

## “The Church Is Not For Everyone”

To the suggestion of this title I can hear someone quickly reply, “What are you talking about? Of course the church is for everyone!” **But it isn’t.** The gospel, the “good news” of Jesus Christ, is for all (Romans 1:16-17), but the church isn’t. Here’s why: the church is the **product** of those who accept the truth of the gospel through obedience. Everyone won’t do that. So while the gospel is for all, the church is not for the simple reason that “all” won’t obey the gospel. Thus, the church isn’t for them. Perhaps this is, at least in part, what is meant in John 1:12, “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even those who believe in His name...*”

However, refusing to accept and obey the gospel is not the only reason that the church isn’t for everyone. There are other reasons also, but they also ultimately stem from the rejection of truth on some level. The church isn’t for everyone because some folks want the church to be something that it can’t be- or at least it can’t be and remain the church. This shouldn’t be surprising. Jesus was rejected as the Messiah because He wouldn’t be the physical/political king that many of the Jews wanted. He instead said, “*My kingdom is not of this world.*” (John 18:36) So I suppose it should be only natural that some will reject His church because it isn’t what they want it to be.

If the church is to be the “*pillar and ground of truth*” (it is to be exactly that, 1Timothy 3:15), and if one doesn’t really want the truth, then naturally, the church isn’t for them. They will either reject it along with the truth that it supports, or they will seek to change the church into some more palatable and desirable entity. **But...**

**Some want the church to be a social club.** Jesus neither designed nor built the church for social purposes. It was designed and built for spiritual purposes, and to be the Lord’s church, it must be maintained the same way. While members of the church certainly enjoy studying the Bible together, worshipping God together, and commemorating the Lord’s death together, it is the pursuit of these spiritual purposes which bring them together- not the desire of social interaction. There are many clubs and organizations which can provide for social needs and desires of man; the Lord’s church is to provide for his *spiritual* needs and desires.

**Some want the church to be an entertainment center.** Jesus did not die on the cross to provide an organization to meet man’s recreational needs and desires. Please listen to 1Peter 4:6 on this point, “*For the gospel has for **this purpose** been preached to those who are dead (meaning *spiritually* dead, though *physically* alive- PCS), that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.*” The **purpose** of which this passage speaks is not man’s recreation or entertainment, but the salvation of his soul from eternal destruction. This is the purpose of the church, not to entertain or recreate. If entertainment and recreation is what one wants, the Lord’s church is not for them.

**Some want the church to be an educational facility or day-care for their children.** While there is certainly nothing wrong with wanting the best education and care for your children that you can get, does such really fit into the church’s purpose of being “*the pillar and support of truth*”? Romans 1:23ff speaks of those who would *remake* God into their own image. It seems that some folks want to do the same with God’s church: they want to remake it to suit their own

needs and purposes, rather than those of God. God didn't establish the church to provide our children a safe and wholesome place to play while we're at work; nor did He create it to educate our children in the wisdom of man. God built and established the church to be "*the pillar and support of truth*"- to preach and teach the gospel to the salvation of souls. If it is daycare and education that one wants, the Lord's church is not for them.

What I hope we see from all of this is actually quite simple. **The Lord's church was designed for one purpose: to be that which *supports, upholds, and demonstrates* the truth of the gospel.** As such, it is an organization comprised of those who accept and obey the gospel. If one doesn't want to *obey, support, uphold, and demonstrate* the gospel through righteous living, **then the church isn't for them. Of course, the inverse is also true!** (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at [southportcofc.org](http://southportcofc.org); email to [mrpcstrong@hotmail.com](mailto:mrpcstrong@hotmail.com))