

What is a Church?

A Definition: People, brought by God into saving fellowship with Him, through faith in Jesus, who regularly assemble for ministry to God, ministry to one another, and ministry to the world.

Breaking Down the Definition

Part 1: People

Ephesians 2:22, "In [Christ] you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

Ephesians 5:30, "We [the people] are members of His body."

One lesson: You will be much happier in your church if you would be thankful for the church you **are a part of** instead of fantasizing about your dream church.

Quote: If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith, and difficulty; if on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so paltry and petty, so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ. (Bonhoeffer)

Colossians 3:15, "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful."

1 Corinthians 1:4, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus..."

Part 2: ...brought by God into saving fellowship with Him through faith in Jesus...

Ephesians 2:1-10, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Lesson: God's grace is the foundation of our thankfulness

Part 3. ...who regularly assemble...

Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

Lesson: One of the most significant ways you can be an encouragement to another believer is to simply assemble for worship.

Part 4. ...for ministry to:

- God (Ephesians 1:3-14)
- One Another (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- The World (Ephesians 2:10; 6:19)

Acts 17:24-25, "²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything."

Ephesian 1:3-14

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ,

according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ **to the praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be **to the praise of his glory**. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, **to the praise of his glory**.

Ephesians 4:11-16,

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² **to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ**, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and **held together by every joint with which it is equipped**, when each part is working properly, **makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love**.”

Ephesians 2:10, ¹⁰ “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

Matthew 28:18-20, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Notice:

1. How this commission is “book-ended”. It starts with the declaration of Jesus’ authority and it ends with the promise of His presence.
2. We are not on a mission to the world so that the world would elect Jesus as king. Jesus is King. He has all the authority. It’s his. He won it all in His resurrection. So, we get to serve the world by letting them know this has happened. It’s done. Jesus is King. Jesus is the only Savior of the world.
3. And we get to go on this mission knowing that this one and only king, who has all the authority in heaven and on earth is going with us on that mission.

Steps Toward Being the Church:

1. Believe the Gospel
2. Embrace your calling as a minister
3. Think like a gardener