

Purpose of the Church



Part 2

Purpose of the Church

Isn't it enough to just go to Exodus? Why should we go to "church" as well?

Is it okay to only join a church group and not go to a service?

What is the purpose of a "little c" church service? Is it necessary, an option, or not useful?

Is being a Christian and attending a church service related? Even though I know in my head it isn't, it sure seems that way...

Could a group of people interacting around a dinner table qualify as a church?



Purpose of the Church

Although we are all the body of Christ, often times I have difficulty dealing with and understanding the “local church” – especially concerning hypocrisy.

I feel like churches today aren't doing what they are supposed to do, but I don't know exactly what they should do.

Can any Christ-followers in community be considered a church?

What should be the goals of the local church? It seems like a lot of churches that I see are floundering from a lack of purpose.

Megachurch vs. small local church – which is really more effective and what are the pros/cons of each?



Purpose of the Church

How does a church remain accessible to new members and still deep enough for people who are lifelong Christians?

Can ministries of the church develop into churches or do they always remain just ministries?

Is the church supposed to feed us or supplement us in our faith?

What role should the church play in the creation of new ministries?

What is the church's role in evangelism?

What is the role of church councils / conventions, both historical and modern?



Purpose of the Church

Should the global or local church take precedence?

Should the pastor have some sort of authority over the lives of the people at the church?

What are the most significant qualifications for a local pastor?
What should his responsibilities be?

Is it healthy to have a set of group leaders or should the church be run by members?

If the church is really necessary, why is there a need for membership?

Should clergy be paid? Why or why not?



Purpose of the Church

I understand certain compensation for work done, but in today's age, at least when it comes to U.S. based "missionaries" and "pastors," is it necessary to have them fully-sponsored financially? What benefit does this present to the church as a whole?

Should we support churches with bad theology?

How do we separate our faith from the shortcomings of the church?



Purpose of the Church

Is “church shopping” appropriate (i.e., finding the church that’s “right for me”)? Is this too individualistic?

How do I know which church is right for me?

If we are supposed to go to church, does it matter what church we go to? Is it okay to leave a church for another?

Are there ever good and biblical reasons to change churches? If so, what are they or why not?

What are the good reasons for churches to split?
Are there any?

Should the churches/denominations try to unite?



Purpose of the Church

Does the disunity of the church (many denominations) post a threat to the Christian name? Is it a big setback in the sense that it goes against how the church is the body of Christ? Would Jesus be okay with all of the denominations?

Why does the church set up unrealistic ideas and rules for daily life and interactions between the opposite sex? It feels like we're being set up to fail.

Define and explore the word "ekklesia" and how the purpose of the church has changed over time.



Purpose of the Church

The Subject We Are NOT Discussing: The Universal Church

An Enduring Church

Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Matthew 16:17-18



Purpose of the Church

The Subject We Are NOT Discussing: The Universal Church

The Body of Christ

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks-slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13



Purpose of the Church

The Subject We Are NOT Discussing: The Universal Church

The Dwelling Place of God's Spirit

They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were being done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes, and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47



Purpose of the Church

Evidences of the Local Church in the Scriptures

Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35

Hebrews 10:24-25

1 Timothy 3. Church structure is forming.

Revelation 2-4. All passages addressed to specific local churches

Acts 6. They established a criterion for which widows received aid.

Acts 15 The church gathered to decide together a specific course of action



Purpose of the Church

Bottom Line: The local church is a given!

“The local Church implies the universal, but the universal no less implies the local; without localization, without becoming concrete in a specific occasion, it does not exist.”

H. Richard Niebuhr



Purpose of the Church

Operating Principle:

The local church is supposed to reflect the universal church because the universal church can only be manifested in local communities.



Purpose of the Church

Tonight's Task:

- **Defining what a local church should be doing (purpose and mission in the world)**
- **Basic common Christian beliefs of a church**



Purpose of the Church

Operating Principle:

“In John 20, Jesus appears before his frightened disciples in a locked room, breathes on them the Spirit of God, and creation is reconstituted as the church is born with an identity and mandate to be the sign, witness, and foretaste of where God is moving within all creation.”

