What Is a Church?

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"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Acts 2:47

What It Is Not!

A. It is not a physical facility at a specific address that those who pass by recognize as a church.
B. It is not just a building dedicated to religious activities on Sunday to do something spiritual.
C. It is not a tradition from parents to do Sunday things related to family, America, and God.
D. It is not a social club, a business organization for the Great Commission, or a religious ritual.
E. It is not merely a manmade organization dependent on men to become large and successful.
F. It is not an auditorium where you can sit and watch a musical and oratory drama acted out.

What It Is!

A. A group of baptized believers that believe the same things and are committed to the Bible.
B. They meet to worship and learn of Jesus Christ and are committed to love one another.
C. God meets with them on earth in this union and in their assemblies to worship Him by faith.

God's Temple

A. Children fantasize about Solomon's temple, but a New Testament local church is greater!
B. Each local church is the temple of the living God by the presence of His Spirit (Eph 2:20-22).
C. God will personally intervene and destroy men who mess with His churches (I Cor 3:16-17).
D. The house rules for God's temple have been declared plainly (I Tim 3:15; II Cor 6:14-18).
E. Do not be confused by I Corinthians 6:19-20 referring to your physical body and fornication.

Spirit's House

A. The Holy Spirit – Who moved on waters in Gen 1:2 – inhabits local churches (Eph 2:20-22).
B. He is the Spirit that moves the members of the church in their various roles (I Cor 12:13).
C. Here is a great mystery of the church – Jesus Christ dwells with us and in us (John 14:17,23).
D. Instead of seeking the lowest apostolic gift – tongues, men should want Christ's local church!
E. A church must grow in love for Christ lest its candlestick (the Spirit) is removed (Rev 2:1-5).

Christ's Body

A. The church is compared to a body, with the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head (Col 1:18; 2:19).
B. How closely connected is your head to your body? It is this union that such words indicate!
C. But get this jewel! The church is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:22-23).
D. Without the church, the Lord Jesus Christ is incomplete, because God has tied us together!
E. There is a mystical union of various phases of salvation between Jesus Christ and the church.

Potentate's Property

A. Our church is the property of Jesus Christ – He is the Head, the Cornerstone, the Apostle, the High Priest, the Saviour of the Body, etc. (Col 1:18; Eph 2:20; Heb 3:1; Eph 5:23; etc.).
B. Never forget how Jesus Christ will shortly reveal Himself – King of kings (I Tim 6:13-16)!
C. He walks among the golden candlesticks, which represent His churches (Rev 1:12-13; 2:1).
D. He offers a personal relationship to each of His churches, if they will have Him (Rev 3:20).

Scripture Repository

A. The pure words of God were given to the Old Testament church (Deut 29:29; Rom 3:1-4).
B. This blessing made them uniquely special before the world's nations (Deut 4:5-8; 32:45-47).
C. Councils, synods, or seminaries did not determine the canon of the New Testament. Glory!
D. A man of God applying himself well by the support of a church is glorious (II Tim 3:16-17).
E. The scriptures work effectually, and the church must defend them (I Thess 2:13; I Tim 3:15).

Treasure Chest

A. God has invested the church with secret mysteries (Matt 13:16-17; I Cor 2:6-13; I Tim 3:16).
B. We know detailed answers to the dilemmas that have destroyed philosophers for generations!
C. It is God's ministers who identify, explain, and remind saints of these promises (Matt 13:52).
D. Church members are able to comfort each other that death is only sleep (I Thess 4:13-18)!

Christ's Prophecy

A. The Lord Christ foretold the success of His church against the gates of hell (Matthew 16:18).
B. Your ancestors were once inside those gates worshipping the devil with ritualistic orgies!
C. He commissioned servants worldwide to rescue men from Satan (Mat 28:18-20; Acts 26:18).
D. His prophecy was marvelously fulfilled and is one of our mysteries (Acts 1:8; I Tim 3:16).
E. There is sufficient historical evidence that the gospel was received in Wales before Paul died.

Angelic Wonder

A. The angels desire to look into the things that are given to us through Jesus Christ (I Pet 1:12).
B. God gave an object lesson to impress the angels with His wisdom to the church (Eph 3:10).

C. Jesus Christ did not take on the nature of angels, but the nature of men (Heb 1:6; 2:14-16).
D. While they will sing praises to the Lamb, they cannot sing with the redeemed (Rev 5:8-14)!

