

# “Positioned in Church”

Pastor Al Brice | Sunday, February 2, 2020

## 1. Whose idea was church anyway? God's or man's?

**Colossians 1:15-18 NKJV:** <sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. <sup>18</sup> And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

[Greek word for ‘church’: ‘**ekklēsia**’, which means: “a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly or congregation; called out ones.”]

**Ephesians 2:19-22 NKJV:** <sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

2. Local assemblies were created for the gathering of the saints (born-again believers). We call them local churches. (Some met in houses because of persecution or a small number of believers. Today, people meet with us as online members in their houses around the world.)

## What is the main purpose of a local church?

**Ephesians 4:11-16 AMP:** <sup>11</sup> And [His gifts to the church were varied and] He Himself appointed some as apostles [special messengers, representatives], some as prophets [who speak a new message from God to the people], some as evangelists [who spread the good news of salvation], and some as pastors and teachers [to shepherd and guide and instruct], <sup>12</sup> [and He did this] to fully equip *and* perfect the saints (God's people) for works of service, to build up the body of Christ [the church];

\* **MATURITY:** <sup>13</sup> until we all reach oneness in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, [growing spiritually] to become a mature believer, reaching to the measure of the fullness of Christ [manifesting His spiritual completeness and exercising our spiritual gifts in unity].

\* **STABILITY:** <sup>14</sup> So that we are no longer children [spiritually immature], tossed back and forth [like ships on a stormy sea] and carried about by every wind of [shifting] doctrine, by the cunning *and* trickery of [unscrupulous] men, by the deceitful scheming of people ready to do anything [for personal profit].

\* **INTEGRITY:** <sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love [in all things—both our speech and our lives expressing His truth], let us grow up in all *things* into Him [following His example] who is the Head—Christ. <sup>16</sup> From Him the whole body [the church, in all its various parts], joined and knitted *firmly* together by what every joint supplies, when each part is working properly, causes the body to grow *and* mature, building itself up in [unselfish] love.

3. The Word of God warns us about not attending church, especially in these last days before Jesus returns.

**Hebrews 10:23-25 AMP:** <sup>23</sup> Let us seize *and* hold tightly the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is reliable *and* trustworthy *and* faithful [to His word]; <sup>24</sup> and let us consider [thoughtfully] how we may encourage one another to love and to do good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking our meeting together [as believers for worship and instruction], as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*, and all the more [faithfully] as you see the day [of Christ's return] approaching.