

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

The Church And Its Mission

GOD DESIGNED THE CHURCH FOR A PURPOSE AND MISSION.

The Meaning Of “Church”

The Greek word used for church is composed of two words:

Ekklesia: *ek* means “out of” and *klesia* means “called.”

- The Ekklesia is a people who have been “called out of” sin and the world to assemble for a common spiritual purpose.

1. To refer to a local congregation of people – the local church.

Romans 16:3-5 (NIV)

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. 5 Greet also the church that meets at their house.

1 Corinthians 1:2 (NLT)

2 I am writing to God’s church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people.

Galatians 1:2 (NLT)

2 All the brothers and sisters here join me in sending this letter to the churches of Galatia.

2. To describe all who have been born again – the universal church.

Hebrews 12:23 (NKJV)

23 ...to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven...

Ephesians 5:23 (NIV)

Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

The Church Was Established By Jesus

Roman 16:16 (NLT)

All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.

Acts 20:28 (NIV)

Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Matthew 16:18 (NLT)

I will build my church, and all the powers of hell[b] will not conquer it.

Acts 2:41 (NLT)

Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

Church Membership

- People become members of Christ's universal church as soon as they are saved.

Acts 2:47 (NKJV)

And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

- The New Testament calls true believers Saints.

Romans 1:7 (CSB)

To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints.

- Saint comes from a Greek word that means separated one.
- The New Testament calls true believers, brothers, and sisters.

Romans 8:29 (NLT)

For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Romans 8:17 (NLT)

Now if we are his children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

John 1:12-13 (NLT)

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

The New Testament Church

Three NT illustrations that help us understand what the Church is and what God wants us to be:

1. The Bride of Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2 (NLT)

For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride to one husband—Christ.

Ephesians 5: 25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Revelation 19:7

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

The bride illustration speaks of three truths about the church:

- The Church's purity as she prepares to see Jesus.
- The Church's eagerness to see Jesus, her Groom.
- The Church's intimate relationship with Jesus.

2. The Temple of God

- Under the Old Testament, God revealed his presence in the Tabernacle and the Temple.

Exodus 25:40:34-35

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

1 Kings 8: 27

"But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!"

- Today, God's Temple is the Church.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

Ephesians 2:19-22 (NLT)

19 So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. 20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.

21 We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. 22 Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

- Today, every individual Believer is a Temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6: 19 (NLT)

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:20 (NLT)

Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.

3. The Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:13

For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NLT)

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Ephesians 1:22-23 (NLT)

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

The picture of the church as the body of Christ teaches us at least 4 important points:

1. Jesus Is The Head Of The Church.

- He's the church's source of life and has authority over the church.

2. The Church Is The Spiritual Body Of Christ In The World.

- Jesus has chosen to show Himself and do His work in the world through the Church.

3. Every Believer Is An Important Part Of The Church.

- In a healthy body, every part does what it was designed to do.

4. Believers Cannot Live And Act Alone.

The Mission of the Church

- The church's greatest value is found in Holy Spirit-empowered ministry.

1. Evangelism

- The word *evangelism* means to preach or announce good news.
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Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

1. The church must go to all people with the good news.
2. The church cannot be satisfied with *decisions* or *converts*.

Luke 24:49 (NLT)

"And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

Acts 1:8 (NLT)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

2. Worship

- Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God's people are called to minister to God in worship.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

Hebrews 13:15 (NLT)

Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.

- Our focus in worship is to minister to the Lord; we focus on God, not ourselves.

John 4:23-24

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

3. Edification of Believers

- God wants his people to be mature.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NLT)

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Romans 14:19

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

1 Corinthians 14:26

What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. *Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.*

Galatians 6:1-2

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

- The fruit of the spirit, not spiritual gifts, indicates A believer's maturity.

4. Demonstrating God's Love and Compassion

- Works of compassion are a powerful way to let God's love shine into a world full of poverty, crisis, and pain.

Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

James 2: 15-17

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

- None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something to make a difference.

Matthew 16:18 (NLT)

"I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it."