Heavenly Connection

A. We are not alone when meeting on earth, for we are connected to heaven (Heb 12:22-24).
B. We cannot forget that we are merely pilgrims and strangers here (Heb 11:13; I Peter 2:11).
C. Our affection should be in heaven, where our tightest family union lies (Galatians 4:26).
D. We are reigning in heaven now through our vital connection to Christ (Eph 2:6; Rev 20:6).
E. This makes every local church a mega church with an innumerable choir of angels!

Royal Connection

A. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Bishop of our church, is the Blessed Potentate (I Tim 6:13-16).
B. But not only that, He has also made us kings and priests in our own right (Revelation 1:6).
C. If we overcome, we will sit with Him and judge angels (Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; I Cor 6:3)!
D. We are living and reigning with Christ a thousand years in the church (Eph 2:6; Rev 20:6).

Truth Defender

A. God assigned us the duty and privilege of supporting and defending the truth (I Tim 3:14-16).
B. If you are militaristic, God has charged us to earnestly contend for the true faith (Jude 1:3).
C. The church has a role to hold the line and not compromise (Acts 2:42; II Thess 2:15; 3:6).
D. While Christianity at large compromises, we must hold fast to truth (II Tim 3:1-5; 4:3-4).
E. We must try men by the Bible and reject heretics (Rom 16:17-18; Gal 1:8-9; Titus 3:10-11).

Salvation Source

A. Catholics believe eternal life depends on their church, but we mean something very different.
B. There is a salvation before membership and one after it (Acts 2:47; 13:48; II Tim 1:9-10).
C. Paul taught a salvation in churches (I Timothy 4:16; I Cor 15:2; II Thess 2:13; Jas 5:19-20).
D. If you are outside the church of Jesus Christ, you are cut off from His Spirit and blessings.
E. The fullest measures of His Spirit, His truth, and His designed assistance are in the church.

Worship Center

A. Jesus Christ is not worshipped in a temple made with hands – the catacombs worked better!
B. He is adored in a spiritual temple – an assembly of saints (Ephesians 2:21-22; I Peter 2:5).
C. And rather than expensive sacrifices, he wants our singing and praise (Eph 5:19; Heb 13:15).
D. Jesus rejected the Samaritans and the Jews and declared for new worship (John 4:23-24).
E. Let us make sure our worship is reverent with godly fear to be acceptable (Heb 12:28-29).

Reality Check

A. Asaph was delusional, until he went into the sanctuary of God for a reminder (Ps 73:16-17).
B. Where is the reality of the universe and of your very own life clearly shown (Psalm 27:4)?
C. It is easy to be distracted from the most important things (Jer 9:23-24; II Cor 4:18; 5:7).
D. In church we are admonished, exhorted, and warned (I Thess 5:14; Heb 3:12-13; 10:23-25).
E. The man of God brings the word of God to bear on our lives (II Timothy 3:16-17; 4:1-2).

God's Seminary

A. It is in the churches that Jesus Christ finds and appoints men to the ministry (I Cor 12:28).
B. When Jesus Christ ascended up on high, He gave ministerial gifts to churches (Eph 4:11).
C. The truth that has been transmitted for 2000 years is from Paul's public teaching (II Tim 2:2).
D. The offices Jesus Christ gave are not chosen by freshmen in a college handbook (Heb 5:4).

Small Claims Court

A. The Lord ordained how to easily settle personal offences (Matthew 18:15-18; I Cor 6:1-8).
B. Being defrauded is the most glorious method, but there is recourse (Prov 19:11; I Cor 6:7).
C. Would you prefer a jury of your peers picked from the streets or from these pews? Glory!

Welfare Agency

A. Churches full of the Spirit share generously to provide for the poor (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37).
B. Apostolic churches supplied qualified widows with daily support (Acts 6:1-3; I Tim 5:3-16).
C. When natural disasters strike, they do not have to wait for FEMA (Acts 11:27-30; 20:33-35).
D. They have God's own rules of acts of God versus follies of men (Prov 20:4; II Thess 3:6-15).

Competent Counselors

A. Where can you easily access a multitude of counselors that fear God (Pr 11:14; 15:22; 24:6)?
B. Wise counselors with hearty suggestions are precious things (Pr 24:26; 27:9; Psalm 141:5).
C. But the saints shall judge angels, how much more the small things of this life (I Cor 6:3-4).
D. Where can you find a greater combination of faith, truth, economy, and love for your needs?
E. Many must wander through life, even children of God, without such advisors and friends.

