

**I. Introduction: The church is a divine institution.**

**A. The church is Important!**

1. The church belongs to God and is precious to Him! Eph. 1:14 Acts 20:28
2. Christ Will continue to build and work through His church. Mt. 16:18
3. We need a biblically balanced view of the church.

**B. What is the church? I Pe. 2:5,9 Eph. 2:19-22 Mt. 16:18 18:17 Acts 2:47**

1. The church is not merely a building of bricks and mortar.
2. There are many biblical figures of the church: the household/family of God, the pillar and bulwark of truth, the building (temple) of God, the people of God, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, etc. I Ti. 3:15 Ro. 8:14-17 12:5 Gal. 6:10 I Pe. 2:5,9 I Cor. 3:16,11 10:16 12:27 Eph. 2:19-22 1:22 5:23ff II Co. 6:16 Titus 2:14 Gal. 3:29 6:16 Co. 1:18,13 2:19 Rev. 19:7

**C. What is the Relationship Between the Church and Israel? I Pe. 2:9 Gal. 6:16**

1. The church is something new with the New Covenant. Mt. 16:18
2. The New Testament applies titles to the church which under the Old testament were reserved to Israel. I Pe. 2:9 Gal. 3:7,29 Rom. 2:28-29 9:6 Phil. 3:3 Isa. 43:20 44:1-2 61:6 43:21 Dt. 7:6-8 10:15 14:2 Ex. 19:5-6 Dt. 7:6 Ps. 110:4
3. Under the New Covenant there is one people of God, consisting of Jews and Gentiles who are in Christ. Eph. 2:11ff Rom. 11:17ff I Pe. 2:10

**D. The term *church* is used in different ways in the New Testament.**

1. The universal church. I Cor. 15:9 Acts 20:28 Eph. 1:22 3:10,21 5:23-32 Phil. 3:6 Col. 1:18,24 Gal. 1:13
2. Local churches. I Cor. 4:17 11:18 19:19 Gal. 1:2 Acts 5:119:31 11:26 14:23, 27 Phil. 4:15 Heb. 12:23 Col. 4:15-16 Rev. 2-3
3. Is there a distinction between the visible and invisible church? Ro. 2:28 9:6-8 Acts 20:30 Eph. 5:25 Mt. 13:24-30,36-43 7:21-23 22:9-14 I John 2:19
4. Is it proper to call a denomination or an association a "Church"

**E. Who is a Member of the Church? I Cor. 12:13,27 Acts 2:47 He. 13:17 I Th.**

**II. What is the mission (purpose) of the church? I Tim. 3:15 Acts 2:42 I Pe. 2:9**

**A. GBC Purpose Statement (revised 2010)**

God's purpose for the church (I Tim. 3:15), including this local expression of the body of Christ, is that He be glorified (Ephesians 3:10, 21) as we grow in discipleship by:

1. Gathering together to worship God in the unity of the Spirit (Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:1-3).
2. Exercising our spiritual gifts for the edifying, maturing and equipping of the whole church body (I Corinthians 12:4-7 Eph. 4:11-16 II Timothy 2:2).
3. Proclaiming the gospel of God's saving grace to our community and to the world through word and practice (Matthew 28:18-20 Acts 1:8).
4. Applying biblical principles to all spheres of life (Mt. 5:13-16 Jer. 29:7 I Co. 10:31 Eph. 5:22-6:9).

**B. We gather together to worship God in the unity of the Spirit (and in truth). Acts 2:42 I Tim. 3:15 John 4:24**

1. The church is not the source of truth.
2. We proclaim God's truth to one another. I Ti. 3:15b 4:13 5:17 II Tim. 4:1ff

3. The church also must defend truth against error. 1:3 4:1ff 6:5 II Ti. 2:18 3:7-8 4:
4. The church responds to God's truth in worship. I Pe. 2:9-10 Acts 2:42,46 He. 10:25 Prayer. 2:1-3 Acts 2:42 1:14 4:23-31 13:3 Rev. 8:4 5:8
5. We serve as priests offering up spiritual sacrifices through Christ. I Pet. 2:5b

C. We exercise our spiritual gifts for the edifying, maturing and equipping of the whole church body. I Corinthians 12:4-7 Eph. 4:11-16 II Timothy 2:2

1. The church is a household (family). I Tim. 3:15a Heb. 13:16 I Cor. 16:1-2
2. We show love by sharing with those in need. Acts 2:44-45 4:32-37 II Cor. 8:4 John 13:34-35
3. We equip the saints for service. Eph. 4:11-13 II Tim. 2:2
4. We use our spiritual gifts to edify one another. I Co. 12:1ff Ro. 12:3-8 I Pe. 4:10-11

D. We proclaim the gospel of God's saving grace to our community and to the world through word and practice. Acts 2:47 1:8 8:1,5 11:2 13:1ff I Pet. 2:9,12 Mt. 28:18-20

E. We seek to apply biblical principles to all spheres of life. Mt. 5:13-16 Jer. 29:7 I Co. 10:31 Eph. 5:22-6:9 I Pet. 2:11ff

F. The church is sufficient to carry out the work Christ has given us. II Ti. 3:16-17 2:2 II Pe. 1:3-4 Acts 13:1-4 14:27 2:27

### III. The church is focused upon Christ. I Tim. 3:16 I Pe. 2:5-8

A. An early hymn (or confession). I Tim. 3:16

1. He was revealed in the flesh. Jn. 1:1,17 8:58 17:5 14:9 He. 1:3 Col. 1:15 2:9 Gal. 4:4 Heb. 2:14 Ro. 1:3 Mt. 1:23 I Tim. 2:5-6 Phil. 2:5-11 II Cor. 8:9
2. He was vindicated in the Spirit. Mt. 3:16-17 12:28 Jn. 1:32-33 9:31 20:30ff 16:8-9 Acts 2:34-36 10:38 Ro. 1:4 4:25 8:1 Heb. 4:15 7:26
3. He was seen by angels. Mt. 1:20 4:11 28:2f Luke 1:26 2:9 22:43 Mk. 16:5-8 Jn. 1:12-13 Acts 1:11 I Th. 4:16 Rev. 5:11-12 I Pet. 1:12 Eph. 3:10 I Cor. 4:9
4. He was preached among the nations. Mt. 28:16-20 II Cor. 5:19-20 Eph. 2:14-15 Col. 1:26-27 John 3:16 I Jn. 2:2 4:14 Rom. 10:14-15 I Cor. 1:21-25
5. He was believed on in the world. John 3:16 17:21 12:47 1:13 6:37,44 Eph. 2:5
6. He was taken up in glory. Acts 1:2,9-11 Heb. 1:3 4:14-16

B. Christ is the foundation of His church. I Pe. 2:4-8

1. He is the living stone precious to God. v. 4
2. We are built up in union with Him as a holy temple. v. 5a
3. We serve as priests offering up spiritual sacrifices through Christ. v. 5b,9
4. Your response to Christ determines everything. v. 7-10

### IV. Concluding Applications: Do you love the church and are you committed to God's purposes for his church?

#### Discussion questions

1. Why is the church important?
2. What are some biblical figures for the church?
3. How is the word 'church' used in Scripture?
4. What is the relationship between the church and Israel?
5. Why are para-church groups unnecessary?
6. What is the purpose of the church?
7. What is the place of Jesus Christ in the church?