

Non-resident Church Membership

- I. Non-resident *adj.* - 1. a. Of a clergyman: Not residing where his official duties require him to reside; culpably absent from his benefice or charge.
- II. A church is a congregation (**Heb 2:12 c/w Psa 22:22**) of people who assemble together to worship God according to the dictates of His word.
- III. Israel was God's church under the law of Moses.
 1. **Act 7:38** - This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:
 2. **Exo 16:2** - And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:
- IV. Many of the members of the church of Israel were non-resident members, only coming up to Jerusalem to worship God thrice in a year.
 1. **Exo 34:23** - Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.
 2. **Exo 34:24** - For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year.
- V. There is likewise non-resident membership in the NT church.
 1. When persecution arose in the church in Jerusalem, the members were scattered everywhere.
 - A. **Act 8:1** - And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.
 - B. They would have been non-resident members, not able to assemble with the church on a regular basis.
 2. Paul and Barnabas were members of the church in Antioch, but they spent much time away from the church doing evangelistic work.
 - A. **Act 13:2** - As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.
 - B. **Act 13:3** - And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.
 - C. Paul and Barnabas were non-resident members/ministers during that time.
 3. Onesimus and Epaphras were a non-resident members of the church in Colosse.
 - A. **Col 4:9** - With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.
 - B. **Col 4:12** - Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.
- VI. Believers are commanded to be baptized and when they are, they are added to the membership of a local church.
 1. **Act 2:38** - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
 2. **Act 2:41** - Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

3. **Act 2:42** - And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
- VII. Therefore, the Ethiopian eunuch would have been a non-resident member of the church which Philip baptized him into (most likely the Jerusalem church).
1. **Act 8:27** - And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,
 2. **Act 8:36** - And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
 3. **Act 8:37** - And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
 4. **Act 8:38** - And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.
 5. **Act 8:39** - And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.
 6. This was a fulfillment of prophesy which said that eunuchs would one day be given a place in the house of God (**Isa 56:3-5**) which they were banned from in the law of Moses (**Deu 23:1**).
- VIII. If there is not a true New Testament church which believes and practices the truth in one's area, then until they can move to live where one is, they have no choice but to be a non-resident member if they are going to obey the gospel and be baptized and joined to the body of Christ, the local church.