

THE CHURCH

Purpose: This study lets the seeker know that they will not be left to fend for one's self after baptism. Instead, Jesus baptizes us into the body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13) to be joined by a team of like-minded disciples in our devotion to Him. These brothers and sisters are meant to be a continual source of encouragement in our walk with Christ. Even more good news!

The Greek word for church is "ekklesia" which means "assembly" or "called out". ("Ek" meaning "out" and "kaleo" meaning "to call.") Therefore, the church in the Bible was the "assembly" of the "called out".

Acts 2:40-47

After Peter preached the first "Christian sermon" at Pentecost, 3,000 people were baptized bringing together the early church.

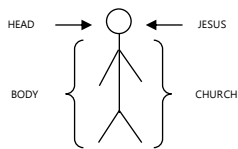
Q: These new 3,000 converts joined together in devotion to what particular things? ("*...the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.*")

Q: How would you describe the atmosphere surrounding this fellowship?

Q: Regardless of how long it took for them to really relate with and get to know one another, what did they ultimately have in common with one another to begin with?

Colossians 1-15-20

Q: Who is the head of the church? (Jesus is the head of the church which is **HIS** body)



Q: Scientifically, what is the function or role that the head plays?

Q: Scientifically, if a body becomes detached from the head, what happens to that body?

Q: Can we be a part of the church (the body of Jesus Christ) if someone or something other than Jesus is the head?

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Q: How does a person become a part of (the church) the body of Jesus Christ? (The Spirit baptizes us into the body of Jesus Christ, His church.)

Q: What is the church (the body of Jesus Christ) made up of? (The church consists of distinct yet unified parts, just like a human body. God Himself, has arranged it this way.)

Q: What should your attitude be like towards other parts of the church (the body of Christ)? (Each of us who are a part of the body of Christ must actively work in ways in which we support each other.)

Q: When you become a part of the body of Christ (the church), will the body of Christ (the church) need you?

Q: Should anyone whose a disciples ever say "I don't need the church" based on v21-27? Why?

Ephesians 4:1-16

Q: How much effort should go into maintaining unity with the church? (Disciples of Jesus should make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the church. Doing so requires humility, patience, gentleness, and selflessness.)

Q: What things should the church be unified about doctrinally based on v. 4-6? (We must maintain unity on the essentials of Christian doctrine – one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all)

Q: What specific offices in the church did Jesus Christ institute based on v11?

Q: What are those offices meant to prepare the church for based on v12? (God provides specific offices within the church in order to prepare us for works of service which build up the body.)

Hebrews 10:22-25

After being washed in baptism, we need the continual exhortations of brothers and sisters to stay the course. The charge is for us to "*...hold unswervingly to the hope we profess.*" and "*...consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*"

Q: In what ways do you think you can help other Christians be about the Christian life?

Q: Why is missing meetings of the body described as a bad habit?

Q: When are the meetings of the body (the church)? (Sunday Worship Services; Midweek Services including Congregational; Men and Women Services, Bible Talks, Devotionals, Retreats, etc...)

Begin to rearrange schedule to come to all the meetings of the body.

Hebrews 3:12-14

We each have the charge and the responsibility to "*...see to it that no one has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from God.*"

Q: How crucial do you think daily encouragement is when it comes to the Christian life?

Malachi 3:6-12

Q: What do you know or understand about tithing?

Tithing is the guideline of our giving on Sundays to meet the ministry needs. Our giving supports the body as we reach out to a world in need of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Giving should be from a "cheerful" heart – not under compulsion.

God blesses you when you sacrifice.

Self-assessment questions:

Q: Is it clear to you what the church is?

Q: Do you have any questions or misunderstandings about the church and how it functions?

Q: Are you willing to adjust your schedule and plan to be at the different meetings of the church?