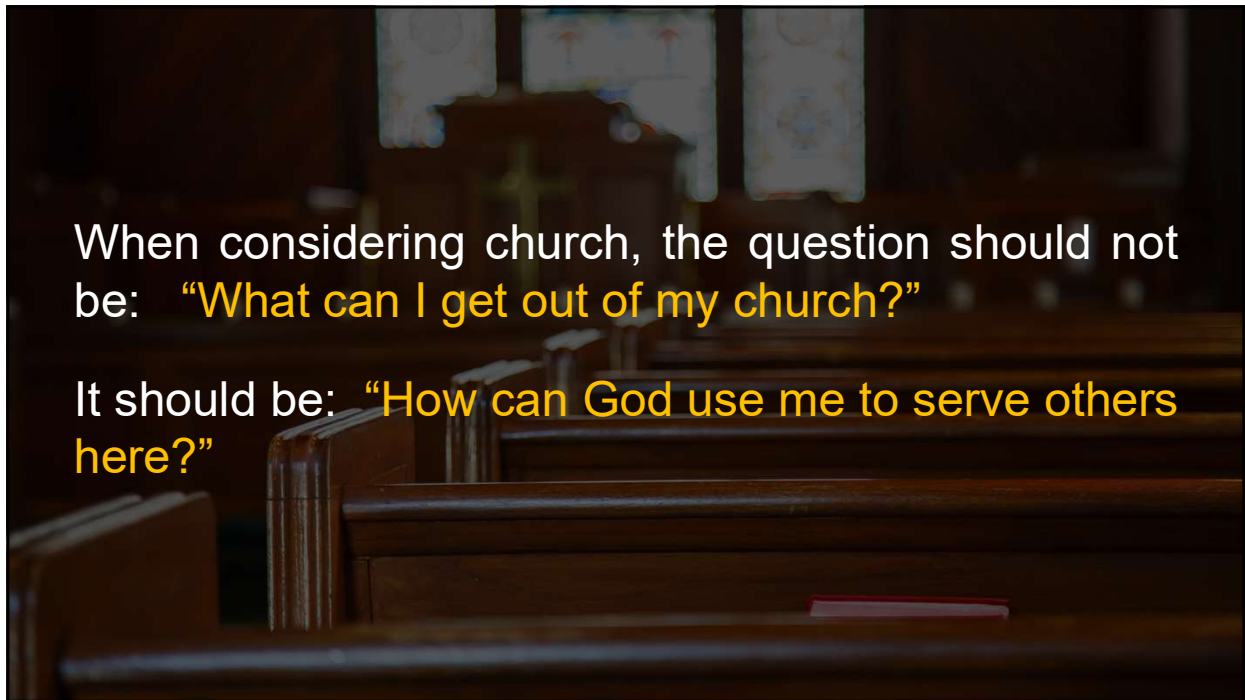
35



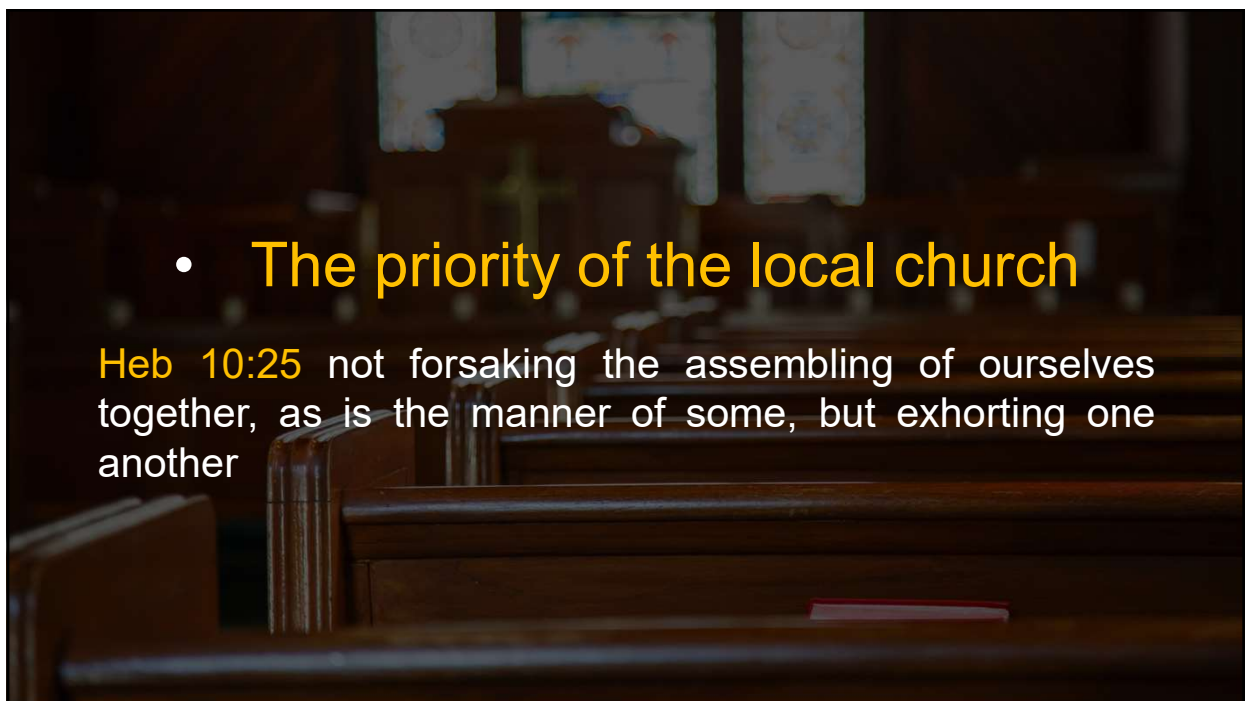
What membership in a local church provides:

