

What Is the Church to You?

Scripture Reading: Acts 20:17-38

In the New Testament, there is a special Greek word that is translated “church.” It refers to a group that is called out, from a larger group of people. It is an assembly that is called together to do business. The Greek people used the word to describe the city elders that would meet to do business. God is calling out people from the world to believe and follow His Son, Jesus Christ. There are many people being called around the world. That is why there is and should be many churches around the world. One day Christ will gather all true believers and assemble them as one big, glorious church (John 10:14-16; Ephesians 5:25-27).

Business assemblies need to assemble and do their business. We are not making comments on the many denominations and their differences. Christendom / Churchianity (the realm of religious activity and of organizations that call themselves “Christian”) contains many false ideas and practices. Suffice it to say for now that churches that are true churches are known to Christ. They are traceable to the teachings of the New Testament. They truly honor Christ as their head and His Gospel truth as their standard of operation. There can be problems and errors in any of them. Read Revelation 2:1 – 3:22. Many times Christ must work with individual members to start a reviving work in a church (Revelation 3:20). This study cannot deal with all the attributes and characteristics of a good Biblical church. We must focus on one thing:

What does the church mean to you?

- God gave His precious blood (the blood of His only begotten Son) to purchase this working relationship called “church.” (**Acts 20:17,28** cp. I Peter 1:18-21)
- The Son of God, crucified and risen again, has committed Himself to the future welfare of the churches as well as the glorious future church. (Matthew 16:13-18; 28:18-20; Hebrews 13:20-21; Romans 8:31-34 cp. Revelation 1:9-20; 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22).
- God is glorified on earth through the ministry of the churches on earth. (Ephesians 3:20-21 cp. Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:14-16)
- It is God’s intended purpose to save others through the work of Christ’s followers, who should be operating in and with an assembly (church) of the Lord Jesus Christ. (I Thessalonians 2:13-14 cp. Acts 2:41-47; 4:23-33; 9:31; 15:41; 16:5; Romans 16:3-5; I Corinthians 4:17; 7:17; 16:1; II Corinthians 8:23; 11:28; Ephesians 3:8-11; I Timothy 3:14-15).

This brief examination of the Lord's church causes us to ask ourselves some serious questions:

- If Christ's blood purchased our right to be a part of one of His churches, have we treated this as a serious privilege with responsibilities, or have we made excuses to treat it lightly, as an option?
- If Christ has committed Himself to the care of His churches and to the work of His churches until the end of the age, do we share any commitment to Christ for these same things?
- If God desires, deserves, and expects to be glorified by His churches, are we sharing any of the responsibility to fulfill God's will?
- If God has chosen the local church to be His base of operation in any given location, are we doing business God's way, or are we free-lancing?

We are easily tempted to look at the human failure in religious organizations throughout history and in our times. We then excuse ourselves from becoming involved with a church because we consider all churches or organizations to be unworthy and unscriptural. Are all churches corrupt? How would you know? Has not Christ preserved any of His churches throughout the ages? (Matthew 28:20) Did the gates of hell prevail against the church that Jesus built? (Matthew 16:16-18)

God has warned us that there will be counterfeit gospels, ministers, and churches. See Matthew 7:15-20; Galatians 1:6-10; II Corinthians 11:13-15; I Timothy 4:1-7; I John 2:18-19,26; 4:1. Despite the failure of man and the interference of Satan, when we remember and consider that the church is ordained and purchased by God, we then must work to fulfill the obligation which is taught in Hebrews 10:23-25; I John 1:1-4; 2:18-29; 3:16-24; 4:1-16; 5:1-5; II Timothy 2:8-10.

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One Another

Here is a list of New Testament instructions on how we should treat “one another” / “each other” (or, how to behave “among yourselves”):

- Mark 9:50.
- John 13:14, 34-35; 15:12, 17.
- Romans 1:12; 12:10, 16; 13:8; 14:13, 19; 15:5, 7, 14; 16:16.
- I Corinthians 1:10; 11:33; 12:25; 16:20.
- II Corinthians 13:12.
- Galatians 5:13, 15, 26; 6:2.
- Ephesians 4:2, 16, 25, 32; 5:19, 21.
- Philippians 2:1-5 cp. 4:2.
- Colossians 3:9, 13, 16.
- I Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9, 18; 5:11, 13, 15.
- II Thessalonians 1:3.
- Hebrews 3:13; 10:24, 25; 13:1.
- James 4:11; 5:9, 16.
- I Peter 1:22; 3:8; 4:8-10; 5:5, 14.
- I John 1:7; 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12.
- II John 1:5

Most of these Scriptures pertain to behavior and attitudes within a church or towards the whole brotherhood of Christ. They all can and should be applied to marriage, family and, as much as possible, to all other human relationships (Romans 12:18). As worshippers of God, in spirit and in truth, we must combine **passion** for God and His Word with **compassion** to our fellow man – especially the household of faith (Galatians 6:7-10). It is our life, empowered by the Holy Spirit, guided by the true light of Scripture that produces the acceptable offering of worship and service to God (Romans 14:17-19 cp. Hebrews 12:28; 13:15-16; I Corinthians 4:20; Psalm 51:15-17). This offering is never more glorious than when many work together as one to offer it unto their Lord (Romans 12:1-5).

“O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.” – Psalm 34:3