



What is a church?

Historical use of the word “Ecclesia” (We translate “church”)

- ◆ **MILITARY:** used in reference to calling an army to assemble.
- ◆ **POLITICS:** used to define the gathering of city citizens together in order to make judicial and political decisions.
- ◆ **OLD TESTAMENT:** referred to the Israelite people God had summoned together to enter into a covenant with himself and live according to his Law.
- ◆ **NEW TESTAMENT:** referred to the global people of God and also the local gathering of God’s people.

What do you think about the statement, “You don’t have to go to church to be a Christian”?

Reflect on these scriptures to understand the significance and role of the church.

Matthew 16:18 (NASB-U) Jesus speaking to his disciples
I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Whose church is it?

How might that affect our view of the church?

How might that affect how we speak about the church?

How does that affect how the church is to be built?

What does it mean when it says the gates of Hades will not overcome it?

Ephesians 5:25-27 (NLT)

And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word. ²⁷He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.



In light of the above verse, how important is the church to Jesus?

Colossians 1:18 (NLT)

Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. He is the first of all who will rise from the dead, so he is first in everything.

What is the significance of Christ being the head of the church?

What's the significance with regard to church leadership?

According to the following verses, what are the purposes of the church?

Romans 15:5-6 (NIV)

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, ⁶so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NLT)

He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹²Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, ¹³until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ.



Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

What is the future of the church?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NLT)

And now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died.

¹⁵I can tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not rise to meet him ahead of those who are in their graves. ¹⁶For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. ¹⁸So comfort and encourage each other with these words.

As a spiritual family we will be _____

Revelation 22:4-5 (NLT)

And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. ⁵And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.

As a spiritual family we will _____

Ephesians 3:20-21 (NLT)

Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope. ²¹May he be given glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever through endless ages. Amen.

As a spiritual family we will _____



Why do we need to be a part of the church?

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NLT)

A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church. ⁸To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another he gives the gift of special knowledge. ⁹The Spirit gives special faith to another, and to someone else he gives the power to heal the sick. ¹⁰He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and to another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to know whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit that is speaking. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, and another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. ¹¹It is the one and only Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

Why doesn't the Holy Spirit give each of us all the needed gifts?

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NLT)

He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹²Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, ¹³until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ.

What happens if we cut ourselves off from the giftings within the local church?

What happens if I sit back and don't use my giftings in the local church?

How would you respond now to the person who says they don't need to be part of a local church to be a Christian?

HOME STUDY:

Read: Continue reading Exodus through to 2 Kings.

The goal is to gain an overview of the story of the Bible. When you come to passages detailing the tabernacle structures, laws, or rites, simply scan them for now and proceed to the next narrative section to pick up the continuation of the story.