

## What is the Church

First, "the church of the living God is the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Second, Christ alone is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

In regard to the truth, the local church is a place where the Bible (God's only Truth) has complete authority. The Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:15-17). When seeking a church to attend we should find one where the true and pure gospel is preached, sin is condemned, worship is from the heart in Spirit and in truth, the teaching is biblical, and opportunities exist for the member to use their spiritual gifts.

Consider the model of the early church found in Acts 2:42-47, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." 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."

Note: remember that no church is perfect. At best, it is still filled with saved sinners whose flesh and spirits are continually at war.

**What Jesus taught:** The word church first appears in Matthew 16 when Jesus tells Peter, "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." (verse 18). The "rock" here is the statement Peter had made, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (verse 16). That truth about Jesus is the bedrock of the church that has flourished for over two thousand years. Everyone who makes that truth the foundation of his or her own life becomes a member of Jesus' church (Acts 16:31).

### A Healthy Church Model

- 1) A growing desire to be Christ-like (conformed to His image) {Romans 8:29}
- 2) Love for one another (Romans 13:8, 10, 14; 1 Corinthians 13) – God is love
- 3) Repentant hearts regarding sin (James 4:8-10) – the pure in heart shall see God
- 4) Love for God's Word (2 Timothy 3:14-15) – reverence leads to obedience
- 5) Unity (Ephesians 4:3-6)

One bride with one husband  
One flock with one shepherd  
One Kingdom with one King  
One building with one foundation  
One body with one head

### The Church

Ekklesia: "called-out assembly or congregation" (not a building but a body of believers – Rom. 16:15)

# What is the Church

'Ek': "out of/from"

'kaleo': "to bear a name or title" (ambassadors for Christ – 2 Cor 5:20)

The church has not replaced Israel nor has the church "become" Israel

Scripture makes a distinction between the nation of Israel and the Church (1 Corinthians 10:32). There is some overlap because, individually, many Jews believe in Jesus as their Messiah and are therefore part of the Church. But God's covenants with the nation of Israel have not yet been fulfilled (Palestinian Covenant, Davidic Covenant). Those promises await fulfillment during the Millennial Kingdom, after the Church Age ends (Ezekiel 34; 37; 45; Jeremiah 30; 33; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 19).

O.T. – Acts 7:38 – Israel referred to as 'the assembly in the wilderness' (but in what context)  
Haggai 2:5 – The Spirit dwelt in their midst (but not within them individually (1 Sam. 16:14; Ps. 51:11; Hosea 9:12)

N.T. – His Spirit dwells within us personally and individually (John 14:16-17; Eph. 1:13-14)

**The Church Age:** the period of time from Pentecost (Acts 2) to the rapture (foretold in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). It is called the Church Age because it covers the period in which the Church is on earth.

**When did it begin:** Pentecost – Acts 2

**Where did it begin:** Jerusalem (importance of that city vs. Babylon)

**Who Runs it:** **Colossians 1:18** - He [Jesus] is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. (Revelation 1:13-17)

**How does He run it:** The Bible teaches that church leadership consists of a plurality of elders along with a group of deacons who serve as servants of the church.

Pastor/teachers: Ephesians 4:11

Elders: Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5 (Israel: Moses, 70 "Elders", Sanhedren)

Deacons: Acts 6:1-15; Phil. 1:1

All the saints using the spiritual gifts entrusted to them: 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11

## What is the Church

Who/how do you get in: **1 Cor. 12:13**; Eph. 2:18-22; Romans 8:9; 2 Cor 6:16-18;

Why are you in: Ephesians 4:1-17 –

What is God's purpose for the church: 1 Tim. 3:14-15 – pillar and foundation of the truth  
1 Peter 2:1-12 – To proclaim the excellencies of Him  
John 15:26-27 – To bear witness of Christ  
Jude 1:3 – Earnestly contend for the faith

How does it grow: Acts 2:42-47 –

**Acts 9:31** – So the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed peace. As it continued to be built up and to live in the fear of the Lord, it kept increasing in numbers *through the encouragement of the Holy Spirit*.

What is the Church's destiny: Ephesians 5:27; 2 Cor. 11:2; 1 Thess. 4:16-17

The Church Age will end when God's people are snatched out of the world and taken to be with the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:51-57). The rapture will be followed in heaven by the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9) as the Church, the Bride of Christ, receives her heavenly reward. Until then, the Church carries on in hope, exhorted to “stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (**1 Corinthians 15:58**).

