

The Church – A Bible Study

Below is a list, in the order that they appear, of verses in the New Testament that specifically mention the church.

The Church is not what you or I have always thought it was, or assumed it was, or wished or hoped it was. The Church is what God says it is, and we can find what God says it is in the Bible.

Jesus said, “you must be born again.” And St Paul said that when you receive Christ you become “a new creation”. When you are born, you are, by definition, a baby. And like a brand-new baby in the natural realm, every new Christian, one who has been “born again” in the spiritual realm, needs a family to survive and thrive. The church is God’s family. A church is not a building. It is a group of people. The church should be a healthy family for God’s children. A healthy baby will thrive, and grow, and become all he or she is meant to be when connected to a healthy family.

So, what is a church? What does a church do? What does the Bible tell us about “the church”?

- Jesus is the head of the church (world-wide and local) and He will build His own church, by His power, for His glory, according to His plans. (see Ex 25:9, Num 8:4, Josh 22:28, 1 Chr 28:11,19, Heb 8:5, etc)

Mat 16:18 - I will build My church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

- The organized, gathered, local church provides a moral compass to the people of the church, and helps to protect relationships of the people in the church.

Mat 18:17 - If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

- The church welcomes unbelievers. The Lord “adds” unbelievers, who become believers, to the church family.

Acts 2:46 - They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity —

Acts 2:47 - all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

- In the church, we can witness God working in other believers’ lives and learn. The Lord’s dealings with one person in the church teach and lead others in the church.

Acts 5:11 - And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

- It’s a place where believers can congregate and identify with each other. People in the church can be known and identified, otherwise they could not be found and persecuted.

Acts 8:1 - And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

- The church meets in large and small groups, in the church sanctuary and in homes (see Acts 2:46).

Acts 8:3 - Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.

- The church in one location can and should reach out and minister to churches in other locations. The "mother church" in Jerusalem oversaw and helped all the churches everywhere.

Acts 11:22 - When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

- One of the main purposes of the church is to teach the believers the truths of God's Word. The believers assemble to receive teaching.

Acts 11:26 - Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people.

- The church stands out and stands against evil. Not everyone loves the church.

Acts 12:1 - About that time King Herod Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church.

- The church gathers in focused prayer, and the believers' prayer power is increased exponentially.

Acts 12:5 - while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.

- The five-fold ministers gather together in the church and together, in agreement and cooperation, they bring focused growth and increased vision and anointing.

Acts 13:1 - Among the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch of Syria were Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul.

Acts 13:2 - One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them."

Acts 13:3 - So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way.

- The church appoints, trains, and prays for leaders.

Acts 14:23 - Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

- Shares exciting God-stories.

Acts 14:27 - Upon arriving in Antioch, they called the church together and reported everything God had done through them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, too.

- Brings joy to the believers.

Acts 15:3 - The church sent the delegates to Jerusalem, and they stopped along the way in Phoenicia and Samaria to visit the believers. They told them — much to everyone's joy — that the Gentiles, too, were being converted.

Acts 15:4 - When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them.

- Supports and sends out leaders to work for Jesus.

Acts 15:22 - Then the apostles and elders together with the whole church in Jerusalem chose delegates, and they sent them to Antioch of Syria with Paul and Barnabas to report on this decision. The men chosen were two of the church leaders — Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas.

- Keeps track of leaders and holds them accountable.

Acts 18:22 - The next stop was at the port of Caesarea. From there he (Paul) went up and visited the church at Jerusalem and then went back to Antioch.

- Leads and feeds and protects the people of the church.

Acts 20:17 - when we landed at Miletus, Paul sent a message to the elders of the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him.

Acts 20:28 – (Paul told the elders) guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock — His church, purchased with His own blood — over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.

Acts 20:29 - I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock.

- Serves the people of the church in many practical, meaningful ways.

Rom 16:1 - I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

- Knows the people, loves the people, gathers the people, and wins unchurched unbelievers to Christ.

Rom 16:5 - give my greetings to the church that meets in their home. Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person from the province of Asia to become a follower of Christ.

- Speaks as a group and loves people as a group.

Rom 16:23 - Gaius says hello to you. He is my host and also serves as host to the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.

- Gives believers an identity, helps believers to know who they are and to whom they belong.

1 Cor 1:2 - I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be His own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as He did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

- Teaches the believers a consistent, reliable, relevant, applicable body of truth.

1 Cor 4:17 - I have sent Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of how I follow Christ Jesus, just as I teach in all the churches wherever I go.

- Can give direction, wisdom and judgment to believers when facing difficult situations and decisions.

1 Cor 6:4 - If you have legal disputes about such matters, why go to outside judges who are not respected by the church?

- Churches face continual questions about how to apply Scriptures to modern culture, and the leaders of the church provide guidance to the people as God leads them by the Spirit and by the Word.

1 Cor 7:17 - Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches.

- We should consider the opinions and feelings of the church when we act.

1 Cor 10:31 - whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Cor 10:32 - Don't give offense to Jews or Gentiles or the church of God.

- A church is not perfect. It is not full of perfect people. But we work together to solve our problems.

1 Cor 11:18 - I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it.

1 Cor 11:19 - But, of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God's approval will be recognized!

1 Cor 11:22 - What? Don't you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God's church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this!

- The church is designed by God and given order by God Himself. Each of us plays an important part.

