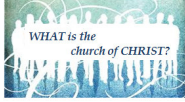


## Why Be A Member Of The Church Of Christ?

Descriptions Of The Church



Fifth Street East Church Of Christ April 29, 2012

### Definition and uses of the word "church"

- From Greek word "ekklesia"
  - compound word from *ek* meaning "out" and *kaleo* meaning "to call"
  - ancient secular Greek use – any general assembly (legislative)
  - Septuagint (Greek translation of OT) used for general gathering of people
- NT used in technical sense of a people who have gathered for the purpose of instruction and worship. (~ 120 times in NKJV)
  - used in two senses
    - \*Universal: Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Colossians 1:18,24; Ephesians 1:22, 5:24
    - \*Local: Romans 16:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Colossians 4:15; 2 Corinthians 1:1, Romans 16:1
- Never used in New Testament to refer to:
  - physical building
  - organizations governed by various creeds or sources of authority
  - man made secular institutions
  - worship activity

### Descriptions of the church found in the New Testament

- **body** of Christ (with Jesus as its head)
  - Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 1:22-23, 3:6, 4:12, 5:23; Colossians 1:24
  - emphasizes unity of the body and individuality of each particular member
  - Jesus guides, directs, and provides this unity
- **temple** of God (with Jesus as its chief cornerstone)
  - Ephesians 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5, 1 Corinthians 3:16
  - emphasizes place where God dwells and is worshipped
  - Christians are the building stones, Jesus is foundation, binds together
- **bride** of Christ (with Jesus as its bridegroom)
  - Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 19:7, 22:17, 21:9
  - emphasizes the love of Christ for his church and his full provision for it
  - our responsibility to keep ourselves pure and unspotted
- **kingdom** of Christ (with Jesus as its king)
  - John 18:36; Matthew 27:11, Philippians 3:20, Luke 1:33, John 3:5, Colossians 1:13
  - emphasizes our citizenship and Christ as King

### Descriptions of the church found in the New Testament (continued)

- **flock** of God (with Jesus as its shepherd)
  - John 10:11, 16, 27; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 2:25, 5:2; Mark 14:27
  - emphasizes his loving care, feeding, protection
  - we are dependent on him as the shepherd
- **house** (with Jesus as firstborn)
  - "household of faith" Galatians 6:10
  - "household of God" Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 10:21; 1 Timothy 3:15 (of the living God)
  - "his own house" Hebrews 3:6; 2 Corinthians 5:1 (not made with hands; not earthly)
  - emphasizes family relationship among its members
  - responsibilities to each other and the collective
- **pillar and ground of truth** (with Jesus as its source)
  - 1 Timothy 3:15, John 14:6
  - No one comes to the father but thru Jesus


These descriptions indicate the most intimate of relationships between Jesus and his body, bride, family, flock, temple, household ... the "church"

### Does it matter?

- It should be important to us because it's important to God
- He planned it, gave his son for it, provided for salvation in it (John 3:16, Acts 4:12, Titus 2:11-14)

### Remember the plan? (Ephesians 1:3-23)

- Over 300,000 religious congregations in the U.S. (2012 - Hartford Institute for Religion Research)
- 183,000 are less than 500 people (94%); 177,000 less than 100 people (59%)
- 217 Denominational groups listed in 2006 (yearbook of American and Canadian churches)



### Does this sound like the plan?

How can I recognize the church described in the NT and become a part of it?

### The New Testament church IS Unique and Recognizable

- **God purposed it from eternity**
  - Ephesians 1:3-20, 3:10-11, Daniel 2:44
- **Founded by Christ & on His authority**
  - Matthew 16:18, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Ephesians 1:22, Matthew 28:18, Colossians 1:17
- **Began in Jerusalem in 1<sup>st</sup> century**
  - Isaiah 2:3, Luke 24:44-53, Acts 2:1-4, 47, 11:19-25
- **Only the Lord adds to it (Acts 2:36, 41-47)**
  - those that are baptized *into* Christ (Galatians 3:26, 1 Peter 3:21, Romans 6:1-3)

**The New Testament church of Christ is Unique** *(cont'd)*

- **Bible is its only creed & governed by divine authority**
  - Romans 1:16, 2 Peter 1:3, Acts 17:11, Galatians 1:1-6, 1 Corinthians 15:1, 1 John 1:7
- **Name is scriptural**
  - church of God - 1 Corinthians 1:2, 1 Timothy 3:15
  - body of Christ - Ephesians 1:22
  - bride of Christ - Romans 7:4
  - church of firstborn - Hebrews 12:23
  - house of God - 1 Timothy 3:15
  - church of Christ - Romans 16:16
- **Organization is scriptural**
  - elders with local oversight - Acts 14:23, 1 Peter 5:2, 1 Timothy 3:1
  - deacons - 1 Timothy 3:8-13
  - members - 1 Corinthians 12:12

**The New Testament church of Christ is Unique** *(cont'd)*

- **Members are scriptural**
  - disciples - John 15:8
  - saints - Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:2
  - brethren - Luke 8:21, Galatians 6:1
  - children of God - Galatians 3:26, 1 John 2:1
  - Christians - Acts 11: 26, 26:28
- **Work is spiritual & divinely appointed (John 18:36)**
  - Ephesians 2:10, Romans 4:17, 1 Corinthians 2:13, 1 Peter 2:5
- **Worship is in spirit and truth (John 4:24)**
  - first day of the week - Acts 20:27, Hebrews 10:23
  - Lord's supper on first day of the week - Acts 20:27
  - pray, sing, teach, admonish - Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19
  - edifies and evangelizes - 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 1 Corinthians 1:17, Acts 10:42
  - benevolence to needy saints - Acts 3:40, 2 Corinthians 9:6, 1 Corinthians 16:1

**The New Testament church of Christ is Unique** *(cont'd)*

- **Goal is to praise God and Heaven**
  - Acts 2:47, 1 Peter 1:3-5, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

What group have you associated yourself with?

Does it look, sound, and function like the NT church?

Is it important?

It was God's plan from creation, He gave his son for it, it is Jesus' body, bride, flock, household, and family...

Outside of it, there is no salvation (Acts 4:12, Ephesians 1)