

*The Place of Growth*  
**Lesson 5 –The Church**

**2 Peter 3:18** – *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.  
To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.*

**Thesis:** This lesson is designed to teach the believer what the New Testament local Church is and what it is not.

**Memory Verse: Matthew 16:18** – And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

**1. What The Local Church Is Not**

A. It is not a \_\_\_\_\_.

- The word Church often gets mistaken for a building in the minds of people, but this is not the meaning of the word as we will see. The Church is not the building, but rather it is the assembling of the body of believers together. If a building were the Church, you could not have Church without a building.

B. It is not a \_\_\_\_\_.

- Some believe only those that are a part of their specific denomination will be in heaven. To them, the Church is their denomination. This is unbiblical because people are not saved by being in a Church, they are saved because they are “in Christ” (**Ephesians 1:1**).

C. It is not a \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

- 1) The Church and state are separate entities. The state is not to have the power to authorize or prohibit the rights within the Church. Jesus distinguished the two spheres of responsibility and His follower’s relationship to each in **Matthew 22:21**.
- 2) The Christian should obey the laws of the land as outlined in Scripture (**Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; Titus 3:1**), but when the laws conflict with the Word of God, there are clear biblical examples of civil disobedience (**Daniel 3, 6; Acts 5:29**).

**2. What Is The Local Church?**

A. The word “Church,” which comes from the Greek word, “ecclesia” meaning “\_\_\_\_\_ ones”, is used 115 times in the N.T. Over 100 times it refers to a local Church or Churches. Ecclesia never refers to a building, denomination, or state Church. The primary sense of the word is the local assembly of believers.

B. The local Church of the New Testament is composed of those who are:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ (**Acts 2:41, 47**)

- a. Some believe you must be a member of their Church in order to be saved. The Bible, on the other hand, teaches salvation is a prerequisite to Church membership.
- b. In this age there are three groups of people in the world: Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God
  - † **1 Corinthians 10:32** – *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God:*
- c. The first two are unsaved; the last one is saved. When a Jew or a Gentile accepts Christ, he is saved, becomes part of the Church, and ceases to be either Jew or Gentile (Jackson, Paul R.).
  - † **Galatians 3:28** - *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

2) \_\_\_\_\_ - (Acts 2:41, Matthew 28:19)

† Acts 2:41 – *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

- a. **Question:** What were they added to? **Answer:** They were added to the \_\_\_\_\_ in Jerusalem.
- b. Clearly you see before they were added to the Church they were saved and baptized. Salvation and baptism came before Church membership, not after.

3) **Organized with Scriptural offices of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Timothy 3:1-13)**

† **Philippians 1:1** – *Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*

- a. The Bible gives 3 different titles for the one office of the Pastor:

i.) \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Peter 5:1-3, Jeremiah 3:15)

† **Ephesians 4:11** - *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

- a.) The Greek word for pastor (Greek: *poimen*), means "shepherd" and is used to denote one who takes care of sheep (**Luke 2:8**).
- b.) The Bible teaches Jesus is the head of the Church and is called the "Chief Shepherd," (**1 Peter 5:4**) and we refer to the Pastor as the "under-shepherd." Christ is the head of the Church, but has placed the Pastor to lead each local Church body.
- c.) The title "pastor" emphasizes his role as the one who cares for, feeds, protects, and comforts God's people.

ii.) \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:4, 6, 22-23, 20:17, 21:18, 1 Tim. 5:1, 19; Titus 1:5)

† **Titus 1:5** – *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:*

- a.) The Greek word for elder is "presbuteros." It refers to an older, wiser or more mature person. However, a young man who shows the characteristics of maturity may fill the office of an elder.
- b.) Timothy was a young Pastor of the Church at Ephesus and Paul says to him:  
† **1 Timothy 4:12** - *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*
- c.) "Elder" emphasizes that the man is spiritually mature among the people of God.

iii.) \_\_\_\_\_ (Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:1-2, Titus 1:7)

- a.) The Greek word for bishop is *episcopos*, which means "overseer." A person in this role leads and gives direction to a work.
- b.) "Bishop" emphasizes the responsibility of the Pastor to guide and direct God's people and oversee the work.
- c.) **Note:** These are not 3 different offices, but rather three different titles that refer to the same office and emphasize the different functions the Pastor is to carry out.

b. **What 3 main responsibilities does the Pastor have according to Acts 20:28-32 and 1 Peter 5:1-3?**

- i.) The Pastor as the Bishop is to take the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church (**Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2**).
- ii.) The Pastor is to \_\_\_\_\_ and strengthen the flock (**Acts 20:29-32**)

