

28 Ecclesial life - Separateness



The principle of separation

Look at Exodus 19:6. What did it mean for the nation of Israel to be 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation'?

Now some New Testament passages which use similar language about those who believe in the Lord Jesus. Look at 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; Hebrews 10:10; 1 Peter 2:5, and summarise what these verses say about believers and their relationship with other people.

Separation from other denominations

Is it a good thing that there are so many Christian denominations?



Look at these passages and see what they teach about divisions in what was once a single church. 1 Corinthians 1:10-14; 12:20-25; 1 Corinthians 11:18; Romans 16:17; Luke 11:17.

Is it good in practice that there should be so many churches?

So why are there divisions?



Look at Acts 19:8-10, and see how the believers in Ephesus separated themselves from the Jewish Synagogue.

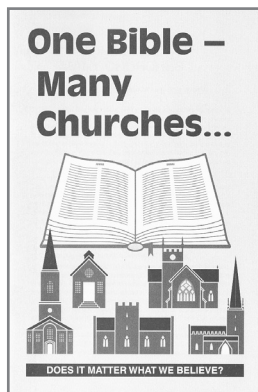
Read Acts 20:29-30; 2 Timothy 4:3-4 and 2 Peter 2:1-2, and see what the apostles said would happen to the church.

So how should we think of other denominations?



Look at Mark 9:38-40 and Luke 11:23. Although these verses seem to contradict each other, when we look at them together we can learn an important lesson about our attitude to others. Now look at Philippians 1:14-18. All in all, what do you conclude from these passages?

Look at Galatians 1:6-9; 2:11-14. What was the attitude of the apostle Paul to people who did not follow the teaching that the Lord Jesus had revealed to him? What should we learn from this?



What are the positive reasons for remaining separate?



And as individuals?

We all need friends, and whether we are at school, at college or at work we need to get along with people we meet. But where do we draw the line? Here are some verses to think about:

Hebrews 11:9-16 - think about how Abraham left behind the rich but corrupt world he had lived in.

1 Peter 2:11-17 - any echoes of Abraham?

John 15:18-19, John 18:36 - what do you think 'the World' means?

Think about citizenship - what does it mean to be a citizen of the country you live in? Now look at Philippians 3:20 and think about what it means.