



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR:

April 2026

by Lee Shipp

Why Must I Go to Church?

A major issue in modern Christianity is confusion about the true purpose and nature of the Church. Many attend church but lack understanding of what the Church is meant to be and how it truly functions.

We can call ourselves whatever we wish and put any label or sign on our churches, but the true Church is the habitation of God by the Holy Spirit. If it is not, regardless of what we call it, it is not the Church.

If you truly understood the Church, you would realize that you don't have the freedom to go wherever you want. You are a living stone, fitly joined together in a spiritual house that the Holy Spirit has placed you in. Your position in Christ is supported by those who have come before you, and your divine position will, in turn, support those who come after you.

To better visualize this, consider that in the West, we see houses made of bricks held together with mortar. The mortar ensures the bricks remain in place and symmetrical. By contrast, the ancient temples Paul references were not built of brick and mortar. Instead, they used marble and stone, with each piece chiseled to fit precisely upon another. These stones are engineered to support one another so perfectly that no mortar is needed. In fact, when properly assembled—as seen in the ancient pyramids—not even a piece of paper can be slipped between the stones. They fit perfectly together.

This image illustrates how Jesus is building His Church. Just as the stones in those ancient structures were fit together with purpose, He fits us together to form His spiritual house. Each of us has a proper place, crafted by the Holy Spirit, as one of the living stones. Your position is specifically designed to provide support to others and to allow new lives coming into Christ to rest upon you. Failing to remain where the Holy Spirit has placed you jeopardizes the integrity of the whole temple.

YOU ARE NOT THE CHURCH BY YOURSELF

Building on this, in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul illustrates the Church as a functioning body, much like the human body. This Body is uniquely built by the Holy Spirit: by one Spirit, we are baptized into one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free—and we have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

The body is not just a single part; it is made up of many parts working together. Alone, you are not the Church—the Church is not made up of just one person. The Church, like a body, is made from many distinct members, each contributing to the whole.

People may say, "I don't need to go to church to be saved. I don't need to go to church to go to heaven." I won't argue with you, but you must understand: if you're not part of "The" Church, you're not saved, and you're not going to heaven.

"If the foot shall say, 'Because I'm not the hand, I'm not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, 'Because I'm not the eye, I'm not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? And if the whole body were an eye, where's the hearing? And if the whole were hearing, where's the smelling?" But now has God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it pleases Him (1 Corinthians 12:15–18).

Reflecting further, whose pleasure determines our place in the Body? God's. Why? Because he is building something enduring, not only for future generations but also for the present one. His purpose is to establish a habitation for the Holy Spirit. He builds it for His pleasure.

However, if all were one member, where would the body be? But the Body is many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you," nor the head to the feet, "I don't need you." Everyone is necessary—even those members that seem less necessary. God gives them more glory, more honor, and greater beauty, because every part of the body is necessary.

THERE MUST BE NO SCHISMS IN THE CHURCH

Because God's care for His Church is intentional, there must be no division in the body. All members should care for one another because of His design.

If you have a problem with the members of the Body of Christ, your problem is not with them—it's with the Head. And the Head is Jesus. If you hold a grudge, your problem is with the Head. The Head brings healing into the Body. Holding a grudge is rebellion against the Head, not just another member. Schisms damage the Body, as a human body is damaged by a loss of communication with its head. At all costs, we must not divide the Body. You cannot amputate it. The hand cannot say to the foot, "I don't need you. I'm cutting you out of my life." It cannot do that. It must not.

Here's a picture for you: I'm not a handyman, but I try. And honestly, it's not great. I know what it's like to bust a finger with a hammer. My right hand does the busting. Every time I take on a project and must hold a nail or something, it's always my left hand that ends up in jeopardy, taking the hit.

Now, when I hit my hand, it doesn't hold a grudge against the hand that hit it. Why? Because of the Head. The Head says, "It's okay. Didn't mean to do it. I'm going to comfort you." The Head takes the hand that did the busting and holds the hand that took the beating.

That's how the Body of Christ must work. When someone hurts you or fails, the Head, Jesus, keeps the Body whole—reconciling, comforting, sustaining so the Body functions. There is no room for grudges—only restoration and unity.

Many members struggle with where the Holy Spirit has placed them. Wishing they were an eye instead of a hand, some try to move themselves where it pleases them. This leads to deformity within the Body of Christ for that generation.

We put noses where mouths should be or hands where ears belong. Members go where they want, serve as they want, and refuse the Holy Spirit. Some stay at home, further deforming the Body. The feet, feeling unimportant, go missing, and now the Body is hindered, unable to function as the Spirit intends.

Given this, it is likely that this is how the Church appears to demons, principalities, and powers. They look on and mock, seeing a body that does not function well—feet in living rooms, hearing impaired, the mouth where the nose should be.

This insight reveals the enemy's strategy. Satan cannot stop the Holy Spirit directly, so he seeks to hinder the vehicle the Spirit uses—the Church. If Satan succeeds, a generation will experience greater darkness and peril. Creating schisms in the Body is Satan's method to hinder the Spirit and advance his cause. For the love of God, we must not allow our lives to play into Satan's schemes.

THE HOLY SPIRIT BEGS US

The Holy Spirit commands us to pursue peace and unity in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:3). This is not optional or casual; living in peace, walking in unity, and honoring one another are not merely good advice—they are acts of obedience.

The Spirit calls us to function this way, so His mission to glorify Jesus through us may be complete, unbroken, and glorious.

The Holy Spirit urges us to walk in a manner worthy of this lifestyle (Ephesians 4:1). This is our calling. Therefore, be lowly, meek, and patient with one another. Bear each other's shortcomings in love. **What could possibly give you the excuse to disrupt the unity of the Spirit and the peace in His Body? He alone reserves the right to deal with His Body, not you.**

You are commanded not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Therefore, you are admonished to be very careful with your behavior and your words towards one another:

"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:29-32, ESV).

I don't expect the religious, who attend our churches, to live this way. The religious will always be a tool of Satan to seek their own way, live in offense, and grieve the Holy Spirit. But I do expect all who are born of God to pursue this lifestyle. Because of your new nature in Christ, being the beloved children of God, I expect you to live like God (Ephesians 5:1). I expect you to walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Ephesians 5:2).

If He lives in you, and if His habitation is the Church, it is not consistent with your faith to live apart from the Church. Do not do this to Him. Get in your place ... be the Church!

©Lee Shipp Wednesday, April 1, 2026