

# The Church – What is it?

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Matt. 16:13-18(NIV)- When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

<sup>14</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

<sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter,<sup>[a]</sup> and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

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1 Tim. 4:1(NKJV)- Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

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Heb.10:24-25(NKJV)- <sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

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The word “forsake” means to leave behind or abandon.

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One of the first things we learn about God is that He is a Heavenly Father. Being a Heavenly Father, he is a relational being.

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We were made in the image of our Heavenly Father; therefore, we are relational beings too. Yet, we were not designed to be in relationship with God alone. We were created to be in loving connection with one another.

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Times of fasting and private devotions are essential to spiritual growth, yet they are not in themselves the path to spiritual maturity. In fact, continued personal isolation is a sign of spiritual weakness and immaturity.

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- The Bible was not written to a single individual, it was written to families, communities of faith
  - The New Testament is written to local churches; therefore, its commands were intended to be lived out and proven within community
  - The message of Revelation was given to seven churches

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In Matthew 16:18(NKJV)- “Upon this rock (this revelation) I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

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What is the church?

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In scripture the church never refers to a physical building. In N.T. times there were no buildings designated as churches-the people met in their homes for prayer and worship.

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John 4:20(NKJV)- “our Fathers worshiped in this mountain; and you (Jews) say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

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John 4:21(NKJV)-... the hour comes when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.

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John 4:23(NKJV)- But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

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It's not the place of worship that God approves-it's the heart of worship which he approves!!!

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God's people have always sought for and had a designated place for worship.

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The location of worship was not the emphasis-it was the coming together as a family of like faith which they promoted!

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If the church is not a physical building and it's not a denomination- then what is the church? Jesus said "I will build my church..." What is he building?

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The word "church" comes from a compound Greek word "ekklesia".

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This word was not originally a religious word- it was a common word to Greek-speaking pagans and was the designation for the group of men who at times were called out of their homes or places of business to conduct civic business. It was a word used "for a gathering of people."

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The literal root of the word means "to call out of."

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In the Bible the church is referring to people who have been called out of sin and the world and who have assembled for a common purpose."

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1). It is used as a designation for a local congregation:

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“1 Cor. 1:2(NKJV)- To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be saints*, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

Romans 16:3-5(NKJV)- Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, <sup>4</sup> who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. <sup>5</sup> Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house.

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2). The second meaning is the whole company of born again believers regardless of location or time.

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Eph. 3:20-21(NKJV)- Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, <sup>21</sup> to Him *be glory* in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

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The church is not a physical building of brick and mortar. It is not one denomination. It is the “called out ones”- a spiritual fellowship comprising all who have been born again.

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1). Saints- “separated ones”

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This title has nothing to do with the idea of perfection but separation. Separated from a life and relationship with sin. That doesn’t mean you will not sin-it simply means you have chosen to live in relation to God and not the devil!

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Romans 1:7(NKJV)- To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be saints*: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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You were a sinner-grace saved you and now you are a saint! If grace didn’t save you-then you are still a sinner.

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1 Corinthians 1:2(NKJV)~ To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

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*If we would start seeing ourselves as God sees us, instead of repeating what the devil says we are-we would experience freedom in our life!*

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1 Cor.15:34(NKJV)~ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame.

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Romans 6:11 (NKJV)-Likewise reckon (consider/calculate/count) yourself dead indeed to sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

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*2). Another title members of the church are referred to in scripture is “brethren.”*

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1 John 3:14(NKJV)~ We know we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.”

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*The word “brethren” signifies all Christians belong to one spiritual family, whose Father is God Himself.*  
*It implies that we are all equal before God.*

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Romans 8:17 (NIV) ~ Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.”

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*3). The Bride of Christ- which signifies beautiful/love/anticipation*

4). A building/temple- and the members of that building are called "living stones" this signifies strength/stability/ and holy

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5). The human body- which signifies it is living and each person has a vital part.