

WHAT ABOUT CHURCH



“... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”

Ephesians 3:21

*Jack Reece
Panama City, Florida*

**Dedicated to Pam,
my faithful wife and companion
in life and ministry. Before you were born,
God knew I needed you.
I love you.**

**©Copyright 2023
by Jack E. Reece
3332 Jenks Avenue
Panama City, Florida 32405
1-850-763-5661**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	3
1. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?	4
2. WHEN AND WHERE DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?	6
3. WHO OWNS THE CHURCH?	9
4. WHO MAKES THE RULES?	11
5. IS THE CHURCH IMPORTANT OR ESSENTIAL?	13
6. WHY DO I NEED TO BE PART OF THE CHURCH?	15
7. DO I HAVE TO “GO TO CHURCH”?	17
8. WHAT’S THE DEAL ABOUT CHURCH FELLOWSHIP?	19
9. WHAT IS THE MISSION OF GOD’S CHURCH?	21
10. WHAT ELSE DOES THE CHURCH DO?	23
11. WHAT IS GOD’S ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH?	25
12. HOW DO I BECOME PART OF GOD’S CHURCH?	27
13. WHAT IS THE DESTINY OF GOD’S CHURCH?	29

PREFACE

Shortly before his arrest and crucifixion, Jesus reminds his disciples what was written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." (Matthew 26:31). Jesus knew it would happen. Jesus was arrested, "then all the disciples deserted him and fled." (Mt. 26:56). But after Jesus resurrected from the tomb, his disciples came together again, met him in Galilee and have been together ever since. This togetherness of his disciples is called the church, the body of Christ and the family of God. Admittedly the church has been less visible at times due to persecution, but his disciples always found their way together. God intended togetherness for his people.

"Alone" means "separated from others, isolated." God made us as social creatures and said, "it is not good for man to be alone." Brief periods of aloneness may be refreshing but not so for extended periods.

We need others for many reasons. We encourage one another, share burdens and joys, help each other, worship together and spread the good news of Jesus with others. We share a common faith as believers and disciples of Christ. We are united with one another because we are united with Christ. Jesus is both Savior and Lord of the church. He is to have preeminence in all things and is humbly followed by his people.

This booklet is intended to be informative about God's plan for the church. But where do you fit in this plan? Study the following lessons and learn. If you have an open mind and a fertile heart, then your life will never be the same. Let's get started.

Jack Reece

The New International Version of the Bible was used in the preparation of this booklet.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The dictionary offers multiple definitions for the word “church”. One such example for “church” is “a building for public and especially Christian worship.” This study will reveal “church” is much more than a building. It’s somewhat like the difference between a house and a home. A house is a structure, but a home would be the people who reside in the structure. Let’s see what the New Testament says about “church”.

I. THE CHURCH IS PEOPLE

1. Letters are written to people.

a. 1 Corinthians 1:2 To the _____ in Corinth...

b. Galatians 1:2 To the _____ in Galatia:

c. Romans 16:16 All the _____ send greetings.

2. People experience the following. . .

a. Acts 5:11 Great _____ seized the whole _____.

b. Acts 8:1 A great _____ broke out against the _____
and all except the apostles were _____.

c. Acts 14:27 On arriving there, they _____ the church
_____ and reported all that God had done. . .

II. THE CHURCH IS GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE

1. 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a _____ people, a royal _____
a holy _____, a _____ belonging to God . . .

2. Titus 2:14 Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to
purify for himself a people _____.

3. 1 Thessalonians 1:4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has

_____.

4. Ephesians 1:4 For he _____ us in him (Christ) before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

III. THE CHURCH IS . . .

1. The household (family) of God

a. 1 Timothy 3:15 If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's _____ which is the _____ of the living God . . .

b. Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of _____.

2. The body of Christ

a. Ephesians 1:22, 23 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the _____ which is his _____ . . .

b. Romans 12:5 So in Christ we who are many form one _____, and each member _____ to all the _____.

