

# The New Testament Church #1

## The Church Is Where...

### Introduction; Many like to be where things are happening

#### A. They like to be in the middle of activity

1. Sometimes this is good. Some like to be doing things that are good. They like to help others and accomplish things. They are enthusiastic and do the best they can.
2. *Ecccl 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.*
3. Others also like to be active. However they like to be busy doing things that are not good. They are **busybodies** and **gossips** and try to start trouble. Some do even worse things.
4. *Isa 59:7 Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction are in their paths.*
5. It is good to be busy. It is good to be active. However we need to be doing things that are good. We need to do the things that the Lord wants us to be doing.
6. *Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*
7. This is not just “**religious**” things. The Lord expects us to be busy in society and doing good and letting out lights shine before men by our good deeds —Matt 5:16.

#### B. The church is a place where things happen

1. The church is not the building. It is not just Christians meeting several times a week to worship God.
2. The church is Christians at all times. A local church is a group of saints who worship and work together. It is not just the assembly but their everyday lives. Every day our lives say something about the church and Christ.
3. *Titus 2:4-5 ...that they (the older woman) admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*
4. These things are not in the assembly. They are the things of everyday life that either honor or blaspheme the Lord and His law.
5. As part of the church we are a part of a group. We are part of a family. We are citizens in the kingdom of God. We are not just individuals but a group that does things.

#### C. We will begin a series of lessons on the *1st century church*.

1. We want to study the N.T. church so we can be like it. If we want to be a strong congregation of the Lord's people we must follow the pattern of the N.T. church.
2. Every group or organization is set up to do certain things. This is true of the church as well. It has a purpose. Certain things are supposed to happen in the church.
3. We want to consider what things are supposed to happen in the church, the Lord's family.

#### D. Today; the church is a place where certain things happen. *The church is a place...*

### I. Where we meet the Lord

#### A. God and man together come together in the church.

1. Man's greatest need is to be reconciled with God. We are all separated from God by our sins. Sin separates us from God and we can do nothing by ourselves about this. We are completely unable to save ourselves.
2. *Rom 3:10-11 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There*

*is none who seeks after God."*

3. *Rom 3:23 ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
4. If scripture teaches anything it is that men are sinners. Many today do not like this. They say it **hurts their self-image**. They say it is **negative** and **unproductive**. Yet it is true.
5. We must accept this and do something about it. If there was nothing to do about sin then it might be harmful and discouraging to talk about it. However there is something we can do about sin.

#### B. **God has reconciled man.**

1. **Reconcile** means, 'to become friendly again: to return to a friendly relationship after a dispute or estrangement' —MS Encarta® Dictionary.
2. God has made a way for man to, 'be friendly again' after 'a dispute or estrangement'. We can once again have a relationship with God.
3. *Rom 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*
4. *Col 1:21-22 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight;*
5. The fact that we are reconciled shows that we once had a relationship with God. We cannot be reunited with someone we never were with to start with. This shows we are not born in sin but become sinners when we sin —see Ezek 18.
5. *Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.*
6. When we reach a degree of maturity and become accountable to God we are separated from Him by our sins. Then we have to take advantage of what He has done through Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.
7. In the N.T. we only see adults baptized. One of the things that became important in the '**Protestant Reformation**' was the baptism of adults and not infants.

#### C. **We are reconciled to God by faith, repentance and baptism.**

1. *Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*
2. We see the necessity of **believing** in the Lord. Only by really believing in God's existence and His willingness to help us do we seek Him. Faith causes us to diligently seek Him by **repentance** and **baptism**.
3. *Acts 17:30-31 "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."*
4. To **repent** is to be sorry for our sins and turn from them. We determine in our hearts to turn to God and serve Him. We then strive to avoid sin. Because we believe and repent we are **baptized**.
5. *Acts 8:35-38 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" 37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." 38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*
6. *Acts 2:37-38 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
7. The Ethiopian wanted to be baptized. Philip said he must believe with all his heart. He must believe the preaching of Jesus he had just heard. We see the necessity here of a certain degree of maturity and age to be baptized.

#### D. **After becoming a Christian we take our place with the Lord in His body, the church.**

1. *Col 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*
2. The **church is Christ's body**. He is the head and we obey Him in all things. He is preeminent and so we

follow Him. We come together with Him in His church.

3. *Matt 18:19-20 "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*
4. While Jesus has a certain topic in mind here He bases it on the fact that when two or three are gathered in His name, to do His will, He is with them. He is always with us but especially when we gather in His name to do His will.
5. In the Lord's church we gather to worship together, encourage one another and contribute to do the will of God on the earth. We must be active in the Lord's church.
6. *1 Cor 12:26-27 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*
7. If we are Christians we are member of the body of Christ and as such have work to do. We have responsibilities to each other. We cannot neglect these and be pleasing to the Lord.

