

**W**e want you to visit us at the Church of Christ.

And we want you to feel comfortable. But we know an unfamiliar place can be intimidating.

So, let us tell you what you can expect when you honor us with a visit.

### **Background**

A brief description of our background may help you understand us.

We are a part of "The Restoration Movement". Our goal is to "restore" the New Testament church in our time—to determine from the Bible what the Church was like in the beginning, and to be like that. We believe this is a worthy and reverent goal.

We want to be a Bible-centered church. And we try to be. Yet we know that our conclusions aren't flawless, and that our practices are sometimes colored by habit, preference, tradition, or convenience.

Now, let us walk you through a worship service.

There may be some variations from this description, because every Church of Christ is autonomous. Self-ruled. Independent.

### **The Setting**

Some Churches of Christ meet in homes or rented facilities. However, for the sake of convenience, we have erected a church building.

You will enter what we refer to as the "auditorium". There will be rows of chairs or pews for the worshipers. There are no reserved seats, so feel free to sit anywhere you choose.

### **Singing**

In a bookrack near you, there will be a hymn book for your use. When the song leader announces a number, you can turn to that number in the hymnbook to find the words and music.

One of the unique things about churches of Christ - and something you may find strange - is that the music is "a cappella". That is, we sing without the accompaniment of musical instruments.

This is a conviction with us, not just a preference. It has its roots in our restoration heritage. We are seeking to worship according to the New Testament pattern. Since the New Testament leaves instrumental music out, we believe it's best to exclude it, too. <sup>1</sup>

You may consider us narrow on this point. But we believe you will respect our reason for it, and our conviction. And we think you'll find the singing meaningful, with everyone being invited to participate.

### **Prayers**

There will be several prayers during the service. And there may be prayers for specific needs and requests.

### **Preaching**

You will notice that the preacher doesn't have a title. He won't be referred to as Pastor or Reverend. He may be addressed as Dr., but only if he has earned that academic credential. He will probably be referred to as brother. Or Mister. Or, possibly, just called by his first name. He won't be wearing any ecclesiastical vestments which set him apart.

The reason for this is our belief in the priesthood of all believers. That all are equal. <sup>2</sup>

The sermon will likely be from 25 to 30 minutes. We think you will find it refreshingly Bible-centered.

### **Invitation**

At the close of the sermon, the preacher will often "extend an invitation". This is simply an expedient time to invite those who are

moved to do so to make a commitment or request prayer support.

He will encourage those who wish to , 'respond' to come to the front of the auditorium while the congregation sings a hymn.

Don't feel ill-at-ease during this invitation. You will not be singled out in any way. There may be several who respond. Or none.

Some may respond for baptism. Some to confess sins. Some to ask for prayer for a specific need. Some to 'identify' or 'place membership' with this church.

If anyone responds for baptism, you will witness the baptism during this service. The baptism will be by immersion.<sup>3</sup> And it will be for the remission of sins. <sup>4</sup>

### **Lord's Supper**

If you visit on a Sunday morning, the Lord's Supper will be included in the worship proceedings—because Churches of Christ observe this memorial every Sunday.

Again, the reason for this is our desire to follow New Testament teaching. The first century church celebrated this observance on the first day of the week. <sup>5</sup>

We assume from this that they did it the first day of every week. And we know from

respected historians that in early centuries the Lord's Supper was an every-Sunday commemoration.<sup>6</sup>

During this memorial, plates containing pieces of unleavened bread will be passed throughout the congregation. The bread symbolizes the body of Jesus.<sup>7</sup> Each participating person will break off a piece of the bread and eat it.

Next, trays filled with small cups will be distributed. The cups will contain "fruit of the vine", usually grape juice, symbolizing the blood of Jesus.<sup>7</sup> Each participant will drink the contents of one of the cups.

If you choose not to participate, don't be embarrassed. Feel free to just pass the plate or tray to the person next to you.

### Offering

Also, if you visit on a Sunday morning containers will be passed to collect the weekly financial offering.<sup>8</sup>

As our guest, you are not expected to make a donation. Feel perfectly comfortable in just passing the collection plate on down the row.

### What Will Be Expected of You

Nothing at all! You are welcome to participate. But don't feel obligated to. Just observe, if that is your choice.

You may be asked to fill out a Visitor's Card. This simply provides information so the church can write or call to thank you for your visit. Supply the information if you are comfortable doing so. But feel free to decline this request if you prefer.

### The People

What kind of people can you expect to find? Pretty much the entire spectrum, as in any group. You will find traditionalists—and you'll find those who prefer anything new over everything old.

You will find those of us who mistake our traditions for absolute truth, and get pretty bent out of shape when they are tampered with. And you'll find those of us who are a bit smug at having been liberated from tradition.

You will find legalists and liberals—and a lot of people in between.

You will find happy people—and grouchy people. Friendly people—and unfriendly people. Loving people - and cantankerous people. People who are learning - and people who already know everything.

You'll find us to be like the little West Texas community that has a billboard at the edge of town which says, "The Home of 3, 000 Friendly People - And A Few Old Soreheads."

You get the picture. We're a diverse group, coming from varied backgrounds, and at different stages of knowledge and spiritual growth.

We don't know everything. We don't do everything right. We don't always treat each other as we should. We haven't arrived—we're just on the journey.

But, you see, we were not brought together by any illusion of our perfection or righteousness. We were brought together by our recognition that we are sinners in need of the cleansing blood of Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

That's the reason we can worship together, stick together, and, with God's help, accomplish some things that make a difference.

You won't have to look very far to find our failures.

But, bottom line, you will find people who love Jesus and love the Bible. You will find people who have passion for Jesus and compassion for people.

1. 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:18,19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12 2. Matthew 23:8-12; Galatians 3:26-28; 1 Peter 2:5,9 3. Acts 8:35-39; Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12 4. Acts 2:38 5. Acts 20:7 6. Neander, Eusebius 7. 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 8. 1 Corinthians 16:1,2 9. Mark 2:17; Romans 5:6-9; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:7

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What You Can Expect  
when You Visit the  
Brownfield Church of  
Christ

Praising Jesus in all Things  
Loving Jesus with the Family  
Sharing Jesus with the Lost

### Schedule of Services

Sunday	
Bible Class	9:30 am
Morning Worship	10:30 am
Evening Worship	5:00 pm
Wednesday	
Bible Class	7:00 pm