

The Church: A Visible Community – Boundary Markers of the Community

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Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Membership/Discipline are three different facets of the same truth: visible markers of our union with Christ by faith and thus communion with one another in the church.

1. Baptism

a. Biblical Evidence

b. Historical Theology Evidence

Modern/Contemporary Evangelical Practice

2. Lord's Supper

a. Biblical Evidence

b. Historical Theology Evidence

Modern/Contemporary Evangelical Practice

3. Membership/Discipline

a. Biblical Evidence

b. Historical Theology Evidence

Modern/Contemporary Evangelical Practice

4. Conclusion



Dr. Lawrence's Select Bibliography:

The Church

Clowney, Edmund P. *The Church*. Contours of Christian Theology. Downers Grove: IVP, 1995. Perhaps the best modern general introduction to ecclesiology.

Dever, Mark E. *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012. Originally written as part of an edited, multi-author Baptist systematic theology, the structure follows the dictates of that volume, separating the biblical, historical, and systematic reflections into separate sections. Despite that weakness, this volume represents the mature reflections of the pastor-theologian who has given more attention than any other to the topic of ecclesiology in our generation.

Green, Christopher. *The Message of the Church*. Bible Speaks Today: Bible Themes. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014.

A delightful and refreshing approach to the church from the perspective of biblical theology. After tracing a biblical theology of the church from Genesis to Revelation, Green then examines the various aspects of the life and ministry of the church in light of that redemptive-historical trajectory.

Keller, Timothy. *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in your City*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.

A remarkable book, filled with insight on both the theology and the practice of the church in the context of modernity. However, do read Jonathan Leeman's review in the 9Marks Journal for a critique of Keller on contextualization.

The Ordinances

Jamieson, Bobby. *Going Public: Why Baptism is Required for Church Membership*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015.

Jamieson's book feels like it is breaking new ground, but in fact is simply reminding us of what the church has always believed. Baptism confers membership in the visible covenant community and the Lord's Supper confirms on-going membership in good-standing. Jamieson rebuilds the biblical argument and then answers the objections raised by modern evangelicalism.

Schreiner, Thomas R. and Shawn D. Wright, eds. *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*. New American Commentary Series in Bible & Theology. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007.

Schreiner, Thomas R. and Matthew R. Crawford, eds. *The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ until He Comes*. New American Commentary Series in Bible & Theology. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011.

These two edited volumes, like all such collections, are somewhat uneven. On the whole, however, they offer helpful, baptistic and congregational perspectives on the practice and meaning of the ordinances in light of both paedobaptist and catholic alternatives.

Membership & Discipline

Lauterbach, Mark. *The Transforming Community: The Practice of the Gospel in Church Discipline*. Scotland: Christian Focus, 2003.

A pastorally wise exploration of the practice of discipline in the context of a gospel-shaped community.

Leeman, Jonathan. *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline*. Grand Rapids: Crossway, 2010.

Together with his two smaller books, *Church Membership* and *Church Discipline* in the 9Marks Building Healthy Churches series, Leeman not only champions the practice of church membership and discipline, but places it on a solid biblical and theological basis. As important, he explores modern evangelicalism's rejection of both practices as a consequence of our cultural compromise in adopting the world's definition of love, rather than God's. Before you reject church membership as unbiblical, you simply must deal with Leeman's argument.