

Living Life within the Church

Discipleship 201 - Session #10

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

I Corinthians 12:4-7

Introduction: The Church is not a building, place, or organization, but an organism, a body of people who gather together for worship, fellowship, spiritual growth, and service. It is a visible expression of the Kingdom to come.

The church is not a Human made organization

A. The church is built by **Jesus** (Matthew 16:18)

B. Jesus Christ is the **Keystone**, the disciples are the **Foundation**, and we are the **Bricks**.
So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. Ephesians 2:19-20

C. The word “Church” means “the gathering of the **people**”

The **work** of God is done through the Church

A member of the church is one who professed **Christ**

D. There were 3 visible gatherings of the church

1. The **small group** or family group

Met weekly, even daily for fellowship, prayer, and support

2. The **congregation**

Weekly gathering of **small groups**

This is where our spiritual **gifts** are applied

3. The **celebration**

The gathering of many **congregation** for worship

The early Messianic Jews gathered around

the **temple** and synagogues

Why should we be a part of the local Church?

Only in America do we think that we can be Christian without being a part of the Church. We have a culture built on the cult of the individual. The Kingdom of Christ is built upon the unity of His people.

- “*The New Testament knows nothing of solitary religion*” **Rev. John Wesley**
- “*The freelance Christian, who would be a Christian but is too superior to belong to the visible Church upon earth... is simply a contradiction.*” **Rev. Cranfield**

A. The purpose of Christians is to be **one**

Jesus prayed, “*And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.*” John 17:11

1. The Church is the **foretaste** of what is to come

2. We are not lovers of Christ if we do not love His **family** called the church (I John 4:20-5:1)
3. Like all families, we will **squable**, and some will drive us **crazy**. However, that is the challenge of faith, to find unity amidst diversity and disagreement.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

B. The Church is the dwelling place of the **Spirit**

1. The gifts given by the Spirit are given in the context of the Church, not the **individual**

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

2. We only have a small piece of the kingdom's **puzzle**, which only makes sense when connected with the other pieces

C. The Church is our **refuge** and protection

D. Within the Church we receive **pastoral** care

1. This is not always provided by professional **clergy**
2. In the NT, the caretakers were **lay** people

E. Within the Church, we can grow in **faith**

1. We receive the **proper** teaching of the Word
2. We are blessed in the gathering around the **sacraments**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ... Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47

F. In the Church, we gather for **worship**

1. "Worship" means the "work of the **church**". In other words, private worship is a contradiction.
2. God deserves our weekly worship, a **communal** activity that cannot be done at home.

In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Ephesians 2:21-22

How do we get connected to the Church?

- Worshiping **weekly**
- Participating in a **small** group
- Discover your **ministry** (I Cor. 12:3, 4)
- Recognize your **liitations** and need of others (Rom. 12:2,4)

- Praying for your **leaders** (II Cor. 13:7, Col. 1:9)
- Submitting to spiritual **authority** (Hebrews 13:7, 17; I Pet. 5:5, 21)
- **financially** support the ministry (Genesis 14:28-20, 28:22; Prov. 3:9; Mal. 3:8-12; Mt. 23:23; Luke 6:38)
- Becoming a **servant** (I Corinthians 13)