3. The church is also referred to as . . .

a. believers Acts 2:44; 4:32

b. disciples Acts 9:1; 11:26; 13:52; 14:28

c. members Romans 12:4, 5; Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:15

TO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST JESUS

THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS, FOREVER AND EVER. Eph. 3:21

WHEN AND WHERE DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?

Everything both good and bad had a beginning. God created all things good—very good. So it was with the church. The New Testament church originated long ago in the mind of God and unfolded in history in the fullness of time. (Galatians 4:4).

I. THE CHURCH ORIGINATED IN THE MIND OF GOD

1. Ephesians 1:4, 10 For he (God) chose us in him (Christ) before _____
_____ to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through _____ . . .
2. Vs. 10 “to be put into effect when the times will have reached their _____ to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one _____, even _____.”

II. THE CHURCH WAS PROPHESED CENTURIES IN ADVANCE

1. Micah 4:1 In the _____ days the mountain of the Lord’s _____ (“house”-KJV) will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and _____ will stream to it.
2. Micah 4:2 Many _____ will come and say, “Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from _____.

(Special note: The Old Testament kingdom was a physical kingdom and was ruled by kings Saul, David, Solomon and subsequent other kings over Israel and Judah. God promised King David there would be an eternal kingdom that would never end. The Jews anticipated another earthly, physical kingdom, but the eternal kingdom would be spiritual. (cf. 2 Sam. 7:8-16; Psalm 89:3-4, 35-36)

III. THE KINGDOM WAS PREACHED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST

1. Matthew 3:1, 2 John the Baptist preached _____ for the kingdom of _____ is near.

2. Remember: John preached the kingdom is near but his audience (Jews) is thinking of an earthly kingdom like King David's kingdom of old.

IV. THE KINGDOM (CHURCH) WAS PROMISED BY JESUS

1. Matthew 16:18, 19 Peter confessed Christ as the son of God, then Jesus says, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build _____ . . .

vs. 19 I will give you the keys of the _____ of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

2. Matthew 16:21 From that time Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to _____ and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

V. THIS KINGDOM WAS USHERED IN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST IN JERUSALEM

1. Mark 9:1 And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some of you who are standing here will not _____ before they see the _____ come with _____." (The kingdom would come with power in their lifetime.)

2. Read Luke 24:45-49 "repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all _____, beginning at _____".

vs. 49 "stay in the city until you have been clothed with _____ from on high."

3. Acts 1:4, 5 On one occasion Jesus told his disciples do not leave _____

but _____ for the gift my Father promised... John baptized with water, but in a _____ you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

4. Acts 2:1-5 On the day of _____ the disciples were all together in one place. Vs. 4 All of them were filled with the _____ and spoke in tongues (languages) because people from all nations were in Jerusalem.

5. Peter and the eleven disciples filled with the Holy Spirit preached Jesus as the son of God and resurrected savior. Jesus is both Lord and Christ (Messiah). When those Jews from every nation heard this message, they were cut to the heart and asked what they should do. (They had crucified the long awaited Messiah.) vs. 38 Peter told them to

_____ and be _____ and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. vs. 41 Those who accepted Peter's message were baptized and were added to their number that day. vs. 47 And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being _____.

SPECIAL NOTE: Congratulations you have just completed the most difficult lesson in this booklet. It's a lot to absorb but very important. Hang in there with your study as it will be well worth your effort. Keep working, learning and growing.

LET'S REVIEW: The long awaited eternal kingdom was to . . .

1. come with power
2. power would come with the Holy Spirit
3. the disciples were waiting in Jerusalem for the power of the Holy Spirit
4. the Holy Spirit came on the feast day of Pentecost in Jerusalem
5. Jews from all nations were there
6. repentance and forgiveness of sins were preached in Jesus' name
7. 3000 obeyed and became part of the long awaited kingdom

CONCLUSION: When and where? The church (spiritual kingdom) began approximately 30 AD in the city of Jerusalem. The church has since spread into all the world. I pray you are part of the church.