- iii.) The Pastor is to \_\_\_\_\_ the flock the Word of God (**Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-2**)
- iv.) The qualifications of a Pastor are listed in **1 Timothy 3:1-7**.
- c. **The Bible gives specific guidelines for selecting Deacons**
  - i.) This office is first seen in **Acts 6:1-6** when the widows were being neglected.
  - ii.) "Deacon" is derived from the Greek diakonos, meaning a \_\_\_\_\_. Their duties are defined by the name "deacon"; they are servants of the Lord through the local Church, to aid the Pastor as the second biblical office in the church. Not only do they aid in physical areas, but in spiritual areas as well. Stephen was a great testimony to this in **Acts 6**.
  - iii.) The qualifications of a deacon are listed in **1 Timothy 3:8-13**.
  - iv.) **Note:** Deacons were not elected to office in the Church until they were needed as seen in **Acts 6:1-6**. You can have a Church without Deacons, but when the need arises they need to be appointed.
- 4) **The Church is made of those who share a common \_\_\_\_\_ (Our Articles of Faith; their Apostles Doctrine)**
  - † **Acts 2:42** – *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*"
  - † **Jude 3**
- 5) **The Church comes together to observe the two \_\_\_\_\_**
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ (**Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41-42**)
    - i.) Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local Church.
    - ii.) The baptism of believers by immersion in water is the biblical pattern. It is a picture of our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ, identifies us with Christ, and joins us to the local Church.
  - b. **The \_\_\_\_\_ - (Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:23-31)**
    - i.) Partaking of bread which representing Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ that was broken for us, and the fruit of the vine represents Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ that was shed for our sins (**Matthew 26:26-27**).
    - ii.) Jesus commands us to observe it in \_\_\_\_\_ of Him (**Luke 22:19-20**). It reminds of Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins (**Luke 22:19**). It \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord's death (**1 Corinthians 11:26**) and anticipates His \_\_\_\_\_ (**1 Cor. 11:26**).
    - iii.) The early Church in the Bible observed the Lord's Supper as a corporate body (**Acts 2:42, 46-47, 20:7-8**). It should only be observed at your local Church.
    - iv.) Only those who are saved are to partake in the Lord's Supper. There should be a solemn self-examination of one's life before Christ before partaking and it is to be done with reverence (**1 Corinthians 11:26**).
    - v.) There should be no unconfessed sin between you and God (**1 Corinthians 11:28, 31**). There should be no ill feelings between you and other members of the Church body (**1 Corinthians 11:28, 31; John 13:34**).
    - vi.) It should be done regularly, but no set time is given in the Scriptures as to how often.
- 6) **The Church is God's vehicle to carry out the Great \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, John 20:21, Acts 1:8)**
  - † **Mark 16:15**- *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*
- 7) **The Church meets at regular times**

- † **Hebrews 10:25** – *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*
- a. Why do we meet on Sundays? (**John 20:19, 26, Acts 20:7, 1Corinthians 16:2**)
  - b. Jesus resurrected from the dead on Sunday. He appeared to His disciples as they were assembled together on Sunday. Then He returned eight days later to meet with His disciples again on Sunday, clearly setting a pattern of assembling on the Lord's Day. The early Church met on Sunday (**Acts 20:7**). The early Church brought their tithes and offerings on the first day of the week (**1Corinthians 16:2**).
  - c. Are Christians to Observe the Sabbath?
    - † **Colossians 2:16-17** - *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*
  - d. Why don't we observe the Sabbath?
    - i.) There is no New Testament command to keep the Sabbath; all 10 commandments are repeated in the NT except for the 4<sup>th</sup> command (to keep the Sabbath); the NT gives no Sabbath day regulations to follow. There are no instructions about behavior on the Sabbath in the NT.
    - ii.) In Acts 15 when the Jerusalem Council decided what would be required of Gentile believers in the church, they did not require them to observe the Sabbath.
    - iii.) The Apostles never commanded anybody to observe the Sabbath. They never chastise anybody for not observing the Sabbath. They never warned believers about Sabbath violations. They never encouraged believers to hold to the Sabbath.
  - e. What about those who say, "I don't have to go to Church to have Church, I can have Church at home, I am the Church. I can worship anywhere I want."
    - i.) The local Church is the people of God, the body of believers congregating and assembling together. The "Church" is not a "Christian" it is the gathering together of Christians. Therefore, a person does not have Church by themselves at home; rather it is when you gather with other believers.
    - ii.) Ask the following to people who make this claim: "Who are the pastor and deacons of your home Church? How many people are saved and baptized at your home Church? How are you actively carrying out the Great Commission throughout the world through your home Church? What missionaries are you sending out and supporting through your home Church? How do you carrying out the observance of ordinances; who do you give their tithes and offerings too, etc." Those who make this statement reject the clear biblical teachings of the Word of God.

### **Conclusion:**

A definition of the local Church is a body of believers, who have been baptized by immersion, having two officers (Pastor & Deacon), autonomous in governing its affairs, and banded together for work, worship, the observance of the ordinances, the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel, and who meet together at regular times. We believe that if a Bible were dropped into the midst of an otherwise unevangelized tribe, and were read and believed, Churches basically like our own would result as men were saved and walked in obedience to the Word of God. In fact, such cases have been reported by missionaries (Jackson, Paul R.).

Homework

# Lesson 5 –The Church

**2 Peter 3:18** – *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Life Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Memory Verse: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 1) How do you know the Church is important to God according to Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 5:25? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Name 3 things a local Church "is not." \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) The word Church comes from the Greek word \_\_\_\_\_ which means the "\_\_\_\_\_."
- 4) What is the primary sense or meaning of the word "ecclesia"? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What three groups of people does Paul refer to in 1Corinthians 10:32? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6) When a Jew or a Gentile is saved, they become a part of what? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) In Acts 2:41, after the people receive Peter's message of salvation, what do they do? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) How many were added to the Church in Jerusalem in Acts 2? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Before the people were "added" to the Church (became members) in Acts 2:41, what two things clearly happened? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) What are the two Scriptural offices of a Church? \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) Who is the "Head" of the Church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) What does the word "Pastor" mean? \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) Who has the Holy Ghost placed to lead each local Church body? \_\_\_\_\_
- 14) What three responsibilities does the Pastor have according to Acts 20:28? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 15) "Deacon" comes from a Greek word "diakonos", meaning \_\_\_\_\_
- 16) What are the two ordinances that the local Church is to observe? \_\_\_\_\_
- 17) According to Matthew 26:26-27, what do the following items symbolize? Bread symbolizes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ; Fruit of the Vine symbolizes: \_\_\_\_\_
- 18) Why do Christians assemble on Sunday? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any questions or comments for your class leaders: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Class leader's signature of completion: \_\_\_\_\_

