
The Church

The Book of Acts records the growth of the church after the ascension of Jesus. We see a progression in the spread of the gospel from the Jews to the Samaritans to the Gentiles. Many analogies were used in Scripture for the church. Read the following verses and write your conclusion below: Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Corinthians 3:9; 6:15; 10:17; 12:25-28; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18,24; 2:19; 1 Timothy 3:15.

The church was not an after-thought of God's. He knew that people would fall into sin. He was not surprised by Israel's continued disobedience and rejection. He knew from eternity past that His Son would be sent into the world and would prophesy "I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18). It was God's plan to use the prophets and apostles, with Christ as the chief cornerstone, to be the foundation for the church (Eph 2:20). God eternally designed the church to reveal the His mysteries (Eph 3:10-11).

What is the Church?

The next several statements indicate what the church is. Next to each statement are verses that give support to the statement. Read each verse and write down and discuss your observations that support the statement.

The church is made up of Christians: Acts 14: 21-27; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; Philippians 1:1-2; Revelation 2-3

The church meets on the first day of the week: 1 Corinthians 16:2; Acts 20:7

The church has leaders who are responsible for the church: Acts 14:23; 20:17-37; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3

The church exercises discipline of believers: Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

The church has specific qualifications for leaders: 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9

The church is associated with other churches: Acts 15:1-34, 16:4-5; Romans 15:26-27; 16:3-5, 16; 1 Corinthians 8; Philippians 4:15-17; Colossians 4:15-17; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 3 John 9-11

The church practices baptism and the Lord's Supper: Matthew 28:18-19; 1 Corinthians 1:11-16, 11:23-27

What is the Purpose of the Church

Read Acts 2:41-47

Identify 5 things that characterized the church in Jerusalem and should characterize every church.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Application

Later in the book, we will be looking at each of these characteristics. In the meantime, the Acts of the Apostles is a great place to get a better understanding of the church. During the course of the next week, try to read four chapters per day and look for the development of the church. Use the space below to make some notes to discuss in your group next week.