WHO OWNS THE CHURCH?

Meet Diotrephes! Diotrephes is introduced in 3 John 9 as one “who loved to be first,” and is mentioned but one time in the Bible. He seemingly tried to control, dominate, and “run” the church like a personal possession. No person or committee has the right to act as if the church is a personal possession. This was not and is not God’s intention. The church is divine and was conceived by, born of and belongs to God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.

I. GOD THE FATHER

1. 1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of _____ in Corinth . . .
2. 1 Corinthians 10:32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the _____ of _____ . . .
3. Galatians 1:13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I _____ the church of _____ and tried to destroy it.
4. 1 Timothy 3:5 Speaking of overseers of the church: If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of _____?

II. JESUS THE SON

1. Matthew 16:18 Jesus promised, “I will build _____.”
2. Acts 20:28 Jesus bought the church with his _____ . . .
3. Colossians 1:18 Jesus is the _____ of the body, the church;
4. Ephesians 5:23 Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the _____.
5. Ephesians 2:20 Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the _____.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT

(The church would not have been born without the agency of the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit was instrumental in the creation of the world [Gen. 1:1] the Spirit was essential to the church's birth.) John 3:5, 6

1. Luke 4:1 Jesus, full of the _____, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert . . .
2. Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the _____ and _____ and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.
3. Acts 1:2 Until the day he (Jesus) was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the _____ to the apostles he had chosen.
4. Acts 1:8 Jesus told his apostles they would receive _____ when the _____ came on them . . .
5. Acts 5:32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the _____, whom God has given to those who _____ him.
6. Acts 2:38 Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the _____.
7. Romans 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the _____, if the _____ of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the _____ he does not belong to Christ.

WHO MAKES THE RULES?

Rules, rules and more rules! There are federal and state laws and county and city regulations. Schools have codes of conduct and most civic organizations are governed by their by-laws. Even families have standards (rules) for their households.

Rules are everywhere! But where would we be without rules? Rules are not always appreciated, but they are essential for the well-being of society. God thought so. Rules began in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve.

The church also has a constitution, a standard of conduct and rules to govern. Who made these rules? God! God's church is governed by God's rules.

I. JESUS WAS AUTHORIZED TO SPEAK ON GOD'S BEHALF

1. John 12:49, 50 For I did not speak of my own accord, but the _____ who sent me commanded me _____ to say and _____ to say it.

I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the _____ has told me to _____.

2. John 3:34 For the one whom God has sent _____ the words of _____,

3. Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, All _____ in _____ and on _____ has been given to me.

4. John 6:63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The _____ I have spoken to you are _____ and they are _____.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED GOD'S TRUTH TO THE APOSTLES

1. John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of _____, comes, he will guide you into _____ truth;

2. John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you _____ things and will _____ you of everything I have said to you.

3. Galatians 1:11, 12 I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that _____ made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by _____ from Jesus Christ.
4. Ephesians 3:5 (The revelation of Jesus Christ) was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy _____ and _____.

III. THE CHURCH FOLLOWS THE WORD OF GOD, THE BIBLE

1. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for _____, _____, _____ and training in _____, so that the man of God may be thoroughly _____ for every good work.
2. 1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of _____.
3. Acts 17:11 The Bereans received the message with great _____ and _____ the Scriptures every day . . .
4. 1 Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the _____ and _____ word of God.
5. Matthew 4:4 Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of _____.

God is our creator, and we are made in his image. He knows what is best for us, and everything he speaks is for our own ultimate good. God's church lives by God's rules.

IS "CHURCH" IMPORTANT OR ESSENTIAL?

"I realize church is important but is it really essential? Do I have to belong to the church to be saved? I have a personal relationship with Jesus, but I'm not into church. I don't think I need the church." Consequently, some say "yes" to Jesus and "no" to church. Please understand the church of God is not optional in God's plan, but is an integral, vital, essential part.

