

The Church

The church is a collective group of disciples of Jesus Christ. The term actually means, "called out ones." The church is not a building or a location, but a people. People who have been saved by Jesus, and are committed to the teaching, fellowship, and mission of Jesus make up the church. Churches have structure, purpose, and ordinances that distinguish them.

Read Ephesians 4:15-16.

How is the church described? _____

How is Jesus described in relation to the church? _____

How is this different from a physical building? _____

The universal church

The bible uses the word church when describing all those in the whole world who are truly saved by Jesus. (Ephesians 5:25)

The local church

The bible uses the word church when describing smaller groups of believers who gather in a local assembly. Houses (Romans 16:5) cities (1 Corinthians 1:2)(1 Thessalonians 1:1) regions (Acts 9:31)

Marks of the Church

Read Acts 2:42. What was the early church committed to? _____

The preaching and teaching of God's word is a mark of true churches. Churches properly administer the ordinances of **baptism** and the **Lord's Supper**. They seek to be pure in doctrine, complete in unity, discipline with love, petition God in prayer, evangelize the lost, disciple their members, worship with authenticity, practice mercy, exhibit holiness and have a love for Jesus.

Purpose of the Church

Worship- Worship is when believers give honor to God for who He is. Worship acknowledges adoration and praise for all that God is and has done. (Colossians 3:16) (Ephesians 5:16-19)

*Worship should take place in the life of a believer both personally and corporately.

Read Psalm 66:4. What ways should God be worshipped? _____

Fellowship- The bible describes the fellowship within the body of Christ as "participation with others in a common purpose." Many refer to this as community, or sharing life together. Community within the church includes:

Unity: freedom from any divisions (John 10:16)(John 17:21)(Ephesians 4:3)

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10. What is the desire for every church? _____

Ministering to other believers: bearing burdens with one another and being accountable to one another.

Ways the body ministers to one another:

(Romans 14:19) _____ (Galatians 5:13) _____

(Galatians 6:2) _____ (James 5:16) _____

Discipling: intentionally equipping and nurturing believers in order to build them up into maturity in the faith. (Colossians 1:28)(Matthew 28:18-20)(Ephesians 4:11-15)

*Discipleship is not complete until those you disciple are making disciples themselves.

“A true disciple makes disciples” –Francis Chan

Read 2 Timothy 2:2. What are believers to do with that they have learned? _____

Evangelism - proclaiming the gospel, urging non-believers to repent and believe in Jesus (Romans 10:14-17) (1 Peter 3:15-16) (Mark 16:15)

Administration of the Church Ordinances

Baptism

Baptism is a command that Jesus instituted for believers to practice. Baptism is a believer's public identification with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection. It is an outward expression of the internal heart change. Baptism does not save us, nor does it impart grace to us, but announces to all that we have trusted Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Who should be baptized? Christians who have personally confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and savior should be baptized.(Matthew 28:19)(Acts 2:41)(Acts 16:33-34)

What does baptism mean?: Baptism is an outward symbol declaring that a person has died to sin in Christ, and has been raised with Him in newness of life, essentially an outward demonstration of an inward faith. Baptism is also an act of joining church membership.

Read Romans 6:3-4. When a believer is baptized, to whom do they identify themselves?

How should we be baptized? Based upon scriptural evidence, we believe that a person should be baptized by being fully immersed in water. (Acts 8:38)(Matthew 3:16)(Mark 1:15)

The Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:24-26)

Jesus gave the Lord's Supper to the church and in some instances it is referred to as communion. The Lord's Supper is an act of remembering Christ's death until He returns. When the bread is broken it symbolizes the body of Jesus being broken (Matthew 26:26); and when the cup is poured out, it symbolizes the blood of Jesus being poured out for us (1 Corinthians 11:25).

Read Matthew 26:26-29. What does Jesus say is symbolized by the Lord's Supper? _____

Who should participate in The Lord's supper? Those who believe in Jesus Christ, have been baptized and have examined themselves for sin and or broken relationships with other believers (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

Personal application:

How is the church necessary for growing maturity in Christ? _____

What purpose of the church are you most thankful for? _____
