

Biblical Expressions of the Church

Whereas the marks are identifiers of the true Church, the expressions are how the Church is presented in Scripture. The trinitarian images Paul uses to describe the Church are the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The People of God

- The church is constituted of God's people. They _____ to him and he _____ to them. ([2 Cor. 6:16](#))

In the Old Testament, God did not adopt as His own an existing nation, but actually created a people for Himself. He chose Abraham and then, through him, brought into being the people of Israel. In the New Testament, this concept of God's choosing a people is broadened to include both Jews and Gentiles within the church.

- The concept of the church as *the people of God* emphasizes God's _____ in _____. ([1 Pet. 2:9-10](#))

In these verses, the apostle Peter weaves (what Clowney calls) "a tapestry of Old Testament language to describe the church" ([Ex. 19:6](#); [Is. 43:20-21](#); [Ho. 1:6, 9; 2:1](#))

- Instead of this _____ circumcision of the flesh, found in the administration of the old covenant, we find under the new covenant an _____ circumcision of the heart. ([Romans 2:29](#); [Phil 3:3](#); [2 Cor 3: 3-6](#))

The Body of Christ

The image of the church as "the body of Christ" is arguably the most dominant of the three expressions. There is a macro application of this image and a micro one as well.

- The image is used both of the _____ and of individual _____. ([Eph 1:22-23](#); [1 Cor 12:27](#))

There is much complexity to soteriology (the doctrine of Salvation) and the majority of it is a result of our union with Christ. Our being "in Christ" and "with Christ" presents this unified connection.

- Christ in the believer is the basis of _____ and _____. ([Col. 1:27](#); [Gal. 2:20](#)).
- Christ is the head of this body of which believers are individual _____. ([Col. 1:18](#); [Eph 1:10](#) {NIV}; [Col. 2:19](#))

Christian faith is not to be defined merely in terms of individual relationship to the Lord. There is a union among the parts that enjoyed by the sum of the parts. We share joys and sorrows, laughter and tears. We are to help each other restore and bear each other's burdens.

- The image of *the body of Christ* also speaks of the _____ between all the persons who make up the church. ([1 Cor 12:12-13; 26](#); [Gal. 6:1-2](#)).

The Temple of the Holy Spirit

- The church is now indwelt by the Spirit, both _____ and _____. ([1 Cor.12-13](#); [1 Cor. 3:16-17](#))
- Dwelling within the church, the Holy Spirit _____ to it. ([Gal 5:22-23](#))
- It is the Holy Spirit who _____ to the church. ([Acts 1:8](#))
- The Spirit, being one, also produces _____.
- The indwelling Spirit is the _____ of Jesus's _____ with us. ([Rom. 8:9-10](#))

Resources:

Clowney, Edmund P. *The Church*. Edited by Gerald Bray. Contours of Christian Theology. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.

Moody, Christopher. *Disciple-Making Disciples: A Practical Theology of the Church*. Franklin, TN: Carpenter's Son Publishing, 2021.