

The Local Church



God has established three institutions:

- ✓ Marriage ([Genesis 2:18-24](#))
- ✓ Human Government ([Romans 13:1-7](#))
- ✓ The Church ([Acts 20:28](#) & [Ephesians 5:23](#) & [1 Corinthians 12:13](#))



The church can be considered in two senses...

- ➡ The Universal Church &
- ➡ The Local Church



In the New Testament the Greek word used for the church is [ekklesia](#). This term means:

- ➡ A body of called-out people
- ➡ A group of people called out from the world and belonging to the Lord.

The Universal Church

- ✓ Is the “Body of Christ” made up of people who have confessed their sinfulness to the Lord and accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour through faith alone. [1 Corinthians 12:27](#)
- ✓ When a person accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit baptises (places) them into the body of Christ. [1 Corinthians 12:13](#)

The Local Church

- ✓ The Bible often speaks of the “[church](#)” in a local sense, where the word “[church](#)” is used to describe a group of Believers (the body of Christ) in a specific locality...
 - ➡ Jerusalem ([Acts 8:1](#); [11:22](#))
 - ➡ Ephesus ([Acts 20:7](#))
 - ➡ Cenchrea ([Romans 16:1](#))
 - ➡ Corinth ([1 Corinthians 1:2](#); [2 Corinthians 1:1](#))
 - ➡ Laodicea ([Colossians 4:16](#))
 - ➡ Thessalonica ([1 Thessalonians 1:1](#))
 - ➡ The churches of Galatia ([Galatians 1:2](#))
 - ➡ The churches of Judea ([1 Thessalonians 2:14](#))
 - ➡ The churches of Asia ([Revelation 1:4](#))
- ✓ The Scriptures also speak of the local “[church](#)” in general terms...
 - ➡ [Acts 16:5](#), [1 Corinthians 7:17](#)



The church is...

- ✗ Not a building
- ✗ Not a denominational group of congregations
- ✓ Men, women, and children who have been saved



The Function of the Local Church

✓ To Glorify God

➡ Through Worshipping Him

John 4:23

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."

➡ Through Prayer & Praise

Psalms 50:23a

"He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honours Me"

➡ Through living a godly life

John 15:8

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."

✓ To Edify its members

➡ By equipping Believers to understand and use God's Word

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

➡ By building up Believers in their knowledge of God's Word through instruction

Colossians 2:6-7

⁶ Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him & established in your faith, just as you were instructed, & overflowing with gratitude.
(See also 1 Corinthians 14:26 & 2 Timothy 2:2)

✓ To Evangelise the World

➡ By sharing the Good News within it's own community

➡ By sharing the Good News outside its own community

Acts 1:8

"but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

(See also Matthew 28:18-20 & Acts 13:1-3; 14:27 & Romans 10:13-15)



The Future Destiny of the Church

- ✗ The Church will not convert the world
- ✗ The Church will not rise to a position of controlling influence in social, economic, and political life

2 Timothy 3:1-7

"But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. ⁶ For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

(See also Matthew 24:3-12 & 1 Timothy 4:1)

There will be no mass turning to the Lord, but life will continue much as usual.

This is indicated by Christ's statement, "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall also be in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17:26)

That the world will not be converted is taught by the parable of the tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) and the parable of the dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50). Good and evil will continue until the end of the age.

Theissen, Henry Clarence. Lectures in Systematic Theology

- ✓ The Church will take a place of blessing and honour
 - ➡ The Church will one day be united with Christ
 - ⚙ The church is known as "the bride of Christ"

(See 2 Corinthians 11:2 & Ephesians 5:27)
 - ⚙ In 2 Thessalonians 2:1 & Revelation 19:7 the church's union with Christ is foretold.

- ✓ The Church will reign with Christ

- ➡ During Christ's Millennial reign

1 Corinthians 6:2

"Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?"

(See also Revelation 1:6; 2:26; 3:21; 20:6)

- ➡ For eternity in the new heaven and new earth

Revelation 22:3-5

³ There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.



The Role of the Believer in the Local Church

The local church can only accomplish its God-given purposes to the extent that Believers participate. Believers should be an active participant in a local church, thereby obeying God's will for their lives.

✓ The Believer looks to serve

➔ Some people come to church because of what they can GET (good teaching, the blessing of being with other Believers, etc.). But a committed Believer comes to church not only to GET but to GIVE (not just to be ministered to but also to minister; not just to be served but to serve).

Hebrews 12:28

"Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe"

Romans 12:1

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your [b]spiritual service of worship."

✓ The Believer gladly shares the Gospel

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

✓ The Believer should be baptised in obedience to Christ's command

Matthew 28:19

✓ The Believer joyfully participates in the Communion service

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

✓ The Believer is faithful in his church attendance

Hebrews 10:24-25 & Acts 2:42 & Colossians 3:16

✓ The Believer makes it a priority to regularly study God's Word & spend time in prayer

2 Timothy 2:15 & Hebrews 4:16

✓ The Believer is a cheerful & willing GIVER (talents, time & finances)

2 Corinthians 9:7

✓ The Believer lives a life that is oriented towards God

2 Corinthians 5:15 & Philippians 2:15



Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Paul is using a comparison to the physical human body. As one's physical body has many members performing different functions (i.e. eyes, nose, mouth, fingers, arms, legs, toes etc.), so the members of the church need to perform different functions according to the talents and abilities that God has given them. No one member is more important than the other.

See also: Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 1:18; 2:19

Lesson #9



When one speaks of the church, what two senses can it be referred too?



What is another name for the church?



Why is the church not a building or a denominational group of congregations?



List three functions of the local church.

1.

2.

3.



What are the two responsibilities the church will have during the millennial reign of Christ, and afterwards in the new heaven & new earth.

1.

2.



Why should a Believer be an active participant in a local church?



With what does the Apostle Paul compare the church in [1 Corinthians 12](#) and why is it important for each Believer to do his/ her part in the church?
