

The Church



We believe that all who have been justified by grace through faith make up the true (universal) church, which is the body of Christ. Believers everywhere are united by the Holy Spirit. The true church is made up of local congregations of believers of all sizes and denominations. We believe that Jesus mandated two ordinances: the Lord's Supper and baptism. Neither of these are means of salvation but are symbols of the work of Christ and his Spirit. We believe that delivering these ordinances is one of the functions of the church. The church also provides a place for worship. It helps believers grow in their faith. It equips followers for works of service and extends grace and mercy to fellow believers and the surrounding communities. And of prime importance, the church shares the love of Christ through evangelism.

The New Testament word for church is *ekklēsia* which means “a group that meets together.” We were not meant to be “Lone Ranger” Christians. God designed us to be together, to rub off on each other, to encourage and challenge each other, and to love and serve one another. That is why he set up the church. It is an important institution that all followers of Jesus Christ should belong to and engage with.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

Even in the early church, some people were in the habit of not meeting together. That was not good then and it still is not good now.

As a group, look at these verses and discuss how they can be applied to the church: John 13:34-35; John 17:20-23; Hebrews 10:24-25; Colossians 3:16-17, and Matthew 28:19-20.