



The Church

Lesson 1: The Church is God's Plan

1. Introduction

During this class we are going to extensively study the church.

Is the church God's idea or a man-made concept?

Does a believer really have to be a part of a church in order to be a Christian?

Let's look at what the Bible says about being a part of a church.

2. The church is _____

Ephesians 3:1-11 – New Living Translation

Ephesians 3:1 *When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles . . .*

Ephesians 3:2 *assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending His grace to you Gentiles.*

Ephesians 3:3 *As I briefly wrote earlier, God Himself revealed His mysterious plan to me.*

Ephesians 3:4 *As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ.*

Ephesians 3:5 *God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by His Spirit He has revealed it to His holy apostles and prophets.*

- Ephesians 3:6** *And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.*
- Ephesians 3:7** *By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving Him by spreading this Good News.*
- Ephesians 3:8** *Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, He graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ.*
- Ephesians 3:9** *I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.*
- Ephesians 3:10** *God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display His wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.*
- Ephesians 3:11** *This was His eternal plan, which He carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Ephesians 3:10, 11 – Contemporary English Version

- Ephesians 3:10** *Then God would use the church to show the powers and authorities in the spiritual world that he has many different kinds of wisdom.*
- Ephesians 3:11** *God did this according to his eternal plan. And he was able to do what he had planned because of all that Christ Jesus our Lord had done.*

The church was birthed by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

This is not a side issue. Jesus gave His life to bring forth the church!

Acts 20:28

3. God intended for _____ to be a part of a local church.

Hebrews 10:24, 25

4. Jesus gave us an example to follow.

Luke 4:16

If you were looking for Jesus on the Sabbath, you would find Him in the synagogue. It was His custom.

Definition of CUSTOM: _____

If you consider Jesus your leader, you should be following His example.

Jesus did not go to the synagogue just on special occasions. He went every week.

5. God instructed us to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Exodus 20:8

Why is this important?

Answer: _____

We need times when we turn off the phone, shut off the computer, and focus on God.

It is important to give that time for Him to keep things in the proper perspective.

Although God instructed us to keep the Sabbath day holy, it is imperative that we understand that every day belongs to God.

6. The Bible tells us that we should go to church.

Hebrews 10:24, 25

The Book of Hebrews was written after the church was only eighty years old.

Even though the church was still young, there were some people saying that it was not necessary to go to church – weekly meetings.

If we are not careful, _____

It begins with missing church occasionally because you are busy. Then you stop volunteering. Before you know it, you hardly attend church at all.

Hebrews 10:25 – Contemporary English Version

Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other . . .

Hebrews 10:25 – God’s Word

We should not stop gathering together with other believers, as some of you are doing. Instead, we must continue to encourage each other . . .

7. It is in corporate gatherings when God speaks to you.

God can speak to you any time. However, God speaks to individuals in corporate gatherings.

Have you ever said the following things?

- “That message was just for me.”
- “Pastor, how do you know exactly what is going on in my life?”

8. You _____ by your presence in church.

When other people see you in church they realize that they are not the only people taking their walk with God seriously.

You encourage and inspire your pastor by your presence in church.

9. You are creating and establishing a legacy by attending church.

Your children and your grandchildren are following you.

Other people are looking to you as their example.

10. What is the church?

Definition of CHURCH (Greek – Ekklesia):

- _____
- A body of individuals who have been called out, called forth, and separated for the purposes of God.

The word “ekklesia” is used 114 times in the New Testament.

11. The church is both universal and local.

The universal church includes all believers in the world.

The local church is a _____

Matthew 18:17

96 of the 114 references in the New Testament refer to the local church.

1 Corinthians 15:9

1 Timothy 3:5

12. The church is a living spiritual organism.

The church is more than just a structural organization.

The church is made up of those who have spiritual life; _____

Matthew 18:20

13. Jesus _____

Acts 20:28

14. Jesus _____

Matthew 16:18

Psalm 127:1

15. Man administrates the affairs of the church and is accountable for it to God.

1 Corinthians 4:1, 2

16. Jesus _____ **the church.**

Jesus commissioned the church to enforce Jesus' victory over the devil.

Matthew 28:19, 20

Mark 16:15-18

John 20:21

Acts 1:8

17. _____

Matthew 16:18, 19

What do we learn about the church here?

- Jesus has given the church authority over Satan.
- We are victorious.

This is why being a part of a local church is important. True authority comes from being under authority!

Matthew 18:15-20

What do we learn about the church here?

- The local church is composed of brothers and sisters.

This implies closeness in relationships.

- _____

It is a place where there is a need for discipline, love, patience, and forgiveness.

- The local church exercises government and structure.
- _____

We are all called to be a part of something from which we can be expelled.

You cannot be expelled from Christian television and radio.

- _____

Notice the number of people in the church involved in this text.

- The local church is a place where Christ is manifest.

The local church is Christ's extended arm in the earth.

- The local church is a place of spiritual warfare.
- _____