I. CHURCH IS THE FAMILY OF GOD

1. Matthew 1:21 . . . Jesus will save _____ from their sins.
2. Ephesians 3:14, 15 For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom his _____ in heaven and on earth derives its name.
3. 1 Timothy 3:15 If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's _____ (family) which is the church of the living God . . .
4. Can you imagine anyone saying, "I'm glad I was born, but I don't want to be part of a family?" When we are "born again" as Christians we are added to the family of God, the church. Because we are united with Christ, we are related to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ's family—the church. The church is our spiritual family.

II. CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

1. 1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the _____ of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.
2. Romans 12:5 . . . so in Christ we who are many form one _____, and each member belongs to all the others.
3. Imagine being a specific part (eye, nose, heart, lungs, etc.) of the physical body and refusing to function with the body. Please read 1 Corinthians 12:14-20

III. JESUS DIED FOR THE CHURCH

1. Titus 2:14 Christ gave _____ for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his _____, eager to do what is good.
2. Acts 20:28 . . . Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own _____.
3. Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ _____ the church and _____ up for her . . .
4. Would you be willing to die for your family? Your country? We put our lives on the line only for things we love and that really matter. Jesus died for the church because the church really matters! Does the church matter to you?

IV. GOD IS GLORIFIED THROUGH THE CHURCH

1. Ephesians 3:21 To him be glory in the _____ and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever!
2. John 8:54 Jesus replied, If I glorify myself, my glory means _____. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.
3. Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let _____ light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise (glorify) your _____ in heaven.
4. Romans 15:5, 6 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may _____ the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH IS THE FAMILY OF GOD, THE BLOOD-BOUGHT BODY OF CHRIST, WHO GLORIFIES GOD WITH THEIR LIVES. GOD WANTS YOU TO BE PART OF IT.

WHY DO I NEED TO BE PART OF THE CHURCH?

“I’m so busy and don’t need another obligation. Between work, family and my already crowded schedule, I don’t have time to join a church.” Sound familiar? Maybe you have experienced these feelings.

The global pandemic has not helped! The pandemic accelerated a convenient alternative to church that requires little time and involvement. Virtual church! Virtual church has raised the question in the minds of some, maybe many, if there is any longer a need for an in-person church.

Listen. God’s church on earth can do something for you and your family that your computer can’t. God’s church is an ally in the midst of a corrupt world. Yes, we desperately need to be part of God’s family, the church.

I. THE PRESENT WORLD IS CORRUPT AND TEMPORARY

(There are many good and wonderful people in our world, but there are also others who are detrimental to society. Pay attention to the daily news. Crime, corruption, dishonesty, greed, abuse, rape, robbery, murder, human trafficking, etc. Then add all confusion over gender equality and identity, racism and political philosophies. I’m sure you get the picture.)

1. Galatians 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present

_____ , according to the will of our God and Father . . .

2. 1 John 5:19 We know that we are the children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the _____.

3. 1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires _____
_____ but the man who does the will of God _____.”

II. GOD CALLS HIS CHURCH TO BE DIFFERENT

1. Romans 12:2 Do not _____ any longer to the pattern of this world, but be _____ by the renewing of your mind . . .

2. 1 Peter 1 :15, 16 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all _____;
for it is written: Be _____, because I am _____.
3. 2 Corinthians 6:16, 17 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore _____ from them and be _____, says the Lord.
Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.

III. GOD'S CHURCH SEEKS MAN'S GOOD

1. **By identifying our purpose:** Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: _____ God, and keep his _____, for this is the _____ duty of man. For God will bring every _____ into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.
2. **By giving direction:** John 14:6 Jesus answered, I am the _____ and the _____ and the _____. No one comes to the Father except through me.
John 8:12 Jesus said ... I am the _____ of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in _____, but will have the light of _____.
3. **By offering stability in a chaotic world:** Hebrews 6:19 We have this _____ as an _____ for the soul, firm and _____...
4. **By offering opportunities for spiritual growth for you and yours:** Ephesians 6:1-4 Children, _____ your parents in the Lord, for this is right. _____ your father and mother ... Vs. 4 ... bring them up in the _____ and _____ of the Lord.

