

# **Foundation Study #10: THE CHURCH**

**What do the following verses say about the Church?**

## **1) Ephesians 3:21**

**The Church exists to glorify God.** The purpose of the church is to display the attributes of God. It does so by announcing God's grand desire to graciously include all people in salvation through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:10). This is accomplished through a great commitment to the great commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) and the great commission (Matthew 28:16-20).

Put another way, the Church is God's chosen agent to demonstrate His power and proclaim His name during this age. God uses the Church in the same way He used Pharaoh (Romans 9:17). Different age, different agent, same purpose.

Enns states the purpose of the Church as follows: *"The two overriding purposes of the Church can be delineated: gathered, ministering to the body, scattered, ministering to the world... The purpose of the Church gathered is for the church to come to maturity. This occurs through teaching, fellowship, and worship... The New Testament church did not attempt to carry out its evangelism within the confines of a building but rather out in the world...the ministry of evangelism was not carried on by a select few but by ordinary believers as well. The central message of the early church proclaimed was Christ, moreover, they took their message beyond the Jewish boundary, crossing previously rigid cultural barriers. The result was that many people became believers."*<sup>1</sup>

The term "church" means "a called out group or assembly." It was "born" on Pentecost (Acts 2) through the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13) as He placed people into the Body of Christ.

## **2) Colossians 1:18**

**The Church is headed by Jesus Christ, it being His body** (Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:23,24; Colossians 1:24). As its head, Christ is the ultimate authority. He controls, directs and gives life to the Church. As its body, all true believers are directed, nourished, uniquely equipped to serve under His authority. Other figures of speech also define the relationship between Christ and the Church (all true believers).

- a. The Vine and the Branches - John 15
- b. The Shepherd and sheep - John 10
- c. The Cornerstone and building - Ephesians 2:19-21
- d. The High Priest and kingdom - 1 Peter 2
- e. The head and the Body - 1 Corinthians 12
- f. The Last Adam and new creation - Romans 5
- g. The Bridegroom and the Bride - Ephesians 5

## **3) Matthew 16:13-18**

**The Church built on the testimony of faith in Christ.** There are two expressions of the Church: local and universal. The local church is designated by location (Colossians 4:15; Revelation 2:1) and is composed of all those who have true saving faith. Within the local expression of the church may be some who do not have a true saving faith (Matthew 13:36-43; 1 John 2:19). The Universal Church is made up of all truly regenerate from all ages, nations, tribes, and tongues (Ephesians 3:13,21; Revelation 5:9).

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1. Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, Moody Press, Chicago, Ill. Pages 365-366

#### 4) **Philippians 1:1**

**The Church is made up of saints, Elders, and Deacons.** The term “saints” means those who are “set apart” or “holy” and refers to all true believers (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2).

Elders are leaders of a local church. The term is also used interchangeably with “overseer” and “bishop.” Elder is a title of an office. Bishop is descriptive of the office. Elders are appointed and qualified based on 1 Timothy 3:1-6 and Titus 1:7-9. The duties of Elder include:

- a. Oversight and ruling (1 Timothy 5:17). The church is to have a plurality of Elders (Titus 1:5).
- b. Preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17,18). The term “pastor teacher” (Ephesians 4:11) refers to an Elder who is to carry out both functions of pasturing (caring) and teaching (educating). It is a two word description of one office.
- c. Shepherd (Acts 28:20).
- d. Guard from false doctrine (Titus 1:9).
- e. Manage the church (1 Timothy 3:5).

Deacons serve under authority of the Elders to free them (the Elders) for concentration upon the ministry of the word and prayer (Acts 6:1-4). They are qualified based on 1 Timothy 3:8-10,12,13 and Titus 1).

#### 5) **Matthew 28:16-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34**

**The church ordinances are communion and baptism.** Charles Ryrie states, “*an ordinance is an outward rite prescribed by Christ to be performed by the church.*” Communion (also called the Lord’s Supper) is a memorial. Its purpose is to create humble remembrance of the sacrificial and beneficial death of Christ.

Baptism is an outward expression of an inward commitment. It communicates the believer’s identification and association with Christ. It is the “wedding ring” of the Christian faith. It is symbolic of the cleansing of forgiveness, the resurrection of the redeemed, and the union of the believer with Christ (Romans 6:5-11).

#### 6) **Acts 8:1-4; 9:31**

**The Church can grow through persecution or reverent peace.** Persecution (suffering for one’s faith) serves to purify and then expand the church. More Christians were martyred for their faith in the 20th century than in all previous centuries combined. As a result, Christianity is the fastest growing religion in the world. The other means of growth is during a time of peace, when believer’s have a genuine fear of the Lord.

**What was the most significant verse in this study to you? Explain.**