### Described as a “Body”

The phrase “the Body of Christ” is a common New Testament metaphor for the Church (all those who are truly saved). The Church is called “one body in Christ” in Romans 12:5, “one body” in 1 Corinthians 10:17, “the body of Christ” in 1 Corinthians 12:27 and Ephesians 4:12, and “the body” in Hebrews 13:3. The Church is clearly equated with “the body” of Christ in Ephesians 5:23 and Colossians 1:24.

When Christ entered our world, He took on a physical body “prepared” for Him (Hebrews 10:5; Philippians 2:7). Through His physical body, Jesus demonstrated the love of God clearly, tangibly, and boldly—especially through His sacrificial death on the cross (Romans 5:8). After His bodily ascension, Christ continues His work in the world through those He has redeemed—the Church now demonstrates the love of God clearly, tangibly, and boldly. In this way, the Church functions as “the Body of Christ.”

**The Church may be called the Body of Christ because of these facts:**

## What is the Church

- 1) Members of the Body of Christ are joined to Christ in salvation (Ephesians 4:15-16).
- 2) Members of the Body of Christ follow Christ as their Head (Ephesians 1:22-23).
- 3) Members of the Body of Christ are the physical representation of Christ in this world. The Church is the organism through which Christ manifests His life to the world today.
- 4) Members of the Body of Christ are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9).
- 5) Members of the Body of Christ possess a diversity of gifts suited to particular functions (1 Corinthians 12:4-31). “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ” (verse 12).
- 6) Members of the Body of Christ share a common bond with all other Christians, regardless of background, race, or ministry. “There should be no division in the body, but . . . its parts should have equal concern for each other” (1 Corinthians 12:25).
- 7) Members of the Body of Christ are secure in their salvation (John 10:28-30). For a Christian to lose his salvation, God would have to perform an “amputation” on the Body of Christ!
- 8) Members of the Body of Christ partake of Christ’s death and resurrection (Colossians 2:12).
- 9) Members of the Body of Christ share Christ’s inheritance (Romans 8:17).
- 10) Members of the Body of Christ receive the gift of Christ’s righteousness (Romans 5:17).

---

### 5 Pillars of a healthy Church

(1) **Worship** (1 Chronicles 16:23-27 – Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place.

**Hebrews 12:28-29** – Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. Psalm 22:3

**Matthew 4:8-10** – Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”

**Matthew 15:8-9** – “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

(2) **Scripture** – *Preach/Teach the Bible* (unadulterated) (Acts 6:4 - But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”) **Nehemiah 8:1-8**

**Gospel: Mark 16:15-16** – And He said to them, “Go into all the world and *preach the*

## What is the Church

*gospel to all creation*. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

2 Timothy 3:10-17

(3) **Fellowship** (relationship) (Hebrews 10:25) – And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Acts 2:42 – And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 John 1:6-7

John 17:20-23

(4) **Prayer** (Acts 1:14: 2:42)

Mark 1:35-38 (Garden of Gethsemane, etc)

Mark 6:46-48

Psalm 5:3

(5) **Discipleship**

Matthew 28:19-20 – Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 – Two are better than one for they have good return

### Do I Need to Personally Attend a Church (what about digital/online)

Church attendance is not just a “good suggestion”; it is God’s will for believers. Hebrews 10:25 says we should “not [be] giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Even in the early church, some were falling into the bad habit of not meeting with other believers. The author of Hebrews says that’s not the way to go. We need the encouragement that church attendance affords. And the approach of the end times should prompt us to be even more devoted to going to church.

Church is the place where believers can ***love*** one another (1 John 4:12), ***encourage*** one another (Hebrews 3:13), ***“spur” one another*** to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24), ***serve*** one another (Galatians 5:13), ***instruct*** one another (Romans 15:14), ***honor*** one another (Romans 12:10), and be ***kind and compassionate*** to one another (Ephesians 4:32).

## What is the Church

When a person trusts Jesus Christ for salvation, he or she is made a member of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). For a church body to function properly, all of its “body parts” need to be present and working (1 Corinthians 12:14–20). It’s not enough to just attend a church; we should be involved in some type of ministry to others, using the spiritual gifts God has given us (Ephesians 4:11–13). A believer will never reach full spiritual maturity without having that outlet for his gifts, and we all need the assistance and encouragement of other believers (1 Corinthians 12:21–26).

For these reasons and more, church attendance, participation, and fellowship should be regular aspects of a believer’s life. Weekly church attendance is in no sense “required” for believers, but someone who belongs to Christ should have a desire to worship God, receive His Word, and fellowship with other believers.