DO I HAVE TO "GO TO CHURCH"?

The answer is "No"! Do I have to go to school? Do I have to go to work? Do I have to save for retirement? No! But we understand education, work, and thoughtfully managing our income is in our best interest. Likewise as adults we are not forced to "go to church" (assemble/gather with Christians), but again it's in our best interest. Let's remember that God always seeks man's best interest.

Collin Hansen and Jonathan Leeman co-authored the book, *Rediscover Church*. Hansen, in an interview, made a candid statement pertaining to church. He said, "A Christian without a church is a Christian in trouble." We concur! But why? Let's notice what the Holy Spirit says in the book of Hebrews.

I. NOTICE WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS (Some Jewish Christians were in danger of renouncing their faith in Jesus and returning to Judaism due to persecution.)

1. Hebrews 2:1 We must pay more _____, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not _____ away.

2. Hebrews 3:1, 7, 13 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on _____, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

Vs. 7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you hear his voice, do not _____ your _____ as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert . . . (Vs. 13) But _____ one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be _____ by sin's deceitfulness.

3. Hebrews 10:23-25, 35 Let us _____ unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may _____ one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up _____ together, as some are in the _____ of doing, but let us _____ one another... (Vs. 35) So do not _____ away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

II. STAY CONNECTED TO JESUS AND HIS CHURCH FOR . . .

1. **Encouragement:** Hebrews 3:12, 13 See to it, _____, that none of you has a sinful heart that turns away from the living God. But _____ one another daily . . .
2. **Relationships:** Hebrews 2:11-13 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same _____. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them _____. He says, I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the _____ I will sing your praises. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again he says, Here am I, and the _____ God has given me.
3. **Spiritual growth:** Hebrews 5:12-14 In fact, though by this time you ought to be _____, you need someone to _____ you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk not solid food. (Read vs. 13, 14)
4. **Accountability:** Hebrews 10:32, 33 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood _____ by _____ with those who were so treated . . .
5. **Stability:** Hebrews 13:5, 6 Keep yourselves free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God said, _____ will I leave you; _____ will I forsake you. So we say with confidence, The _____ is my _____; I will not be _____. What can man do to me?
6. **Ultimately our salvation:** Hebrews 2:3 How shall we _____ if we ignore such a great salvation? (Do I have to go to church? Why would you not??)

WHAT'S THE DEAL ABOUT CHURCH FELLOWSHIP?

God said it is not good for man to be alone. We are created as social creatures and need and desire the company of others—some more so than others. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10. We need one another and are most vulnerable to Satan's attacks when alone.

Consequently, some seek fellowship in hunting and fishing clubs, civic organizations, booster clubs, or maybe even at the local bar. But God, our creator, knows our needs and provides for them. God provided the **church** for Christian fellowship. Christians need the fellowship of other Christians!

I. THE POWER OF FELLOWSHIP

1. Fellowship can be **negative**: Many have been led astray by being with the wrong people in wrong places. 1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be misled: Bad company

_____ good _____.

2. God's plan is **positive** and for our good. Christians inspire others to do better.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore _____ one another and _____ each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Ephesians 5:8-10 For you were once darkness, but now you are _____ in the Lord. Live as children of _____. (for the fruit of the light consists in all _____, _____ and _____) and find out what pleases the Lord.

II. THE PLACE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP— CHURCH

1. The **church** at Ephesus: Ephesians 4:32 Be _____ and _____ to one another, _____ each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
2. The **church** at Corinth: 1 Corinthians 14:12 So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that _____ the church.
3. The **church** at Rome: Romans 14:19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what

leads to _____ and to mutual _____.

