

## The Doctrine of the Church

Various scriptures

*“Simon Peter answered, You are the Messiah the Son of the living God. Jesus responded, Blessed are you Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hades will not overpower it.”*

*-Matthew 16:16-18*

**In your opinion, what are some common misconceptions of the church that discourage people?**

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\*Church is a \_\_\_\_\_

\*Church is an \_\_\_\_\_

\*Church is a place for \_\_\_\_\_ people

**What does church really mean?**

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*\*Ekklesia: an assembly, congregation, the whole body of Christian believers. Ek: “out from and to” kaleo: “to call”;*

The English word church comes from the Greek word *kyriakos*. This word means belonging to the Lord.

In this sense, the church is described as a group of people (Christians) who have been called out of the world and into Christ.

**Cross reference:** Romans 8:29-30

Another way the Bible describes the church is as the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. The Lord Jesus, also known as the bridegroom has sacrificially and lovingly chosen the church to be His \_\_\_\_\_. In biblical days there was a period of time in which the bride and groom were separated until the wedding. During that time, it was the bride's responsibility to remain faithful. So it is with the church today, we are to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ in everything so that we can be ready at the rapture when the church will be united with the bridegroom at the wedding ceremony in heaven.

**Cross references:** 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:24; 29-32; Revelation 19:7-9

**“We will never change the world by going to church. We will only change the world by being the church.”**

**As you reflect on these two biblical descriptions, how can you use them to counter some of the misconceptions regarding the church today?**

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**Where should we go to church?**

In biblical days the early church met in \_\_\_\_\_ and certain gathering places. Why didn't they meet in synagogues?

The Apostle Peter wrote his letter to what churches? 1 Peter 1:1

James the brother of Jesus wrote his letter to whom? James 1:1

The Apostle Paul wrote letters to local churches that were established in major cities. Can you name them?

- \*A \_\_\_\_\_ Acts 13:1
- \*C \_\_\_\_\_ Colossians 1:2
- \*P \_\_\_\_\_ Philippians 1:1
- \*C \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Corinthians 1:2
- \*G \_\_\_\_\_ Galatians 1:2
- \*E \_\_\_\_\_ Ephesians 1:1
- \*R \_\_\_\_\_ Romans 1:7

The Apostle John wrote to seven churches in modern day turkey. Can you name those?

- \*E \_\_\_\_\_ Revelation 2:1
- \*S \_\_\_\_\_ Revelation 2:8
- \*P \_\_\_\_\_ Revelation 2:12
- \*T \_\_\_\_\_ Revelation 2:18
- \*S \_\_\_\_\_ Revelation 3:1
- \*P \_\_\_\_\_ Revelation 3:7
- \*L \_\_\_\_\_ Revelation 3:14

Today, a church building is a place where Christians gather to serve and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Can we still meet in our homes? \_\_\_\_\_ There are no biblical rules that say where we should meet. The main objective is that we come together to encourage each other in the Lord.

**Cross Reference:** Hebrews 10:25

**Why should Christians attend a local church?** Acts 1:8; Acts 2:42-47

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1. Make \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 28:19-20
2. Study and obey God's Word. Psalm 119:33-35
3. Worship God and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. Ephesians 1:4-6
4. Teach and \_\_\_\_\_ Christians for ministry. Ephesians 4:11-15
5. Fellowship, prayer, Lord's supper. Acts 2:42
6. Bear \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ continually. Acts 1:8
7. Helping others. 1 Thessalonians 5:25; Galatians 6:2; 2 Peter 3:18

**As you consider this list, how would you encourage someone who says they are Christian but does not want to attend church?**

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● **What is the proper way to join a church?**

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Depending upon the church membership is typically granted after the completion of one of the three requirements:

- \*Candidate for \_\_\_\_\_ (After profession of faith) Acts 2:38
- \*Statement of faith (Christian experience) Romans 10:9-10
- \*By \_\_\_\_\_ (From another church to confirm fellowship in that church)

● **What is the proper way to leave a church?**

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**\*Make sure you have valid reasons.** (relocation, changes in foundational beliefs, divergence with the mission, no evangelism, you have better opportunities to use your gifts at another church, significant lapses in character judgement or integrity in leadership)

**\*Be honest about your own motives and failings.** (have you contributed to the breakdown in your church relationships?) Matthew 7:1-5

**\*Affirm the good in your church.** (Be careful of developing a critical attitude against every flaw of the church while ignoring or minimizing its virtues.) Philippians 4:8-9

**\*Resolve outstanding conflicts.** (Do everything in your power to make peace.) Romans 12:18

**\*Talk with your leaders.** (Go to your elders and share your concerns with them humbly and graciously. This alone may help clear things up.) 1 Peter 5:5

**\*Say goodbye to friends.** (In order to avoid confusion and hurt take time to let them know you're leaving in a personal conversation) James 4:11

**\*Commit to a new church.** (Never let your past experience keep you from finding a new church as soon as possible) Hebrews 10:25

● **Is it okay to be a church-hopper?**

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Church hopping is defined as someone going from church to church to satisfy their yearnings. The following are some dangers of church hopping:

\*Church hopping will cause you to lose **accountability**. James 5:16

\*Church hopping will cause you to lose **consistency**.

\*Church hopping will cause you to lose a sense of **community**. Galatians 6:2

\*Church hopping will cause the church to lose out on a **committed service**. 1 Peter 4:10-11

**What are some common excuses for church hopping?**

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\*I like to see how different churches \_\_\_\_\_.

\*I don't like the \_\_\_\_\_.

\*There's nothing for my teens/kids.

**What is one thing you learned that you are willing to share with someone else?**

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**“Church is not something you go to, it's a family you belong to.”**