

Christian Doctrine

The Church (Part 1)

Understanding What the Church Is

What Is the Church?

As we look to understand what the church is, let us first look at this word “church.” The Greek word used in the New Testament to refer to the church is “ekklesia” meaning “a called out assembly.” With that in mind, note:

- The word “church” does not refer to a building. Many people think of church in reference to a building because of the way the word church is often used (such as, “I am going to church today.”).
- The word “church” refers to the people who have been called out and redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Two Aspects of the Church

- The Universal church. This refers to all believers:
 - Christ will build His church ([Matt. 16:18](#)).
 - Christ loved and gave Himself for her ([Eph. 5:25](#)).
 - Christ is the head of the church ([Eph. 5:23](#)).
 - Believers are part of one body ([Eph. 4:4](#); [Heb. 12:23](#)).
- The Local church refers to believers in a specific area. Examples include the Church in Jerusalem ([Acts 8:1](#)), Ephesus ([Acts 20:17](#)) and Corinth ([I Cor. 1:2](#)).

Terms Which Describe the Church

Here are a few concepts Scripture uses when referring to the church that show how we are united with Christ (as well as other believers) in a unique relationship:

- Body of Christ – Christ is the head and each member is an important part of the body ([I Cor. 12:12-27](#); [Rom. 12:3-8](#); [Eph. 1:22-23](#)).
- Bride of Christ – Pictures the union and love a bride and groom have for each other ([II Cor. 11:2](#); [Eph. 5:25-33](#); [Rev. 19:7-9](#)).
- A Family – All members are united as a family ([Eph. 3:14-15](#); [I Tim. 5:1-2](#); [II Cor. 6:18](#)).
- A Fellowship – The members care for each other and help each other ([Acts 2:42](#); [Gal. 2:9](#)).