Synergistic Support

A. Two are better than one for at least four reasons, which tell the value of society (Ec 4:9-12).
B. How can two stay warm together? There is no more heat! The value of church synergism!
C. The value of the combination is greater than the sum of the value of all the individual parts!
D. A man alone, especially in spiritual things, is vulnerable and weak (Heb 3:12-13; 10:23-25).
E. The combination of body parts gives them more value than alone (I Cor 12:14-25; Eph 4:16).

Prayer Band

A. The prayer of the church is the most powerful force on earth (Matthew 18:19-20; Acts 4:31)!
B. No wonder Peter was sleeping peacefully – and escaped – due to many prayers (Acts 12:5).
C. The activity that we are to be engaged in to defeat the devil himself is prayer (Eph 6:18-19).
D. We should confess our faults without pretensions and pray one for another (James 5:16).

Replacement Family

A. The Preacher taught long ago that a proven friend is better than a brother (Pr 27:10; 18:24).
B. Jesus Christ made very clear the trade He would make with the faithful (Mark 10:28-30).
C. No man has ever left family in this world that has not received 100 times more in this world!
D. Therefore, we are bound by the thickest blood – of God Himself – to one another (Eph 3:15).

Best Friends

A. Godly men will always be better friends than a family member or worldly friend (Pr 18:24).
B. David, who had more friends than any man, had learned this well (Psalm 119:63; 101:3-8).
C. Bishops are told to be lovers of good men, and there is only one place to find them (Tit 1:8).
D. Paul found comfort from brethren when traveling to Rome for trial before Caesar (Ac 28:15).

Heaven's Executioner

A. The churches of Christ have been granted executive power to apply disciple (I Cor 5:1-13).
B. They gather together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for very serious work (I Cor 5:4-5).
C. Heaven itself responds and confirms the judgment of the true churches of God (Matt 18:18).
D. God will destroy any man, especially ministers, who mess with His churches (I Cor 3:16-17).

Living Organism

A. The church is not just an organization: it is a living organism with its own life (I Peter 2:4-5).
B. A church without the Spirit of the living God is nothing more than a dead corpse (Jas 2:26).
C. The sustaining life of spiritual grace is given through Jesus Christ to believers (John 15:1-5).

Freedom Central

A. Nowhere else in the world do men have such personal freedom as in the church (Ro 14:1-3).
B. You are protected in God's churches from the judgmental whims of other men (Rom 14:3-4).
C. There is total equality in the church of Jesus Christ without distinctions (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11).
D. The rich and poor have no advantage or leverage against the other (James 1:9-11; 2:1-5).

Support Group

A. No others will stick as close to you for both better or for worse (Romans 12:15; I Cor 12:26).

B. The friends in the world are fair weather friends – for their own lusts or merely convenience.
C. The relationship of Jonathan and David was based on more than compatibility (I Sam 23:16).

Secret Supper

A. The Lord Jesus Christ revealed to Paul the ordinance of the Lord's Supper (I Cor 11:23-25).
B. This feast is closed to outsiders, because it is reserved for the committed disciples of Christ.
C. The ordinance and how it is to be kept has been lost by most, but it is our privilege to keep it.
D. The elements are simple; the significance profound; the partaking easy; the blessings great!

Praise Band

Eph 5:19

Col 3:16

Heb 13:15

Psalm 34:1-3

United Nations

Rom 15:26

Secret Society

I John 3:1

I Cor 2:15

Mega Church

Heb 12:22-24

Christ's Bride

Eph 5:29-32

Psalm 45

Hidden Wisdom

I Cor 2:6-10

I Tim 3:16

I Cor 4:1

What Will You Do for Your Church?

Will you pray for it?

Will you prepare for its assemblies?

Will you participate in its assemblies?

Will you protect its doctrine and its peace?

Will you provide for it in every way you are able?

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, “Pillar and Ground of the Truth,” exalts the church’s role in defending the truth of God.
2. The sermon outline, “Which Every Joint Supplies,” shows the important role of each member in church growth.
3. The sermon outline, “The Purpose of the Church,” considers goals and objectives for churches and members.
4. The sermon outline, “Blood Is Thicker than Blood,” shows the tight bond believers have through Christ’s blood.
5. The sermon outline, “The Life of the Church,” considers the true purpose for churches and their members.
6. The sermon outline, “The Glory of the Church,” deals with the lofty reality of a New Testament church.
7. The sermon outline, “Christian Liberty,” details freedom of church members from manmade rules of conduct.