



THE LOCAL CHURCH

Introduction: The church is not a building; it is not a campus; and it is not a denominational group of congregations. Berean Baptist Church is a body of men and women who have been saved, baptized, united by a covenant, and organized primarily to:

**Proclaim Christ in the 21st Century,
In Fayetteville, Fort Bragg, North Carolina and the world:
To make fully-functioning followers of Jesus Christ,
To the Glory of God the Father.**

THE WORD “CHURCH”

A. According to Matthew 16:18: _____ builds the church and has promised the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

B. In 1st Corinthians 12:27, Paul is writing to the believers at the city of Corinth and says they are the _____.

This is why our covenant states: **“We make this covenant with each other for the express purpose of glorifying God as the visible representation of the body of Christ.”**

C. Now read 1 Corinthians. 12:14-27 and notice how Paul compares the church to the _____ body.

D. There are two ways in which the word “church” (Greek *ekklesia*: which means “called out assembly of people”) is used in the New Testament. Notice below how much more emphasis is given to the local church in the Bible.

1. 100 times in a “local sense”
2. 14 times in a “corporate, universal sense”

The church is like a “city within the city” seeking to glorify God.

E. Look up Acts 2:47: Is this the local church, universal church or both? _____

F. Look up Ephesians 5:25: Which sense of “church” is being used here? _____

G. Can unbelievers see the universal church? _____ What do they see? _____

1. Jesus loved (in death) His universal body of believers who are expected to congregate in local “pictures” of this universal “body” called “local churches.”

2. Which “church” (of the above two options) is being built by Jesus? _____

3. Who is the “head of the church” according to Eph. 5:23? _____



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The Lord Jesus Christ is building His “corporate, universal” body which is revealed in churches like Berean Baptist Church who pray that their vision will remain His vision so that He will indeed build His “corporate, universal body” through their local churches.

MEMBERS FUNCTION IN THE BODY

A. During your Christian life, you should mature in three broad, general stages in a local church:

1. **Worship and Learn**. In this stage your focus as a member is learning about and worshipping God. Either you are new to the faith, or you are new to the church.
2. **Participate and Serve**. In time, you will not be content remaining in stage 1 and will want to begin doing more in your church. In stage 2, you will want to participate in outreach venues and find places to serve and give back to the church.
3. **Lead and Teach**. In the third and most mature stage, you will continue to w_____, grow, s_____ but will now find that you have much to give back to the church in the way of leadership and can now t_____ children, youth, ladies or even serve in the role of adult teacher, deacon, or lay pastor.

B. Study Romans 12:4-5 and 1st Corinthians 12 to learn about what _____ -given gifts, talents, and abilities that He expects you to use in the body of Christ in a local church.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH

Acts 2:41-47 contains a description of a local church in Jerusalem 2000 years ago. Berean seeks to follow the core essential functions of a church as recorded in this passage. Answer the following questions from Acts 2:41-47 to learn about the functions of the church.

- A. The church made teaching d_____ important (vs. 42).
- B. Christians enjoyed f_____ one with one another (vs. 42).
- C. The church was a house of p_____ (vs. 42).
- D. God sa_____ people in and through the church (vs. 47).
- E. People were being b_____ (vs. 41).
- F. The n_____ of church members are met by a community of Christians (vs. 45).
- G. God was glorified and pr_____ by His church (vs. 47).

UNITE WITH A CHURCH

A. There are at least six reasons why Christians should officially unite with a local, New Testament church as active, faithful, serving members.



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Unite with a church:

1. Because of influence with unbelievers; Christians will be more of a _____ and a bit more salty because of a close relationship to the church (Matthew 5:16).
2. Because of influence with believers; when strong Christians unite with a church it s _____ as a good example for other believers. (1st Timothy 4:12).
3. Because of the necessity to have a pastor who watches over your s _____ (Hebrews 13:17).
4. Because of the mutual importance of one another's spiritual g _____ (Ephesians 4:12).
5. Because of the opportunity to partake of the L _____'s S _____ (1 Corinthians 11:2, 20); Christians who are not united to or refuse to unite with a Bible-believing church are not invited to partake of this special remembrance of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
6. Because of the opportunity to serve and v _____; have a voice in the business of the kingdom (Acts 6:3).

B. The decision to unite with a church is a serious decision that should not be made without prayer and wisdom from God. What does God promise you in James 1:5? _____

C. The following questions can help guide you in your decision:

1. You should ask yourself if you believe the church you are considering is built upon the foundation of the Bible as God's infallible, inerrant guide for life.
2. Are members encouraged to bring others into a relationship with Christ?
3. Is the church built around Christ or the personality of the pastor?
4. Do you believe the vision of the church is aligned with the Bible?
5. Is the church involved in global outreach through missionaries and mission trips?
6. Are members encouraged to grow as followers of Christ?
7. Do you see evidence that the church takes care of its members and their needs?
8. Is there an emphasis on following the Bible even in the hard areas of life?
9. Do you believe you could grow as a disciple of Christ in this church?
10. Will you be given an opportunity to use your spiritual gifts for God's work?
11. Is it obvious that there is much emphasis on the gospel and the grace of God?

CONCLUSION

Christ died for the church; therefore, it should play an important role in the life of the Christian. God's plan for a Christian will always be fulfilled best when he or she is actively connected with a local church. The church has been commissioned by God to carry out His purposes in reaching the lost and perfecting the saved of God (Ephesians 5:25, 4:11-12), and this happens through a dynamic membership. When a church member leaves one church, he/she should unite with another local church as soon as possible and is ethically responsible for letting the old church know of this decision.