

TITLE: THE NEW TESTAMENT

TEXT : I TIMOTHY 3:14-16

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the “true church”. The primary NT emphasis is on the local church, and the local church is “true church”. In the NT, Christians were expected to unite with local assemblies and go to work for God. In these verses, Paul shows the importance of the local church by describing it under several images:

I. THE HOUSE OF GOD.

That is, the family or household of God on earth. All believers are children of God, and the church is His family. See Gal. 6:10 and Eph. 2:19. Paul wrote this letter to teach people how to behave as members of God’s family. If the church is God’s family, then certainly it is more important than any other organization on earth. [**Galatians 6:10** - As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. **Ephes. 2:19** - Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

II. THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH.

This is architectural language. The church is what holds up God’s truth in this world. The word “ground” means “bulwark” or “foundation”.... As the local church is faithful to preserve, preach, and practice the truth, God’s work prospers on earth. The unfaithful Christian is weakening the very foundation of God’s truth in the world.

III. THE BODY OF CHRIST.

Verse 16 is perhaps an early Christian hymn, memorized by the saints for their worship services. The mystery of godliness is God’s hidden program to bring godliness into the world. Of course, Christ is God’s great Mystery, and this song exalts Him: His birth; His death and resurrection; His earthly ministry. This is a summary of the Person and work of Christ, and the idea is that the local church now continues the work which He began. The church on earth is the body of Christ on earth (see 1 Cor. 12:12, where Paul is speaking of a local church, not the church universal). [**1 Cor. 12:12** - For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all

the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.]

CONCLUSION

The church is important to God and should be important to us.