

# INTRODUCING THE CHURCH

Most people think of The “Church” as a building or an organisation. But this is not how the Bible uses the term. The Church is *a congregation of redeemed people*. In fact, the word *Church* means *called out ones*. In one sense, there is only one Church. It is comprised of all believers around the globe. We refer to this as “the Church” (Matthew 16:18). But in another sense, there are many *churches* functioning within their communities (note Galatians 1:2; 1Cor. 4:17). This twofold dimension of what the Church is, might be expressed like this: *the Church is comprised of churches*.

1. Based on the words of Christ in Matthew 16:18, why should a believer belong to a local church

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2. How does Christ *feel* about the Church according to Ephesians 5:25?

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3. To belong to Christ is to love what He loves. How would you respond to someone who claimed to love Jesus but refused to belong to a local church?

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4. In Colossians 1:18, how is the Church described and what is the implication of this description for someone who claims to be a believer?
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## What Is A Church?

Churches come in various forms, sizes, and traditions. Some meet in buildings they own. Some meet in buildings they rent. Some groups claim to be “a church”, when all they are is a *group*. There are at least seven things which constitute a group of people as being a church. These include-

- A regular **assembling** for the purpose of furthering the Church’s mission
  - Organised** with structure
  - Ordinances** of membership, water baptism, Communion, and marriage
  - Officers** who are called and gifted and appointed
  - Order** leading to discipline
  - Outreach** which is collective (a group effort) and intentional
  - Connection** with other churches
5. What do you think this list or requirements for constituting “a church”? Are there any you feel are not necessary or any you feel should be added? Discuss.
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## What The Church Does

What a church does is referred to as its *Mission*. Some people call this the church’s *purpose*. We draw from Christ’s Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) that the Mission of the Church involves four essential tasks. These include: *to worship, to fellowship, to teach, to evangelise*. These aspects of the Church’s Mission will form the basis of this Bible Study Series. Before we launch into this, let’s consider how a church does this.

## How The Church Does This

In one sense, believers do not *go* to church. They *are* the church. The primary way that Church carries out its Mission is by meeting together. Biblically, this takes place in two extremely important contexts: the congregational meeting (usually on a Sunday), and the small-group context (often meeting in a home).

6. Read Acts 2:42-46. What principles from the Early Church can be drawn for the Church today from this passage?

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7. Based on Hebrews 10:25, what is the believer's obligation to the congregational church meeting? (Sunday worship service)

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8. What are some of the things that took place in the Early Church's congregational worship services? (refer to Ephesians 5:19 & 1Cor. 14:26)

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## Ministries Within The Church

While Christ has done away with the spiritual class divisions of "Priests" and "Laity", and declared that all believers are "brothers" (Matt. 23:8), He has still ordained that His Church be led by certain people whom He has gifted to do so.

9. What are the ministries within the church identified in Ephesians 4:11?

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When you read through the Epistles of the New Testament, notice how many of them are addressed to the leaders of the church. These leaders are frequently identified as “elders” and “deacons”.

- 10. Based on First Timothy 3, what are the requirements for someone to be recognised as a deacon or an elder?

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- 11. How does First Corinthians 12:28 teach that God has a leadership ‘structure’ for His Church?

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- 12. What do you think Christ’s vision for our local church might include?

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May God grant us a fresh vision for what He sees in us His Church.