

The Local Church:

- I love Local church
- I believe it is God's design to minister to his people

How do you feel about church, why do you come every Sunday?

We are going to look at what scripture says about the local church, its functions and design. So that we can understand:

- Its importance
- The role The local church has to reach His people
- And our role in it

(1) Where do we read about Church in the Bible?

Matt 9:16-17

¹⁶ No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. ¹⁷ Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined

- Wine = The life of Christ poured out on the Cross.
- Wineskin = The new wineskin is a new structure or vehicle that Jesus will use to effectively dispense the new wine to the world, this new structure is His church.
- **V16.** *He came to do something completely new, not just adjust, edit, or add how the current structure was. And we see that by Him tearing down the curtain of the temple.*
- **V17.** *The old design/structure was being completely replaced - we do not need a priest to make atonement for us anymore, He himself made and was the perfect sacrifice and we have now full access to relationship with Him. So we needed a new structure that he would reveal to us.*
- **And we know that it is the Church :**
 - **Ephesians 3:10.** His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms

Matt 16:15-18

¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build **My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

- This is the first time In the Bible that church is mentioned.
- This is Jesus' words, that tells us that church is God's design.

(2) So what is Church then, is it us as the believers collectively called the church or is it a physical place?

- The answer is YES!
- It is both.

Church: the believers collectively

- Ekklesia, meaning the Body of Christ/faithful.
- **1 Cor 12:12-13.** ¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.
- **Eph. 2 20-22.** ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Church: a physical place (A gathering place **not a building**)

- **Acts 2:42-47.** ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were **together** and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to **meet together** in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and **ate together** with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

(3) What is the Function OF the Church?

Great Commission: **Matt 28:18-20.** ¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make **disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ **teaching** them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

- Jesus is the Author & the Builder of the church.
 - It is not a man made design, do not break down the church.
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Side note: The **great commision** = the **great co-mission**

- He did not create this design and leave us to do the work alone, but He is with us on this mission.
 - He gave us His Spirit to teach us all things and to remind us of everything he has taught us. **John 14:26**
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(4) What are the functions IN church:

- The church is not just a place of coming together, but it has a design and a structure to further the great commission.
- Again this is not man-made, but God designed.
 - **Phil 1:1.** Paul and Timothy (**Apostolic team**), servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people (**Saints**) in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers (**Elders**) and deacons (**ministry team**)

The functions are:

- Elders (**Govern/Presbuteros**), Overseas (**Guide/Episkopos**), Shepherds (**Gather/Poimano**)
 - **Tit 1:5-9** The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and **appoint elders (Presbuteros) in every town**, as I directed you. ⁶ An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷ **Since an overseer (Episkopos) manages God's household**, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸ Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹ **He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.**
 - **Acts 20:28** Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers (Episkopos)**. Be **shepherds (Poimaino)** of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.
- In this Office of Eldership we see:
 - A shepherd **feeds (with The Word) and takes care (praying, aiding)**
 - He oversees all aspects of God's household
 - He exhorts, corrects and rebukes the saints
- Deacons - (**under authority** of elders, helps with **practical tasks**) - **Acts 6: 1-7**
 - ¹ In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." ⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷ **So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.**

- Apostles -Translocal team (**relational, help, strengthen, and encourage**)
 - There are many scriptures that speak about the function and roles of Apostles or apostolic teams, and one of the best examples we have is when we look at the life of Paul and those that journeys with him (team).

- **Acts 14: 21-28**
 - ²¹ They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they **returned** to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, ²² **strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.** “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.
 - Relational (not a once-off visit).
 - Strengthened and encouraged the church.
 - ²³ Paul and Barnabas **appointed elders for them in each church** and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.
 - Help appoint Elders in the local church
 - ²⁶ From Attalia **they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed** to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.
 - They are also under the authority of a local church (their base church).
 - They are sent or invited to a local church under authority.
 - ²⁷ On arriving there, they **gathered the church together and reported all that God had done** through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.
 - Reported back to their base church.
 - Again, under Authority.
 - Encouraging their local church with the feedback of what the Lord has done.

- **And collectively we are the saints and disciples!**
- **And that is what we can read in Scripture about God’s design and structure inside His Church.**

(5) Why should I go to Church?

Hopefully you can now see that it is not to keep you busy, but that it is God’s design to make you grow and help you with your purpose as well.

- It is for **you and your offspring's benefit.**
- **You have been commissioned** to make not only believers but also disciples. **And there is a structure to help you do that.**

(6) Hurt inside the Church

- We are a family with many members, a variety of personalities, strengths and weaknesses.
 - Which means indifference is bound to happen.
 - Offense will try to creep into your heart.
 - You might be the victim of someone's fruit of the flesh... or you might be the cause...

But Remember!

- **You are on a mission!**
- **Do not let the enemy side track or steal from your purpose and function inside God's church!**

Rom15:1-7 ¹ **We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak** and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, **to build them up.** ³ For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. ⁵ **May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had,** ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ **Accept one another,** then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

We are imperfect people, part of God's perfect plan!