

---

## CHURCH KEYS



TODAY'S TEXTS: [Matthew 16:13-19](#)

The New Testament Greek word for *Church* is *Ekklesia*.  
It literally means “*the Assembly*” or “*the called-out ones.*”

### *Functions of the Church?*

1. The *Local Church* functions as the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.
2. The *Local Church* is the pillar and foundation of the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The *Local Church* provides the ideal setting for \_\_\_\_\_ how to live like Jesus.
4. The *Local Church* provides godly \_\_\_\_\_ pressure.

# Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

PRAY FIRST 2023: 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting

Message: Church Keys

Speaker: Shawn Vandop

Date: January 8, 2023



## Connect (30min)

### 1. HIGHLIGHT – HOPE – HABIT – HEART

- What is 1 **Highlight** from your Christmas season experience?
- What is 1 **Hope** you have heading into 2023? Something you're looking forward to or something we can pray for.
- What is 1 **Habit** (or Discipline) that you would like to change or add in 2023?
- What is 1 **Heart** characteristic or word that you think God is going to work on or develop in you this year?  
*\*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, other...*

### 2. PRAY FIRST

📖 Share the Reading of pp.4-11 in the 2023 PRAY FIRST devotional.

- > Do you have any questions or feedback as we begin these 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting?
- > Are you using or will you use the devotional?

🙏 Leader – Open in prayer for your group and our church this season.

## Message Discussion (45min)

### 1. KEY KEYS 🔑

- Can you remember a memorable or unique time when you were given keys to something? What was the key for? How did it change your life or make you feel at that time?
- What do Keys generally symbolize, represent or activate? Why are they important?

### 2. MESSAGE RECAP

What jumped out at you from this week's message? What encourage or challenged you, or simply got you thinking?

### 3. CHURCH KEYS – Part 1

- What is one of the FIRST impressions or memories you have of church (good or bad)?
- What is one of the BEST experiences you've had in church so far in your life, and why?
- How many churches have you attended (regularly) and how long have been connected at Main Street Church?
- Which elements of your church do you get most excited about? Which elements could you do without?
- When you think of church do you think of a building or people, and why? Discuss.
- Ok – so a 5<sup>th</sup> Grader, who's never been to church, read a Bible or heard about Jesus before... asks you this question tomorrow – “What is the church and why should I go?”  
> How would you answer?

### 4. CHURCH KEYS – Part 2

- Do you think it is possible to grow in your relationship with God without being connected to a local church? Why? What would you or others be missing if you never participated in church again?
- Have you ever heard someone say (or found yourself saying) “I love Jesus... but I don't like the Church”? How would you respond to that in a conversation? How do you think Jesus would respond?

c.  READ [Ephesians 5:25](#) and [Matthew 16:13-19](#).

What do these verses tell you about how God views His Church?

d. Do you think most Christ followers love the Church the same way God loves the Church? Why/why not?

## 5. GOD'S PLAN A

a. Shawn gave 4 REASONS why the *Local Church* was so important:

- i. **The *Local Church* functions as the Body of Christ.**
- ii. **The *Local Church* is the Pillar and Foundation of the Truth.**
- iii. **The *Local Church* provides the Ideal Setting for learning how to live like Jesus.**
- iv. **The *Local Church* provides Godly Peer Pressure.**

b. Do you agree/disagree with these insights? How would you explain (briefly) what each point means? Have you ever thought about the importance of the *Local Church* in these ways?

c. Which of the four points jumped out to you or challenged you the most personally, and why?

## 6. THE BRIDE

a. What does it mean to view the church as the *Bride of Christ*?

b. Why do you think this metaphor is used by God to describe the identity, character and purpose of the Church?

c. How does this specific picture change your view of the Church?

## 7. WORD UP THIS WEEK

At home this week - explore and consider these Bible verses on the Church:

 [www.openbible.info/topics/church](http://www.openbible.info/topics/church)    [www.gotquestions.org/what-is-the-church.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-the-church.html)

## Prayer (15min)

- Break into groups of 3-4 people (or men & women) to pray for one another, and other needs that are shared:
- How are you using the “Keys to the Kingdom” that Jesus gives his disciples to build up & strengthen the church?
- What is one thing you can do this month to invest in and grow in your love for the *local church*?
- Is there a hurt in your life from the church? Are you willing to invite Jesus to heal it? How can we help?
- In response to our discussion together, what is one way that we can pray for you today?

## Romans Road

- Continue to read & pray through the *Book of Romans*, as we resume our *Best News Ever* series next week.
- Memorize *The Romans Road* – [Romans 3:23](#), [Romans 6:23](#), [Romans 5:8](#), [Romans 10:9-10](#), [Romans 10:13](#).

## Group in January

- Discuss your Life Group details and plans for the month of January.