

CARRYING THE TORCH

CHURCH'S MISSION

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Matthew 28:19

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

"Belonging to a church is a gift 10,000 times more than it is a duty".

THE TEMPLE (OLD TESTAMENT) VS THE CHURCH (NEW TESTAMENT)

The temple was a place where offerings and sacrifices were given to God. It was the place where heaven and earth meet. Israel's priestly representatives would go into the temple, to enter God's presence on behalf of the people to give thanks, to confess and to bring praise. But we are told by the prophet Haggai (Haggai 2:3-9) 'the future glory of this Temple will be greater than its past glory'.

500 years later Jesus arrives (Luke 2:22, Luke 2:46, Luke 19:45) The gospel of John tells us that Jesus is the glorious temple as a living human being. 'The word became flesh and pitched a tent among us, and we saw his glory'. John 1:14

When Christ came, we became the church.

Walking away from church is walking away from Jesus. John 14:23 says 'if anyone loves me he will keep my word'. Jesus founded the church. He established the apostles to be the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20).

Ephesians 5:32 – Christ and church are one

There are no lone rangers in the New Testament.

PAUL DEDICATES HIS LIFE TO CHURCH

A third of the New Testament is written by Paul. He wrote 13 letters, which went out to churches and believers. He had more influence on 2000 years of church history than any other person (apart from Jesus himself). Paul spent his life serving the church and building churches. He was beaten, tortured and ridiculed for his faith, yet he continued to help build and strengthen churches. Why would a man risk his life for the church if it wasn't important?

WHY IS CHURCH IMPORTANT?

It is God's plan.

Matthew 16:18

Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock') and upon this rock I will build my church and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

Ephesians 1:22-23

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.

Ephesians 4:15-16

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.

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

Matthew 28:19 AMP - The great commission

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations (help the people to learn of me, believe in me and obey my words), baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you...

1. Preach the gospel - Mark 16:15 Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. (Matthew 24:14).
2. Make disciples – In Acts the apostles started off with 12 of them and ended with thousands (Acts 6:7).

Disciple – Mathetes (Greek): Committed learner, student and follower.

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS TO OUR LIVES?

Four T's

Touch (Relationships) – Reach out to one another. Building genuine relationships and caring for our church family. (Acts 2:44 - 47, Romans 1:12, Hebrews 10:24-25).

Talent (gifts) – Using your gifts/talents for Gods glory. Whatever God has given you, give it back to him by serving him with it to bring glory to his name. (1 Peter 4:10, 1 Timothy 4:14, Romans 12:6-8).

Time – Making God a priority. Giving God your time in prayer, in studying the word, in worship and in serving Him. Set time aside specifically for Him. (Matthew 6:33, Proverbs 16:3)

Treasure (finances) – Tithes, offering and first fruits. God is our provider so we give back to Him. He gave his most precious gift and never withheld. We too, should give him our best and not our leftovers. (2 Corinthians 9:7, Acts 20:35, Luke 6:38, Malachi 3:10).

Ephesians 5:29-30

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

CONCLUSION

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Do you not know you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy and you are that temple.

Church is sacred, it is holy, it is magnificent, it is great, it is a live, it is working, it is Gods plan and it is you and I. We are the church. God has given us a mission that we have limited time on earth to complete.

'The early church didn't need energetic music, great videos, attractive leaders or elaborate lighting to be excited about being a part of God's body. The pure gospel was enough to them in a place of awe. Aren't you at least a little embarrassed that you have needed the extra stuff?' – Francis Chan, Letters to the Church

As Christians we are to be actively involved in church, serving and growing together as we support the preaching of the gospel and making disciples of all nations.

Ephesians 4:11

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.