Doctrinal purity  
Congregational identity  
Spiritual fellowship  
Organizational loyalty  
Mutual submission  
Effectual service

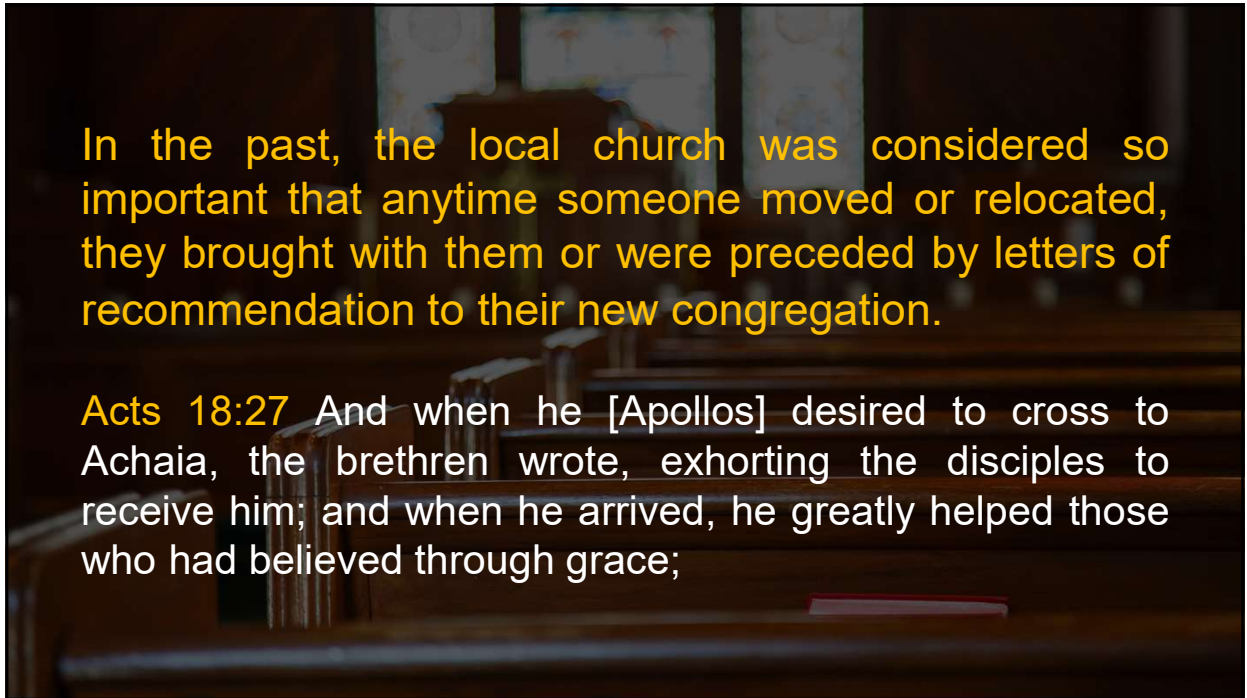
36



37



38

A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The lighting is dim, and the text is overlaid in yellow and white.

In the past, the local church was considered so important that anytime someone moved or relocated, they brought with them or were preceded by letters of recommendation to their new congregation.

**Acts 18:27** And when he [Apollos] desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace;

39

A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews and a pulpit in the background. The lighting is dim, and the text is overlaid in yellow and white.

- **The practice of the local church**

**Heb 10:25** and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

40

**Eph 4:11-16** And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; <sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, <sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

41

### 4 ways you can join Liberty Church Edmond:

1. By conversion and baptism
2. By baptism (if you have never been immersed)
3. By letter from another a church of “like faith and practice”
4. By statement of faith (if you cannot get a church recommendation letter)

42