4. The **church** in Jerusalem: Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' _____ and _____, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

III. THE PURPOSE OF FELLOWSHIP

(Read the following verses, think about the purpose of fellowship and give your answers.)

1. Philippians 2:3, 4 _____
2. Galatians 6:2 _____
3. Ephesians 4:2 _____
4. Colossians 3:13 _____
5. Romans 12:10 _____
6. Hebrews 3:13 _____

III. THE PERSON WHO UNITES CHRISTIANS IN FELLOWSHIP

1. 1 John 1:3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you may have _____ with us. And our fellowship is with the _____ and with his Son, _____.
2. 1 John 1:6, 7 If we claim we have _____ with him yet walk in the _____, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the _____, as he is in the light, we have _____ with _____, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP IS DESIGNED BY GOD FOR OUR GOOD

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF GOD'S CHURCH ?

What is the mission of God's church? Opinions vary! The internet provides various answers to this question, but please exercise caution. The internet is often (not always) a great source of information, but it may also be a source of misinformation. God's word, the Bible, is the reliable standard that governs the church and accurately identifies the mission of God's church. God's mission for His church was to spread the good news (gospel) of Jesus Christ and thereby make disciples of all nations. This was to be the heartbeat of the church! Let's try to see the heart of God, the heart of Jesus and the hearts of His early disciples (church) in order to see the mission of His church.

I. THE HEART OF GOD---SALVATION FOR ALL

1. 1 Timothy 2:4 (God) who wants all men to be _____ and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
2. 2 Peter 3:9 . . . He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to _____ but everyone to come to repentance.
3. John 3 :16, 17 For God so _____ the _____ that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not _____ but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to _____ the world, but to _____ the world through him.

II. THE HEART OF JESUS---SACRIFICE FOR ALL

1. Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered _____, so that by the grace of God he might taste _____ for _____.
2. John 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his _____ for the sheep.
3. 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ _____ for sins once for all, the righteous for the

unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to _____ in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

III. THE HEART OF THE CHURCH---SHARE GOD'S LOVE WITH ALL

1. Mark 1:17 Jesus told his disciples to follow him and he would make them _____.
2. Mark 3:14 Jesus appointed 12 apostles that they might be _____ and that he might send them out to _____.
3. Matthew 28:18-20 After Jesus' resurrection he said to his disciples ... All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make _____ of all nations, _____ them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and _____ them to _____ everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
4. Acts 8:4 The early church, even though scattered by persecution and commanded by civil authorities not to preach Christ, _____ the word _____ they went.
5. 2 Timothy 2:2 The apostle Paul told Timothy--The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses _____ to reliable men who will also be qualified to _____ others. Timothy was to teach and train others so that the good news of Jesus continued to be passed to others, and others, and still others.
6. Ephesians 3:10 God's intent was that through the _____, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known . . .

THE MISSION AND HEARTBEAT OF THE CHURCH IS MAKING DISCIPLES FOR JESUS IN ALL NATIONS

WHAT ELSE DOES THE CHURCH DO ?

The church tries to follow Jesus' example of service. Christians serve the Lord Jesus by serving others. (Matthew 25:40). "Church" is not a dormant body of believers but a vibrant serving body. (Matthew 5:16). Therefore disciples of Jesus will serve others in some capacity according to their abilities and opportunities.

I. JESUS LED BY HIS EXAMPLE OF SERVICE

1. Matthew 20:28 Just as the Son of Man did not come to be _____, but to _____, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
2. Philippians 2:7 But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a _____, being made in human likeness.
3. Luke 4:18, 19 Jesus said, The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the _____. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the _____ and recovery of sight for the _____, to release the _____, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
4. John 13:5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to _____ his disciples' feet, drying them with a towel that was wrapped around him.

