

THE CHURCH: THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Membership Part 1—An intimate relationship with Christ
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The church lies at the very center of the eternal purpose of God. It is not a divine afterthought. It is not an accident of history. The church should be regarded as important to Christians because of its importance to Christ. Christ founded the church, purchased it with His blood, and intimately identifies Himself with it. —John Stott

Bride—an intimate relationship with Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Pillar—built on truth (1 Timothy 3:15)

Flock—led by shepherds (Acts 20:28)

Body—functioning in unity together (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

Family—sharing the same priorities (Ephesians 2:19)

MEMBERSHIP, WHAT & WHY

One heart, one mind in doctrine and direction

- Jesus affirms & _____ the church

Matthew 16:18 upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

- The New Testament assumes _____ to a local church

Acts 1:14 They had one mind. **Acts 2:42** They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **Acts 4:32** Those who believed were of one heart and soul.

Acts 5:12 They were all with one accord. **Acts 8:1** The church in Jerusalem. **Acts 8:3** Saul began ravaging the church.

Acts 11:22 News of this reached the church. **Acts 11:26** Barnabas and Saul met with the church in Antioch. **Acts 12:1** Herod arrested some who belonged to the church. **Acts 12:5** The church was earnestly praying. **Acts 14:27** They gathered the church together. **Acts 15:3** The church sent them on their way. **Acts 15:4** They were welcomed by the church in Jerusalem

Acts 1:15 Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about **one hundred and twenty persons**).

Acts 2:41 that day there were added about **three thousand souls**.

Acts 5:4 Many of those who heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about **five thousand**.

Acts 5:11,13-14 And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things...¹³ But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴ And all the more believers in the Lord...were constantly added to their number.

Romans 16:1-2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints.

To be a Christian is to belong to a church. No one gets saved and then wanders around by him or herself, thinking about whether to join a church...Looking to Christ as Lord means being united to Christ's people. It's automatic, like being adopted means you'll quickly find yourself at a dinner table with brothers and sisters. —Jonathan Leeman

- Christian obedience is lived out _____

Romans 5:14, 14:19, Galatians 5:13, 6:1, 6:2, Ephesians 4:32, 5:21, Colossians 3:13, 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 4:18, Hebrews 3:13, 10:24, James 5:16, 1 Peter 1:22, 4:9

- The church provides care & _____ for your soul

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

- The New Testament _____ require belonging

Bride, Pillar, Flock, Body, Family

1. United to the groom: _____

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” **Acts 4:12** And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

2. Grow in intimacy with the groom: _____

Ephesians 5:25-27 ...Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

3. Identify with the groom: _____

- To individually confess Him in _____

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 10:32-33 Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.³³ But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

- To collectively remember Him in _____

Luke 22:19-20 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”²⁰ And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”

1 Corinthians 11: 27-28 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.²⁸ But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

4. Devotion to the groom: _____

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

A. _____

Romans 10:9 If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

1 Thessalonians 4:10 But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more.

Your life is much bigger than a good job, an understanding spouse, and non-delinquent kids. It is bigger than beautiful gardens, nice vacations, and fashionable clothes. In reality, you are a part of something immense, something that began before you were born and will continue after you die. God is rescuing fallen humanity, transporting them into His kingdom, and progressively shaping them into His likeness—and He wants you to be a part of it. —Paul Tripp



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