

Discipline #5: Committed Gathering

Because I am part of THE Body, I faithfully gather with a local body in accordance with God's design to be grown and help the body to grow.

TWO CHURCHES?

The Universal Church

THE Church – the one (universal) assembly church that is composed of all believers of the church age. THE Church is the body of Christ, and is sometimes referred to as the bride of Christ. This body has never met together, and does not function as a unit (as of yet).

- **Matt 16:18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- **1 Cor 12:13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.
- **Eph 5:23** For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

The Local Church

A Church – Any group of believers gathering together in a specific, geographical area, and functioning as a Bible-defined local church. It is possible for a local church to have unbelievers as members, and/or for that local church to be doing much wrong. (Matt 18:15-17; Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; 1 Thes 1:1; Rev 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14). A Biblical church has qualified leaders (Eph 4:11-16; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:17-18; Titus 1:5-9; Heb 13:7,17), and works together as a local body as defined by God (Matt 28:18-20; Eph 4:12-16; Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; 1 Pet 4; etc.)

- **Matt 18:15-17** ¹⁵ "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'* ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.
- **Gal 1:2** and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:
- **Rev 1:4** John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
- **Rev 2:1** "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ' These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

What Is the Church?

What the Church Is NOT:

1. The Church Is Not a Place

- Biblically speaking, "Let's go to church" is erroneous and leads to false ideas. (Can you think of any?)
- Thus, "church" involves more than just "going somewhere."
- "Where do you want to go to church this Sunday?" misses the Biblical teaching of what a church is and does.
- A church building is not "God's house," or a modern-day OT temple.

2. The Church Is Not a Time

- "Let's do church at 11 AM," and "I attend 11 AM church" are both concepts not found in the Bible.
- Thus, "church" involves more than just going to a "service" sometime.

3. The Church Is Not a Service

- "Let's go to church at _____ Church this Sunday," or "Let's have church at home this Sunday."
- Attending a service does not constitute "church" in light of the Bible.

4. The Church Is Not a List

- "I'm a member @ _____ Church, but I don't attend very often," is not a Biblical view.
- Not a merely a list, but active participation in a group of people as structured and designed by God (Mt 18)

What the Church IS:

Acts 2:40-42 ⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." ⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Eph 4:11-16

1. A Specific Assembly Committed to One Another

2. Led by God-Appointed, God-Approved Leaders

3. Proclaiming the Gospel to Unbelievers

4. Pursuing the Training of Believers to Full Maturity & Service

5. Perpetuating Leadership to the Next Generation

6. Preserving the Truth in the Face of Falsehood