

Lesson 4 Church Membership

The big question in many people's minds relates to **church membership**.

For instance:

- **Should I join (link to or unite with) a church?**
- **Is church membership Scriptural?**
- **What kind of church should I join?**

Lesson 4 endeavors to answer these questions and other important questions most often asked especially by new and soon to be Christians.

It is essential to know that the word "**CHURCH**" **originates from the word "KURIAKOS," meaning 'belonging to the Lord,'** in the Bible.

The word "EKKLESIA" is the original Greek word, which we see when we read our English New Testament.

- The word "**church**" means a "**called out assembly.**"
- One who has been **called out of this world**, (a disciple of Christ).
- Therefore when we read the word CHURCH in the Bible, **these are they (remember St. John 17: 1-9, those whom Jesus prayed for) who are still in the world, but no longer part of the world**, fulfilling the words of our Lord in carrying out THE GREAT COMMISSION of the HEAD of the CHURCH Jesus Christ!

Now let us clear as to how many ways this group (**the called out assembly**) is characterized in the Bible.

- Psalms 89:7 (**all KJV**) **The Assembly of the Saints**
- Ephesians 1:22 &23 **The Church = The body of Christ**
- Revelation 21:9 **The Lamb's Wife**
- Hebrews 12:23 **The General Assembly and Church of the firstborn**
- Psalms 149:1 **The Congregation of the Saints**
- Ezekiel 34:15 **The flock of God**
- 1Timothy 3:15 **The House of God, The Church of the Living God, The Pillar and Ground of the Truth**

1. According to Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 5:23 -- who is THE FOUNDER and HEAD of the EKKLESIA? **Christ Himself**

Okay, I'm CONFUSED :(

2. **Why exactly do we refer to the church (singular) as churches (plural)?**

Class Reading: (There is a biblical model as to why we do that)

- Revelation 2:1 "unto the angel of **the church** of Ephesus,
- 8 "and unto the angel of **the church** in Smyrna"
- 12 "And to the angel of **the church** in Pergamos"
- 18 "And unto the angel of **the church** in Thyatira write"
- 3:1 "And unto the angel of **the church** in Sardis write"
- 7 "And to the angel of **the church** in Philadelphia"
- 14 ""And unto the angel of **the church** of the Laodiceans write"

- a. How many **churches** are there? **Seven**
- b. Would you agree that scripture gives us the model of what we refer to as
THE LOCAL CHURCH?
- c. Is there a LOCAL CHURCH in Acts 2:41? **“Added unto them”**
- d. Are there people **adding themselves** or joining that LOCAL CHURCH? **They are becoming part of THE CHURCH through THE LOCAL CHURCH.**
- e. Is there somebody COUNTING how many are joining? YES
- f. How many joined that day? **About 3 thousand**
- g. How soon were they considered members **"after they gladly received His word?"**

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3. How often did people become members of that local church according to Acts 2:47? **Daily**

4. **Now! Now! Now!** Christ Himself is Founder and Head of the ONE CHURCH according to Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 5:23 right? **YES**

5. Who are the **supervisors (managers, administrators or overseers)** of these LOCAL CHURCHES according to:

a. Acts 20:1;17-28 - **Men Overseers** - (in the text Paul speaks to his disciples (trained men)).

b. Ephesians 4:11&12 "He gave SOME"?? **Pastors and teachers**

- **Dispensation or religious epoch: the time during which a religious doctrine or practice is believed to be in force**
 - Ephesians 1:10; 3:2 and Colossians 1:25

c. 1 Timothy 3:1-5 "if a man desire the office of a **Bishop** "

d. Hebrews 13:17 "**stewards of souls**" CEV "Obey your leaders and do what they say. They are watching over you, and they must answer to God. So don't make them sad as they do their work. Make them happy. Otherwise, they won't be able to help you."

e. 1 Timothy 5:17 "**Elder** (in some Christian churches, a senior lay member responsible for some aspects of church administration, the pastoral care of church members, and sometimes for teaching and preaching), especially those that labor in the word and doctrine"

6. There is another position of supervision given to the LOCAL Churches as noted in 1st Timothy 3:1-8 what is the title of that position? **Deacon** (in many Protestant churches, a layperson who is appointed or elected to assist the minister) in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Episcopal Churches, an ordained member of the clergy who ranks below a priest

7. When we read Ephesians 4:1-15 is the apostle speaking of the ONE CHURCH "Ekklessia" or the local churches? **The ONE CHURCH which is made up of local churches.**

a. Therefore which entity has received everybody mentioned in verse 11? **The CHURCH or Ekklessia.**

b. **The Seven Dispensations** ¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Understanding the seven dispensations is necessary to rightly divide the Word of God, meaning to correctly understand the Bible. Everything written in the Bible is written for us, but everything written is not necessarily written to us. Commandments, promises, blessings and warnings given to Israel in the Dispensation of Law do not apply to the Christian Church today in this Dispensation of Grace. We are not under the law but under grace. Instructions given to Adam and Eve do not apply to us today. The dietary restrictions given by God to Israel do not apply to us today. We must follow the teachings of the Apostle Paul as they apply to Church in this Dispensation of Grace.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Ephesians 1:10 that in the **dispensation of the fullness of the times** He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.

Ephesians 3:2 if indeed you have heard of the **dispensation of the grace of God** which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation

The Scriptures divide time (by which is meant the entire period from the creation of Adam to the "new heaven and a new earth" of Rev. 21: 1) into **seven unequal periods, usually called dispensations** (Eph. 3:2), although these periods are also called ages (Eph. 2:7) and days, as in "day of the Lord."

These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with mankind, or a portion of mankind, in respect of the two questions: of sin, and of man's responsibility. Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment, marking his utter failure in every dispensation. Five of these dispensations, or periods of time, have been fulfilled; we are living in the sixth, probably toward its close, and have before us the seventh, and last: the millennium.

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8. Would the officers or supervisors of the Local Church be in the will of God to expect a standard of character and behavior from the members and execute a biblical system of discipline according to

a. Romans 16:17 **Yes they are to mark (CEV; watch out for) those who cause division.**

b. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 **Yes they are to actually carry out judgment or decisions of chastisement for those who become an embarrassment to the local church.**

c. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 **withdraw the hand of fellowship/membership when deemed necessary.**

9. What is the main job of the members of the Local Church according to?

a. Acts 1:8 **to be Witnesses of Christ.**

b. Mark 16:15 **preach (talk, speak, urge,) the gospel (the good news of Jesus).**

c. **Matthew 28: 19-20 - Go (teach, baptize (the result of evangelism) while knowing He is with us.**

10. The way to tell if you have joined the RIGHT LOCAL CHURCH!!!

a. Isaiah 8:20 - **Seek those whose spirit is that of God according to the word the present.**

b. Revelation 22:18&19 - **for those who add or take away from The Bible, God is not pleased.**

c. Galatians 1:6-9 - **a teaching church according to the word**

d. 2 Corinthians - 6:14-18 **we are instructed to be with those who believe what we believe and that is that the Bible has absolute authority.**

e. Revelation 18:4 - **God calls us to come out from the sins of the world**

f. 2 John 1:7-11- **Those that preach and teach contrary to the Bible we are not to receive.**