Alan J. Roxburg, Foreword to “The Ministry of the Missional Church”



Purpose of the Church

1) The local church is a place of prayer, worship, proclamation, and learning the scriptures so that the body may attain full maturity in Christ.

“It was he who gave some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13



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“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Romans 10:14



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1) The local church is a place of prayer, worship, proclamation, and learning the scriptures

Paul's ministry as an example:

- He first preached and taught about Christ.
- Then he gathered those who came to faith into local congregations for further teaching and maturation in Christ under the leadership of elders, pastors, and teachers.



Purpose of the Church

- 1) The local church is a place of prayer, worship, proclamation, and learning the scriptures
- 2) Expression of Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12-14



Purpose of the Church

- 1) The local church is a place of prayer, worship, proclamation, and learning the scriptures
- 2) Expression of Spiritual Gifts
- 3) People participating with God to carry God's mission out in the world.



Purpose of the Church

People participating with God to carry God's mission out in the world.

“So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us this message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

2 Corinthians 5:16-21



Purpose of the Church

People participating with God to carry God's mission out in the world.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 2:8-10



Purpose of the Church

- 1) The local church is a place of prayer, worship, proclamation, and learning the scriptures
- 2) Expression of Spiritual Gifts
- 3) People participating with God to carry God's mission out in the world.
- 4) To provide a place and people where you can learn to love your brothers and sisters in Christ.



Purpose of the Church

To provide a place and people where you can learn to love your brothers and sisters in Christ.

“Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.” 1 Peter 2:17

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” 1 Peter 4:8

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2



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“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” Galatians 6:10



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- 2) Expression of Spiritual Gifts
- 3) People participating with God to carry God's mission out in the world.
- 4) To provide a place and people where you can learn to love your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- 5) The place where we receive the sacraments.
Communion and Baptism in particular.



Purpose of the Church

**The place where we receive the sacraments.
Communion and Baptism in particular.**

Matthew 26

Communion

Matthew 28:18-20

The command to baptize



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- 5) The place where we receive the sacraments.
Communion and Baptism in particular.
- 6) Church Discipline.



Purpose of the Church

Church Discipline

Matthew 18:15-20 **Commands for dealing with sin**

1 Corinthians 5:1-12 **Commands to not fellowship
with certain people**



Purpose of the Church

Unifying Christian Beliefs:

- Belief in Jesus as God incarnate; fully human and fully divine.
- Belief in Jesus' historical life and summarized in: his virgin birth and earthly ministry, in his literal death, in his literal resurrection from the grave, in his appearance to his disciples, and in his heavenly ascension.
- Humanity is sinful, and separated from God, and is in need to redemption through Christ.
- God is one, yet Triune, revealing himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



Purpose of the Church

Speaking to hypocrisy in the church:

“This viewpoint involves a process whereby the Church is and becomes. It is a fully formed community, a living sacrament, and a sign before God, its members and those outside its walls. But simultaneously it is in the process of becoming through careful contextualized goal-setting, planning, and evaluation. The gap will be bridged between the Church’s human, often-sinful visible, and organizational side, and its divine, holy, invisible, and organic side”

Charles van Engen, “God’s Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church”



Purpose of the Church

Evaluation of Our Churches:

“How far does the Church correspond to its name? How far does it exist in a practical expression of its essence? How far is it in fact what it appears to be? How far does It fulfill the claim to which it makes and the expectation it arouses?”

Karl Barth, “Church Dogmatics”



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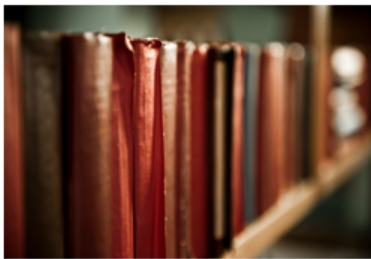


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