

Believe Series

“Church”

How will God accomplish his plan?

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

“Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

Matthew 16:13-18 (NLT)

We believe the church is God’s primary way to accomplish his purposes here on Earth.

What is the church?

Church -> Ekklesia -> Gathering

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.

A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity - all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47 (NLT)

**We gather to: worship & celebrate.
grow & encourage.
serve together.**

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NLT)

Whose Church is it?

Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

Matthew 16:18 (NLT)

**The church belongs to Jesus
& is powered by the Holy Spirit.**

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.
Acts 1:8a (NLT)

Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away - all who have been called by the Lord our God.”

Acts 2:37-39 (NLT)

Why does the church exist?

...And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8b (NLT)

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

To Gather, Grow, & Go.

SO WHAT?

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NLT)

We don't GO to church

We ARE the church.

Now lets go BE the church.

What do you believe?

Growth Group Questions

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

Read Believe Chapter 6: Church.

1. When you hear the word "church" what do you think of?

What do you think people outside the church think of?

2. The church is a gathering of people. What other places do people willingly gather together in our society? Why?

What are some reasons people don't put the effort in to gather with other believers?

3. Re-read Acts 2:42-47. List all the things you see the church doing together.

Which of these things does the church still do regularly?

What are we struggling to do together like these early believers?

4. Re-read Hebrews 10:23-25. In this day and age of digital connection, and massive amounts of screen time, why is it important to actually meet together?

What is the cost of meeting together?

5. Re-read Ephesians 4:15-16. What unique gifts and talents do you have to share with the church? How can you put them into action?