II. DISCIPLES FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE OF SERVICE

1. Luke 6:40 A student (disciple) is not above his _____, but everyone who is fully _____ will be like his _____.
2. Matthew 20:25-26 Jesus called them together and said, You know that the rulers of Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with _____. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you _____ be your _____ . . .

3. Acts 9:36 In Joppa there was a _____ named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the _____.
4. Acts 11:29 (There was a severe famine.) The _____, each according to his _____, decided to provide _____ for the brothers living in Judea.
5. Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have _____, let us do _____ to _____ people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

III. SOME EXAMPLES OF SERVICE RENDERED BY DISCIPLES

1. Matthew 25:35, 36 I was hungry and you _____
 I was thirsty and you _____
 I was a stranger and you _____
 I needed clothes and you _____
 I was sick and you _____
 I was in prison and you _____
2. James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after _____ and _____ in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.
3. Galatians 2:10 . . . continue to remember the _____, the very thing I was eager to do.
4. Matthew 5:16 . . . let your _____ shine before men, that they may see your good _____ and praise your _____ in heaven.

GOD HONORS THOSE WHO UNSELFISHLY SERVE OTHERS

WHAT IS GOD'S ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH ?

“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:33). “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” (1 Corinthians 14:40). True to his nature, God provides the organizational structure for his church.

Each congregation is independent and self-governing and is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.” (Ephesians 2:20, 21). Jesus is the head and his headquarters is in heaven rather than on earth. He has given different gifts to members of his body (church) and delegated various responsibilities.

This lesson addresses positions of leadership “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” (Ephesians 4:12). Some of the positions were temporary (e.g., apostles and prophets), others were permanent. God intended for each congregation to have . . .

I. ELDERS (OVERSEERS, BISHOPS, PASTORS)

- 1 Peter 5:1-3 To the _____ among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who will also share in the glory to be revealed:
Be _____ of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as _____ -- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not _____ it over those entrusted to you, but being _____ to the flock.
- Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed _____ for them in _____ church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.
- 1 Timothy 3:1-7 Read the qualifications (qualities of life) for elders.

II. DEACONS (SERVANTS)

- Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the _____ and _____:

2. Acts 6:2-4 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word to wait on tables. Brothers choose _____ from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. (We assume these seven men were “deacons” in the church due to the nature of their work.)
3. 1 Timothy 3:8-13 Read the qualifications (qualities of life) for deacons

III. EVANGELISTS (PREACHERS)

1. Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be _____, and some to be pastors and teachers,
2. 2 Timothy 4:2, 5 _____ the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. (Vs. 5) But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an _____, discharge all the duties of your ministry.
3. Acts 21:8 Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the _____, one of the Seven.

IV. TEACHERS

1. Ephesians 4:11 God gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, and some to be pastors and _____.
2. Hebrews 5:12 In fact, by this time you ought to be _____, ...
3. Matthew 28:18, 19 Christians are to make and baptize disciples in all nations, and _____ them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Teaching the gospel to others is not limited to evangelists in the church but is a privilege for all members of the body, the church, to share the good news of Jesus.)

HOW DO I BECOME PART OF THE CHURCH ?

This is a critically important question. Why? Because those in the church are those who have been forgiven, redeemed and saved from their sins. Jesus purchased the church with his blood. (Acts 20:28; Revelation 1:5). He is the Savior of his body, the church. (Ephesians 5:23). God rescued his people from the dominion of darkness and brought them into the kingdom of his Son. (Colossians 1:13, 14). Saved people comprise the church.

