

## What We Believe - The Church

Pastor Gilbert Kelly

**The Church of Jesus Christ** is the last instrument that God is using to extend His Kingdom before the second coming of Christ. We believe that every believer should be identified with the local expression of the Church to fulfill his or her divine purpose. *(Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:20; 3:10; 4:16)*

### **Ephesians 1:15-23 (NKJV)**

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, **16** do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: **17** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the **Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him**, **18** the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, **19** and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power **20** which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

**22 And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**

New Testament **Greek word** for Church:  
**Ekk-le-sia** Meaning "the called-out ones."

### **Bill Scheidler:**

"The church of Jesus Christ consists of those people who have been "called out" from the world and have separated themselves unto God and have gathered unto the Lord Jesus Christ for worship and fellowship."

### **1 Peter 2:9-10 (NKJV)**

**9** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **10** who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

**In the Bible, the word "church" Ekk-le-sia is used in 2 expressions.**

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**1. Ekklesia refers to all believers of all ages and all geographical locations. Often referred to as the universal Church, or sometimes the invisible or mystical Church.**

**Matthew 16:18**

"Upon this rock, I will build my **church**" Jesus was not speaking of a **specific local congregation**. He was speaking of the **universal Church of all ages**.

**2. The second expression of the word Ekklesia is used to refer to a local congregation of believers that gather as an identifiable body of believers in a specific identifiable location.**

1. **Acts 8:1** – "the church which was at Jerusalem"
2. **Romans 16:5** – "the church that is in their home"
3. **I Corinthians 16:1** – "the churches of Galatia"
4. **I Corinthians 16:19** – "The churches of Asia"
5. The seven churches of Asia (**Rev. 1-3**)

**Bill Scheidler:** "It involves a specific group of people in given localities which are marked out by confession of faith, discipline of life, obedience in baptism, gathered to the person of Jesus Christ, having gifted ministries and keeping the memorial of the Lord. They are always spoken of as complete units within themselves, which may voluntarily cooperate and fellowship with other local churches. God's plan is for every believer to be physically added to a local church and become a functioning part of that body. The local Church is a specific body of believers in a given locality."

**What is the Church NOT?**

1. The Church is not a building.
2. The Church is not a sect or denomination
3. The Church is not a worship service.

How is the Church described in the Bible?

**A. The New Testament describes the Church as a Body.**

**1 Cor 12:18, 26-27**

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased...And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

**B. The New Testament describes the Church as the Family or Household of God.**

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### **Ephesians 2:19:**

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...

**C. The New Testament describes the Church as a Temple or Building made up of living stones.**

### **Ephesians 2:19-22 (NKJV)**

**19** Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **20** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, **21** in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, **22** in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

### **1 Peter 2:4-5 (NKJV)**

**4** Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, **5** you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

**D. The New Testament describes the Church as an Army.**

### **Ephesians 6:10-11 (NKJV)**

**10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

**E. The New Testament describes the Church as the Bride of Christ**

### **Ephesians 5:30-32 (NKJV)**

**30** For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. **31** "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **32** This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

What did Jesus teach about the Local Church?

### **Matthew 18:15-20**

**15** Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. **16** But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that "by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word

may be established." 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the Church. But if he refuses even to hear the Church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. 18 Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

1. The local Church is a family
2. The local Church is not perfect.
3. The local Church is a place of order and discipline.
4. The local Church is a place where Christ promises to dwell.
5. The local Church is a gathering identified with the name of Christ.

What were the main characteristics of the New Testament Church?

#### **Acts 2:40-47 (NKJV)**

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." **41** Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. **42** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' [c]doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. **43** Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. **44** Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, **45** and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. **46** So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved.

- 1. The Apostle's doctrine** -- The Authoritative Teaching of the Word of God
- 2. Fellowship** -- The Cultivation of Relationship in the Family of God
- 3. The Breaking of Bread** -- The Communion of the Body of Christ
- 4. Prayers** -- The Supernatural Influence of Prayer and Intercession
- 5. The Fear of the Lord** -- The Awesome Respect of Almighty God
- 6. Wonders and signs** -- The Miraculous works of the Holy Spirit
- 7. Together in One Accord** -- The Unity of True Believers
- 8. All Things in common** -- The Adventure of Liberal Giving
- 9. In the Temple** -- The Dynamics of Corporate Gatherings
- 10. From House to House** -- The Ministry in Small Groups
- 11. Simplicity of Heart** -- The Joy of the Christ-like Lifestyle
- 12. Praising God** -- The Spiritual Impact of Worship

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- 13. Favor with People** -- The Influence of Righteousness in a City  
**14. Added to the Church** -- The Making of Disciples in the Local Church

What is the Lord's Purpose and Mission for His Church?

**Bill Scheidler:** "The ultimate intention of God is to establish His rule and authority in the hearts and lives of people and throughout His entire universe. God has used different instruments over the centuries of time to accomplish His plan and purpose. He used the patriarchs (i.e. Adam and Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Etc.), the nation of Israel, and even Gentile kings at times. He used Jesus as the instrument of His kingdom. The Church is the final or ultimate instrument of God in the earth and will continue to function as such right up to the return of the Lord."

What was Christ's motive for establishing the Church?

**1 Corinthians 13:4-10 (NKJV)**

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is ]perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.