

The Church

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So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:41-47

What we believe about the Church...

- Jesus is the head of the Church, which is His body. (Ephesians 1:22-23)
- The Church is universal and local. (Ephesians 3:20-21)
- The Church regularly and purposefully meets together. (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- Jesus builds His Church through the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:2)
- Jesus builds the Church through leaders and equipped believers. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

Everyone has a part to play and a place.

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Eph 4:16

Let's Talk About It

We believe in one holy, universal, and apostolic Church, the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head. As God's holy people on mission, the visible Church is expressed in gathered communities where believers assemble to pray, worship, hear God's Word, receive the sacraments, and fellowship with one another. Through the ministry of His Spirit, faithful disciples, and biblically qualified leaders, Christ builds and grows His Church.

Acts 1:6-9; 2:42-47; Ephesians 1:22-23, 3:20-21, 4:11-16; Acts 13:2; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Purple Book, review:

- What did you learn about resurrection and judgment from chapter twelve of TPB?
- Describe how God's justice and mercy work together and don't contradict each other.
- What does it look like to fear God in daily life?

Sermon questions:

- Which part of the message impacted or challenged you?
- Read Acts 2:42-27. Why is it essential for the Church to gather regularly in person?
- Read Hebrews 10:23-25. How could you help others be restored to the Church or continue in the Church if they are drifting away? Does someone come to mind? Take a moment as a group to pray for them.
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:15-20. What does it mean for the Church to be the body of Christ? What are the implications?
- Read Ephesians 4:11-16. How could you increase your effectiveness in contributing to the Church's growth? Where might you serve? Who might you "build up"?

Take a Step

- This week, look for an opportunity to "build up the body of Christ" by encouraging someone. If you're not a member of a serve team, attend Step Three of the Growth Track this Sunday (May 19).

Here's My Prayer

O God of our salvation, hope of all the ends of the earth, hear us. In your strength, may Your Church, as it extends to all corners of the world, soar in faith, rest in hope, and rise to the full height of love. Fill it with all truth. Where it is in error, direct it. Where it is right, strengthen and confirm it. Where it is divided, make it unified. Deliver it from all evil, make it perfect in Your love, and sanctify it for the kingdom which You have prepared for it.