Jesus is the Cornerstone of the Church (1 Peter 2:6), and we are “like living stones . . . being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). As the building materials of God’s “spiritual house,” we naturally have a connection with one another, and that connection is evident every time the Church “goes to church.”

### God's Plan for the Church – POWER

Zechariah 4:6 –

Psalm 127:1-2 –

1 Cor. 1:18; Romans 1:16 – The Gospel is power

Ephesians 3:16 –

2 Peter 1:3 –

### What weakens the church

**Gossip:** The Hebrew word translated “gossip” in the Old Testament is defined as “one who reveals secrets, one who goes about as a talebearer or scandal-monger.” A gossip is a person who has privileged information about people and proceeds to reveal that information to those who have no business knowing it. Gossip is distinguished from sharing information in two ways:

## What is the Church

1. Intent. Gossipers often have the goal of building themselves up by making others look bad and exalting themselves as some kind of repositories of knowledge.
2. The type of information shared. Gossipers speak of the faults and failings of others, or reveal potentially embarrassing or shameful details regarding the lives of others without their knowledge or approval.

**Proverbs 20:19** – Whoever spreads gossip betrays confidences; so don't get involved with someone who talks too much. (ISV)

**Proverbs 11:13** – Whoever spreads gossip betrays secrets, but the trustworthy person keeps a confidence.

**Backbiting:** “talking maliciously about someone who is not present.”

**Proverbs 16:28** – A deceitful man stirs dissension, and anyone who gossips separates friends.

**Self-promotion:** **Phil. 1:15-17** – Some are preaching the Messiah because of jealousy and dissension, while others do so because of their good will. The latter are motivated by love, because they know that I have been appointed to defend the gospel. The former proclaim the Messiah because they are selfishly ambitious and insincere, thinking that they will stir up trouble for me during my imprisonment.

**Rebelliousness:** **Judges 21:25** – everyone did what was right in their own eyes

**Hebrews 13:17** –

**Jezebel Spirit:** An obsessive passion for domineering and controlling others, especially in the spiritual realm. Marked by anyone who acts in the same manner as Jezebel did, engaging in immorality, idolatry, false teaching, and unrepentant sin. (Rev. 2:18-29; 1 Kings 18, etc.)

**The glory of the gospel is that when the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it.** **Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

**You never have to advertise a fire. Everyone comes running when there's a fire. Likewise, if your church is on fire, you will not have to advertise it. The community will already know it.** **Leonard Ravenhill**

**1 Tim. 3:15** – but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

Year in Review 2022

# What is the Church

Tom Smits & Brian Nedjelo join CTR staff

## Active Ministries

Women's Luncheon: (Tammy Huey, Renell Schmeidel) – January 14 (Quarterly)  
Prayer Groups: Wednesday 6:00 am, Thursday 9:00 am, Sunday 9:15 am  
Prayer Wall  
Missions Board: the Dominican, Uganda, Rebekah Reed, David Soncrant, Jacob Kane  
Church Renovation (Pastor Tom)  
Discipleship Ministry (Elder Mark)  
Biblical Counseling (Elder Mark & Renee Umnus): Couples & Individuals  
Youth Ministry (Elder Jim/Brian Nedjelo)  
Safety Team: (Elder Jason)  
Hospitality Ministry (Elder Armand & Lacy Zietlow)  
Prayer/Intercession (Deacon Mike Johnson)  
Electronic Missions: (Deacons Denis Laho, Mark Storby) (Craig, Scotty, Keith, Christian)  
Ushers/Greeters (Deacon Lee Dudek/Bob Pigeon) : front line ministry  
Helps (Deacon Scott & Dani Kunesh)  
Adult Sunday School: (Steve Graham) Sunday 8:00 am  
Children's Church (Teresa & Cora Pigeon)  
Vacation Bible School  
Home Fellowships (locational leaders)  
Bloom Women Study: Beth Guntlisbergen, Lois Graham, Wendy Hedlund, Chris Robokoff  
Thursday night Women's Bible Study (Teresa Minske): 6:00 pm  
Stronger Men's Ministry Bible Study: John Guntlisbergen  
Music Ministry: (Jill Quinlan) worship, choir, musicians/singers

## **2023 Vision: Focus Outward**

Men in Christ The Rock group: Taking Men Where They Are to Where God Wants Them To Be

Young Adult Group: Ages 18-25

Evangelism: Local missions: our neighborhood, CTR Food Pantry  
Citywide: St. John's Homeless Shelter (Rob Frazier), Crisis Cafe Phil & Rita Schounard), summer outreach (coordinate with Frontline Harvest Ministries)