I. HOW PEOPLE BECAME PART OF THE CHURCH

- 1. The church at Corinth:** Acts 18:1 Paul left Athens and went to _____
Acts 18:5 When Silas and Timothy joined Paul in Corinth, Paul devoted himself
exclusively to _____, testifying that Jesus was the _____.
Acts 18:8 Crispus and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the
Corinthians who heard him _____ and were _____.
- 2. The church at Philippi:** Acts 16:12 From there we traveled to _____ . . .
Acts 16:13-15 On the Sabbath Paul went down to the river and found a place where
people were praying. Paul and his companions began to speak to women who had
gathered there and one woman who listened to them was _____. She was
a worshiper of God, and the Lord opened her heart to _____ to Paul's
message. She and her household were _____.
Acts 16:25-33 Paul and Silas also preached to a prison guard in Philippi, who was
about to commit suicide. Paul stopped him. The prison jailer asked what to do to be
_____. They responded, _____ in the Lord Jesus, and you
will be _____. Then they spoke the _____ of the Lord to him and
to others in the house. Then _____ he and all his family were
_____. The jailer was filled with _____ because he had come to
believe in God—he and his whole family.

3. **The church in Jerusalem:** Acts 2:5 Jews from every nation were staying in _____ . Peter preached that Jesus of Nazareth was a man who was accredited by God by miracles, wonders and signs (2:22); was crucified and was raised from the dead (2:23, 24). Peter said, God raised him (Jesus) from the dead and we are all _____ of the fact. (2:32) Jesus is now exalted to the right hand of God. Jesus whom you crucified is both _____ and _____. (2:36). When the Jews heard this they were cut to the heart and said to the apostles, What shall we do? (2:37) Peter said, _____ and be _____ every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins ...(2:38) Those who _____ his _____ were baptized, and about three _____ were added to their number. (2:41).

II. SUMMARY OF HOW PEOPLE WERE SAVED AND ADDED TO THE LORD'S CHURCH

1. They heard the story of Jesus. Jesus, the Son of God, was crucified, raised from the dead by the power of God, and reigns in heaven as Lord and Christ (Messiah).
2. They believed the message that was preached and responded accordingly.
3. They repented of (turned away from) their sins and turned to God's way of life.
4. They confessed their faith in Christ and were baptized.
5. They were added to the number of believers (the church).
6. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching; continued in fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer. (Acts 2:42-47). In other words, they honored their commitment to following Christ, lived and grew as Christians, and preached the good news of Jesus wherever they went. (Acts 8:4).

FOLLOWING JESUS AND BECOMING PART OF HIS BODY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION ANYONE CAN MAKE

WHAT IS THE DESTINY OF GOD'S CHURCH ?

Christians understand life on this earth is temporary. “. . . What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” (James 4:14). Humans are mortal (subject to death), and then we pass away. Death is both undeniable and inevitable. What then? That's a very important question. What does God say about life after death for Christians—the church?

I. A CHRISTIAN'S HOPE TRANSCENDS DEATH

1. 1 Corinthians 15:19 If only for this _____ we have hope in Christ, we are to be _____ more than all men.
2. 2 Corinthians 5:1 Now we know that if the _____ tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an _____ house in heaven, not built by human hands.
3. Titus 3:7 So that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the _____ of _____ life.
4. Matthew 5:12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in _____,
5. Romans 8:17, 18 Now if we are children, then we are _____--heirs of God, and _____ with Christ . . . (Vs. 18) I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the _____ that will be revealed in us.

II. JESUS PROMISED TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR HIS DISCIPLES

1. John 14:1-3 Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many _____; if it were not so, I would have told you.

I am going there to _____ a _____ for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

2. 1 Peter 1:3, 4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a _____ through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an _____ that can never _____, _____ or _____ --kept in _____ for you.

III. JESUS WILL RETURN AND TAKE HIS PEOPLE HOME

1. **Now we must patiently wait:** Philippians 3:20, 21 But our citizenship is in _____. And we eagerly _____ a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our _____ so that they will be like his _____ body.

Titus 2:13 While we _____ for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ . . .

2. **But he is coming back:** 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord himself will come down from _____, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and left will be caught up together with them in the _____ to meet the Lord in the _____. And so we will be with the Lord _____. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Hebrews 12:23 To the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

WILL HEAVEN BE YOUR HOME? I CERTAINLY HOPE SO!