

Lesson 17 – What Is the Church?

Key Verse: Matthew 16:18

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Overview

Charles Spurgeon said, “Nothing in the world is dearer to God’s heart than His church.” With that being true, then we must ask, “What is the church?” There are many churches throughout the world today. A recent study shows there are over 45,000 Christian denominations globally¹ and more than 200 Christian denominations in the U.S.² Even with the massive number of churches, there are still many people who do not know what a biblical church is. So, what makes a church a church? Is it a denomination? Is it a building? In this lesson we will look at God’s Word to understand what the church is and why it is important to know.

Defining the Church

1. The word for church in the Greek is *ekklesia*. It means: _____
2. Acts 20:28. What did Paul say about the church? _____
3. Ephesians 5:25. What does this verse tell us about the church? _____

4. 1 Corinthians 1:2. What did Paul say about the church? _____

5. Acts 2:1–4. When did the church begin? _____
6. Acts 2:47. What was God doing to the church? _____

“The church is made up of people called by God to be His children through faith in Jesus Christ, and who are united to one another.”

—John MacArthur, *The Master’s Plan for the Church*, pg. 86

¹ <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/research/quick-facts/>

² <https://www.livescience.com/christianity-denominations.html>

The Visible and Invisible Church

1. Matthew 13:24–30. What does this verse reveal about the visible church? _____

2. Matthew 7:21–23. What does this verse reveal about professing Christians? _____

3. Titus 1:16. What does this verse reveal about those who “profess to know God”? _____

4. 1 John 2:19. What does this verse tell us about the visible church? _____

5. 2 Timothy 2:19. What does this verse reveal about God’s church? _____

Biblical Metaphors of the Church

1. 1 Corinthians 12:27. What metaphor is used for the church? _____
2. Ephesians 5:22–32. What metaphor is used for the church? _____
3. Ephesians 2:19. What metaphor is used for the church? _____

Leadership in the Church

1. Ephesians 5:23. Who is the head of the church? _____
2. Philippians 1:1. What two offices has God established in the church? _____
3. Titus 1:5. What did Paul task Titus to do? _____
4. 1 Timothy 5:17. What is the responsibility of the elders of the church? _____
5. 1 Peter 5:1–2. What duty does Peter give to the elders? _____
 - a. How does he do it? _____

**“Christ’s headship of the church is administered through godly leaders
whom He has given to lead His people.”**
—John MacArthur, *Essential Christian Doctrine*, gen. ed., pg. 395

Purpose of the Church

1. 1 Corinthians 10:31. What is the church called to do? _____
2. Romans 12:1. How does the church exalt God? _____
3. Ephesians 4:11–12. Why has God given the church leaders? _____
4. Matthew 28:19. What is the church called to do? _____

The Means of Grace: What makes a church a church?

1. Acts 14:21–23. What is necessary for a spiritually mature church? _____
2. Acts 6:4. What were the two priorities of the early church leaders? _____
3. 1 Peter 2:1–3. What is the means of the Christian's growth? _____
4. 2 Timothy 4:2. What was Timothy commanded to do in the church? _____
5. Matthew 28:19. What ordinance did Jesus give to the church? _____
6. 1 Corinthians 11:23–26. What ordinance did Jesus give to the church? _____
7. 1 Thessalonians 5:17. What did Paul instruct the church at Thessalonica to do? _____
8. Colossians 3:16. What is the church commanded to do? _____
9. Acts 2:42. What did the early church do? _____
10. Matthew 18:15–17. What did Christ establish for the purity of His church? _____
11. Colossians 3:14. What is the church to pursue? _____

Application

1. How is a church different from a Bible study, Christian retreat, or parachurch organization?
2. Why should Christians become members of a church?
3. How has this study changed your view of what a true church is?