1 Cor 12:28 - Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages.

- Some members of the church have gifts from God to strengthen the entire church.

1 Cor 14:4 - A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church.

1 Cor 14:5 - I wish you could all speak in tongues, but even more I wish you could all prophesy. For prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues, unless someone interprets what you are saying so that the whole church will be strengthened.

1 Cor 14:12 - Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church.

- Those in the church should seek wisdom from God to find how they can best bless the church.

1 Cor 14:19 - in a church meeting I would rather speak five understandable words to help others than ten thousand words in an unknown language.

- Every individual in the church is at a different place in their journey and has different needs. We should be mindful, as much as possible, of their needs.

1 Cor 14:23 - if unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your church meeting and hear everyone speaking in an unknown language, they will think you are crazy

1 Cor 14:28 - if no one is present who can interpret, they must be silent in your church meeting and speak in tongues to God privately.

- Every church occupies its own time, place and culture and must apply Scriptures to their situation.

1 Cor 14:34 - The women (wives) should keep quiet in the churches, for they are not authorized to speak, but should take a secondary and subordinate place, just as the Law also says. [Gen. 3:16.]

1 Cor 14:35 - But if there is anything they want to learn, they should ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to talk in church [for her to usurp and exercise authority over men (their husbands) in the church].

- The church sometimes makes enemies.

1 Cor 15:9 - I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church.

- The church gathers people into small, intimate groups.

1 Cor 16:19 - The churches here in the province of Asia send greetings in the Lord, as do Aquila and Priscilla and all the others who gather in their home for church meetings.

- Gathers believers into large, cohesive groups and into larger, distributed groups.

2 Cor 1:1 - This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. I am writing to God's church in Corinth and to all of His holy people throughout Greece:

- Sometimes is persecuted, but it always stands strong and endures.

Gal 1:13 - You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion — how I violently persecuted God's church. I did my best to destroy it.

- The church belongs to and submits to Jesus, trusts in Him, and reaps the benefits of being one with Him.

Eph 1:22 - God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church.

- The church, in all its glory, is used by God to teach the angels the power of His love and grace poured out through the Gospel, the Good News of God's merciful offer of salvation through Christ.

Eph 3:10 - God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display His wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

- Gives glory to Jesus throughout all the ages, as long as the world stands and beyond.

Eph 3:21 - Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

- The church submits to Jesus, loves Him, trusts Him, and is blessed and helped by Him, just as godly husbands and wives submit to and love and respect one another.

Eph 5:23 - For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of His body, the church.

Eph 5:24 - As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

Eph 5:25 - For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up His life for her

Eph 5:26 - to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.

- Is a beautiful, glorious, holy church, pleasing to God.

Eph 5:27 - He did this to present her to Himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.

- Is fed and lovingly taken care of by Jesus.

Eph 5:29 - No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church.

Eph 5:32 - This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.

- Is hated and persecuted by the Devil and by evil people.

Php 3:6 - I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church.

- Supports other ministries outside the church.

Php 4:15 - As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this.

- Loves, adores, submits to and holds fast to Jesus.

Col 1:18 - Christ is also the head of the church, which is His body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So He is first in everything.

- Sacrifices for and serves the people of the church, as Jesus did.

Col 1:24 - I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for His body, the church.

- Meets in homes and other intimate locations.

Col 4:15 - Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house.

- Shares truth from God's Word together.

Col 4:16 - After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them.

- Prays for, blesses and teaches the people.

1 Thess 1:1 - This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May God give you grace and peace.

2 Thess 1:1 - This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The church's leaders manage the church well, and take care of the people of the church.

1 Tim3:5 - if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?

- Teaches people how to behave in Christian gatherings and how to live a godly life among themselves.

1 Tim3:15 - if I am delayed, you will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.

- As a group, takes care of destitute people and teaches its members to do so for their own family.

1 Tim5:16 - If a woman who is a believer has relatives who are widows, she must take care of them and not put the responsibility on the church. Then the church can care for the widows who are truly alone.

- Gathers the believers in small, intimate, safe groups.

Phm 1:2 - to our sister Apphia, and to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church that meets in your house.

- Welcomes the presence of Jesus and worships Him.

Heb 2:12 - I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

- The church is a family of God's firstborn children who focuses on Jesus and on God Himself.

Heb 12:23 - You have come to the assembly (and church) of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God Himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.

- Prays for the sick and believes for healing.

Jas 5:14 - Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord.

- Provides comfort and refuge for those who live in a hostile environment.

1 Pe 5:13 - Your sister church here in Babylon sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark.

- The church loves one another and gives to, helps and works with the ministers of the church.

3 Jn 1:6 - They have told the church here of your loving friendship. Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God.

- Welcomes true men and women of God appointed to lead and feed them.

3 Jn 1:9 - I wrote to the church about this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be the leader, refuses to have anything to do with us.

- Answers to God and is subject to the wise, strong, holy leadership of God's appointed people.

3 Jn 1:10 - When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing and the evil accusations he is making against us. Not only does he refuse to welcome the traveling teachers, he also tells others not to help them. And when they do help, he puts them out of the church.

- Is held by Jesus and led by His appointed servants, who provide wise leadership and a strong, godly example for the believers.

Rev 2:1 - Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Rev 2:8 - And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Rev 2:12 - And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Rev 2:18 - And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

Rev 3:1 - And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Rev 3:7 - And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Rev 3:14 - And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;