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**Lilbourn Church of Christ**  
**P.O. Box 270**  
**Lilbourn, MO 63862**  
**573-688-2234**

**Thoughts Worth Pondering:**

1. Zeal without knowledge is fire without light. - Thomas Fuller
2. When the character of a man is not clear to you, look at his friends. - Japanese proverb
3. Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future. - Paul Boese

Would you be interested in a **'FREE' Bible Study** through the mail? If so, please send your name and address to the address below. You can also send me an e-mail with your information at:

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P.O. Box 270  
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**Times of Assembly:**

**Sunday:**

Bible Class	9:45am
Morning Worship	10:45am
Evening Worship	5:30pm

**Wednesday:**

Bible Class	7:30pm
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[www.geocities.com/heartland/cabin/8851/](http://www.geocities.com/heartland/cabin/8851/)

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# The Lilbourn Light



*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" -Psalm 119:105*



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Number 3

## The Purpose of the Church

You do not have to look around very much to notice religious division. Anyone doubting this need only open up a phone book to see the vast amount of "choices" available for anybody willing to look. As far as "how" these groups view God's Word, you will find the full spectrum ranging from extremely liberal to ultra conservative. Have you ever wondered what God thinks of this? Many applaud the efforts made to expand the "religious world," yet, is more religious choice really what is needed? Jesus' prayer for unity in John 17 seems to be exactly the opposite of what we have around us. His desire for the disciples to be "one" just as He and the Father are one is a far cry from what we have today. We have a desperate need to get back to the Bible and back to

the purpose for which the Church was established. If anyone doubts the importance of the Church, it should be a sobering reminder to know that Christ died to purchase it (Acts 20:28).

What is the purpose of the Church? If you were to conduct a survey out of this question, no doubt you would receive a variety of answers. Some view the Church as a sort of Red Cross for the world, with its primary function to get rid of poverty and aid anyone who has a need. Others view the Church as a way to keep children off the streets and to function as a system of recreation for its members (Basically a glorified YMCA). *What is your answer to this question and how would you go about supporting your conclusion?*

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## Consider what the Bible says about the purpose of the Church:

### 1. It is to preach the gospel.

Jesus instructed the apostles to preach the gospel to the whole world (Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20). The book of Acts as well as most of the other New Testament books are filled with examples of the apostles & the various Churches preaching the gospel and assisting in this great work (Acts 11:22-23; 13:1-4; Phil. 4:15-16; I Thess. 1:8; II Cor. 11:8, etc).

### 2. It is to edify itself.

The Church edifies (builds up) itself through teaching and in doing the work and worship which God has commanded (Ephesians 4:11-16). Much of what Paul wrote to Timothy & Titus had to do with this purpose (I & II Timothy & Titus).

### 3. It is to engage in a limited amount of benevolent work.

The early believers in Jerusalem sold property and possessions to share with those who had need among them (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-34). Some Christian widows had been neglected in Acts 6:1-6 and the

disciples at Jerusalem made efforts to correct the problem. The Church was to care for its widows who had need (I Tim. 5:16). When brethren in Judea were struck by a famine, the disciples at Antioch determined to send a contribution for their relief (Acts 11:27-30). This relief was sent

by way of Paul and Barnabas. In Romans 15:25-26 & in II Corinthians 8-9, the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia made a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

### 4. It provides a unit of fellowship for the

**saved.** Every saved person is a member of the Church (Acts 2:47). When those 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost were baptized into Christ, they were added to the Church by the Lord. We have fellowship with Christ (I Cor. 1:9) and with all those who obey the gospel (I John 1:1-3, 6-7).

### 5. It is to Worship God.

Jesus said in **John 4:24**, *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”* We must worship God in the manner that He has told us and we must do

so with the right heart (attitude). We see this with the early Church in Jerusalem. **Acts 2:42**, *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”* The apostle Peter said that Christians are to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God (I Peter 2:5). The New Testament Churches did this on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2).

These are the examples we find in the scriptures about the purpose of the Church. Many people seem to think that the scriptures are much to narrow on what the Church is

about. Did you notice there wasn’t any scripture about the Church providing recreation for its members? There weren’t any gymnasiums, Family Life centers or ball teams. The Church did not set up counseling centers for psychological problems or maternity homes for expecting mothers. Sure these are good works but that departs from the function and purpose of the Church. We do not see the Church involved in the relief of the world. They helped other Christians but they were not trying to

eradicate poverty or build hospitals for the masses. We also do not see the Church involved in secular education or in the political arena.

Why can’t we just let the Church be what God intended it to be? Do not try to put responsibilities on the Church which God never gave it. It is easy to look around and see what everyone else is doing but why not just look at what God said in

His Holy Word? The Church was successful in the first century against incredible odds. It will be successful today if we will just let the Church do its work.

— Shane Williams

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## God’s Plan for Saving Man

- ⇒ **Hear** the Gospel (Romans 10:17)
- ⇒ **Believe** the Gospel (Hebrews 11:6; John 20:31)
- ⇒ **Repent** of Past Sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30)
- ⇒ **Confess Faith** in Christ (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32)
- ⇒ **Be Baptized** in water (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:27; I Pet. 3:21)
- ⇒ **Be Faithful** until/ unto Death (Rev. 2:10)