

Part Three
THE CHURCH

I. What is the Church?

A. The Church is NOT—

1. A meeting place. Often we speak of going to the “church” or we say “which church do you attend?” or we admire the beautiful structure of a “church.” These are really unfortunate uses of the word, for God never so designated the physical structure. The church is NOT a physical structure where people meet together. (See Acts 12:5, 15:22; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 15:9, 16:19; Revelation 2:23).
2. The Church is not merely a social organization where people who have something in common meet together. It is not a club.

B. The Church IS—

1. A unique organism vitally related to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The Body through which God does business today, the Body through which He is making Himself known.
3. A called out assembly of believers (See Acts 11:26, 14:27, 15:14; 1 Corinthians 14:23a). The Greek word for “church” (ekklesia) literally means “a called out assembly”).
 - a. Galatians 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might _____ us _____ this present _____ world (age). . .
 - b. 1 Peter 2:9-10 But ye are a _____, a _____, an _____, a peculiar people (a people of His own); that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath _____ you _____ of darkness into his marvellous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 1:9- _____, by whom ye were _____ unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - d. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Be ye not unequally _____ together with _____: for what _____ hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they

shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye _____, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will _____ you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

- e. Hebrews 13:13 Let us _____ therefore unto him without (outside) the _____, bearing his reproach.
- 4. The Church is a “mystery”—a wonderful secret locked up in the heart of God in ages past, but now revealed by God to His believers.
 - a. Romans 16:25-26 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the _____ of the _____, which was kept _____ since the world began, But now is made _____, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, _____ to all nations for the obedience of faith.
 - b. Ephesians 3:3-11 How that by _____ he _____ unto me the _____...(5) Which in other ages was not made _____ unto the sons of men, as it is _____ unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit... (9) to _____ all men _____ what is the fellowship of the _____, which from the beginning of the world hath been _____ in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (10) To the intent that _____ unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be _____ by the _____ the manifold wisdom of God, (11) According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - c. Colossians 1:26-27 Even the _____ which hath been _____ from ages and from generations, but _____ is made _____ to his saints: (27) To whom God would _____ what is the riches of the glory of this _____ among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
 - d. 1 Timothy 3:15-16 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the _____ of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (See our study on “The Mystery of Godliness”—available as both a brief paper and a lengthy book).

- 5. The Church is that called out assembly of born again believers in Christ, members one of another in an organism, possessing the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus, fully integrated or merged into one body picturing and portraying Him in time and eternity. “The genius of New Testament Christianity is that Christ has a body in addition to His resurrection body now in glory” (Pastor Carlton Helgerson).

If, as is true, the Church is such an assembly of believers in Christ, can one so vitally related to the Lord Jesus and his fellow believers fail to take his or her place in the assembly whenever possible rather than whenever convenient?

“...They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Acts 2:41-42.

“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.”

Hebrews 10:25

For a more detailed study of the church, see the set of doctrinal worksheets entitled, “The Church—God’s Called-Out Assembly” (over 100 pages).

SUNDAY NIGHT

Sunday morning’s very nice,
 But Sunday night’s such sacrifice!
 With television’s relaxation
 Must I make the congregation
 One man larger? After all,
 Other ones can heed the call.
 And surely I’m within my right
 To skip the service Sunday night.
 O, I like the church with an evening service
 In any other I’d be nervous.
 It marks the church as spiritually right,
 But I’ll stay home on Sunday night.

PRAYER MEETING

Where would I be on Prayer Meeting night
 If my Lord should suddenly come?
 At church in my place or out with the crowd,
 Just having some innocent fun?
 Would I be getting food for my soul
 And praying for those who are lost,
 Or absent again forgetting the One
 Who bought me at infinite cost?
 Where would I be? I’ve excuses enough,
 But how would they look in His sight?
 Where would I want Him to find me at last
 Should He come on Prayer Meeting night?

—William H. Rice