



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: August 2026

by Lee Shipp

WHY DO I NEED TO GO TO CHURCH?

As we have established, the Church is God's eternal longing: "...hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ...according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:9, 11). Through the Church—David's Tabernacle—God would make known His manifold wisdom, shattering the objectives and boasting of principalities and powers in heavenly places.

Because Satan has no power over the Church and is no match for the Holy Spirit, he must seek some point of advantage, lest his schemes fall to the ground. Therefore, he seeks to hinder the vehicle of God—the Church—by using people and false teachers to sow division and thus grieve the Holy Spirit.

Satan's most effective people are those who think they are godly—those who believe they have the right to destroy others in God's name. They are wolves. They destroy people in the name of Jesus. They paralyze believers with fear and lies. They seek to poison others with their bitterness and rebellion. They cannot gain a natural following; therefore, they typically work behind the scenes, like a snake in the dark.

So, let us address the problem of false teachers by examining the protection the Holy Spirit has built into the Church. Ephesians 4 will be the primary resource for this chapter.

God has established offices in the body: the apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, and evangelist. These gifts serve to sanctify the Body of Christ. Through these offices, God equips individual members of the body to become mature, grounded, useful, and effective in the Body of Christ.

This answers many relevant questions: "Why must I go to church?" or "Why must I submit to leadership?" Perhaps someone may ask, "Why can't I just do church at home by streaming the service online?"

You need the Body of Christ because you are a member. The Body of Christ needs you because you are a member. You need these offices in your life if you are to grow healthy in Christ and have a useful ministry.

The Body must gather—not just at home, not just on a screen. Why?

1. Not everyone is a fivefold minister. Without these offices, you will be spiritually malformed.
2. The purpose of fellowship is to manifest God's glory and wisdom. By definition, if you do not attend, you are not in fellowship.
3. The church is a body put together by the Holy Spirit. When we are not together, something is amiss.
4. Jesus is not a message—He is life that must be expressed through the church.
5. If you forsake assembling, you are at greater risk of turning back. You have already begun to turn back.
6. The gifts of the Holy Spirit cannot operate through the television. You cannot speak a word of prophecy to the congregation from your living room.

Ephesians equips us to discern whether the Holy Spirit is leading us to a proper church. With so many fellowships today, how can we identify a true church where the Holy Spirit lives?

The formation of the Body of Christ and the ORGANIZED FUNCTION OF LEADERSHIP must exist for it to be the Church and the Body of Christ. There must be a spiritually built house where the Holy Spirit can live and move, where the gifts of the Spirit function as a body, and where there is designated leadership.

A Church that THE HOLY SPIRIT is building has headship. If there is no such ministry and leadership within the Body—the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher—then it is a deformed body with unhealthy members. Therefore, there are designated and recognized leaders within every church body.

Individual members will not be properly equipped, protected, and sanctified in grace without the structure the Lord established. What we have today, all over the world—even in underground churches—is the organized meeting of the Body of Christ that the Holy Spirit is building.

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit commands that the Body does not forsake its fellowship in love. If you do not sense this command of the Spirit, you are probably not part of the Body. **THIS IS NOT TRADITION, THIS IS ORDER!**

THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR 2000 YEARS

What we see today is not tradition; it is the order of the house. It was clearly established and recognized. The Scriptures depict clearly established churches in particular cities, with designated meeting places.

Because of his authority and power, Paul often sent Timothy and Titus to pastor a church. He commanded them to set the church in order, establish leaders, and take up offerings. The biblical Church is active. The graces of God are witnessed by believers who give financially, minister in prayer, and serve in hospitality. The sending of Timothy and Titus shows that the Church was not up for grabs. The Holy Ghost's appointment of the fivefold ministers, recognized by the Church, was necessary for a healthy church.

Organization, even in a HOUSE CHURCH, was not up for grabs. You would find the same order and activity in a HOUSE CHURCH as in a church of thousands in Jerusalem. If you were in one of Paul's churches, you would observe leadership and order. You would see the bishops and elders functioning. You would see people giving and operating in the gifts of the Spirit. You would see the Body functioning. You would see the apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, and evangelist growing the people.

Denominations, large groups, small groups, and independent groups all have their place within the church. Numbers have nothing to do with it. Whether 100 or 10,000 people meet has nothing to do with the credibility of a church.

Today, people are attacking the ORGANIZED BODY OF CHRIST (the Church) to promote their preferred version of the Church. They belittle other churches by claiming, "They are the true Church." For example, the Home Church Movement may belittle the traditional or institutional church to legitimize itself. Why would any church belittle another church to justify itself? This is never the work of the Holy Spirit.

This is not to say that house churches cannot exist, for they certainly can. But whether it is a HOUSE CHURCH or an ORGANIZED CHURCH GATHERING, they will look alike if they are churches of the Holy Spirit.

What happens in a service will be the same whether it is a HOUSE CHURCH or a large meeting in a building. Even HOUSE CHURCHES meet in a building. There will be clearly defined leaders called by God and appointed by the Holy Spirit as apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists. There will be strong male headship. There will be tithes, offerings, giving, and missions. There will be a love for unity and a love for the brothers in Christ outside their fellowship. There will be respect for other gatherings that come together in the name of Jesus to proclaim His doctrine.

The House Church cannot point to the larger church meeting and say it is wrong any more than a large church meeting can point to a House Church and say it is wrong—unless the necessary building structures are absent.

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