#### E. We see then that in the church we meet God.

## II. Where we learn to care for others

### A. The world has a '*me first*' attitude.

1. The world is **selfish** and **uncaring**. It is self-centered and concerned only about itself. This makes the world a hard place to live.
2. *Phil 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*
3. *James 3:16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*
4. We see many examples around us of folks being harmed, neglected and ignored. Many become very hard-hearted by the selfishness of the world.
5. One common saying is, "*Be careful whom you step on going up the ladder. You might see them again on the way down.*" How we treat other to get ahead may hurt us later.

### B. The church teaches us to **care for others**.

1. We learn to be **giving** and **forgiving**. We learn to treat others well and help them. We learn to respect others and do good to them.
2. People are important. We must help them when we can, even if it costs us something. Jesus taught that clearly in the '*Parable of the Good Samaritan*.'
3. *Luke 10:33-35 "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'"*
4. Paul taught us to think of one another. We do not go to heaven alone. We go with others. Therefore we must not be selfish but **humble**. We cannot think only of ourselves. We must think of others and help them along the way.
5. *Phil 2:3-4 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*
6. We learn to love and help others because the Lord loved and helped us. Love and concern starts with God and not man.
7. *Eph 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.*
8. We go up to heaven together as the Jews went up to Jerusalem, as a group. They went up to Jerusalem together singing the songs of Zion. The '**Psalm of Ascent**' in the Psalms were sung as they walked together—Psalms 120 to 134.
9. *Heb 12:12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees...*
10. *Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!*

### C. In the church we learn to **encourage and be encouraged.**

1. As we walk the narrow pathway to heaven we walk with others. There are not many but the few with us are wonderful. We help one another.
2. *Luke 13:23-24 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, <sup>24</sup> Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able."*
3. The few that are going to heaven need to **stick together and help one another.** We need help and we give help. We encourage and are encouraged by one another.
4. *Rom 1:11-12 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established; <sup>12</sup> that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.*
5. This is certainly not limited to the public assemblies but the assemblies are an important part of being a part of the Lord's church. We assemble often, not just for ourselves, but for others.
6. *Heb 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*
7. We **hold fast our confession of hope** by not deserting the assemblies. We **consider one another** by not missing the assemblies. We **show our faithfulness to the one who is faithful** and we **stir up each other to love and good works** by assembling.

### D. We see that we care for one another in the Lord's church.

## III. Where we prepare for the future

### A. We have a hope for the future in the church.

1. Someone has said that man can live three weeks without water, three days without food, three minutes without air and three seconds without hope. Hope is important.
2. We need hope. Hopelessness can destroy us and make us give up and quit. Our hope is not in this life. Many hope for **riches** or **fame** or **power** or **pleasure** or **wisdom**. There are many things in this world men hope for. Yet these are all fleeting and unfulfilling.
3. *1 Cor 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.*
4. *1 John 2:16-17 For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*
5. Those who trust in the world for peace and happiness will be disappointed. The world seems to become more tense every year. The world is not dependable. The economy is great for a few years, then things change and it is poor.

### B. Our great hope is not in this life.

1. Since the world is undependable we need to trust in something that is strong and steadfast. This is the Lord and His promises.
2. *Heb 13:5-6 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*
3. God is dependable. His promises are sure. He can be counted on –Heb 10:23 on page 3. When we read that He will do something for those who love and serve Him we can mark it down and count on it.
3. *2 Pet 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*
4. *James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*
5. The promise of heaven and eternal life with Him was made before time began. God did not intend for earth to be man's eternal home. He had something better planned for him.
6. *Titus 1:2 ...in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began...*
7. *Heb 10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the*

*promise:*

8. Heaven is eternal. This world is temporary and will pass away. We need to look forward to the return of Jesus Christ and being with Him and the righteous of the ages in heaven forevermore. This thought should give us comfort.
9. *1 Thess 5:11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

**C. We do have a certain hope in this life.**

1. We do not intend to say that this life is completely vain and worthless. This does not mean we have no purpose in this life.
2. Solomon dealt with this in his latter years. In the book of Ecclesiastes he deals with the question of the purpose of life. In many senses it is vain. Yet it does have a purpose.
3. *Ecccl 12:13-14 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.*
4. We must fear God and keep His commands because we will stand before Him in judgment. We need to use this life to prepare for that event.
5. *Gal 4:19 My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*
6. *Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*
7. The purpose of this life is to become like Jesus Christ. We become like Him so we are prepared to be with Him. We learn to behave like He behaved and follow His example. We learn to like what He liked and hate what He hated. We become **Christlike**.

**D. We see we need to be prepared for the future.****Conclusion; Is the church where we ought to be?****A. If it is we need to become a Christian.**

1. We need to first meet the Lord in **faith, repentance** and **baptism**.
2. We need to learn to **care for others** and **encourage one another** in the church.
3. We need to prepare for the future in the church. We need to be ready to meet the Lord in the end.
4. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
5. *Rom 6:3-7 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.*

**B. If we can help you be in the Lord's body, the church today, please let us.**

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