

Foundations of Faith

Lesson Three: The Church

Created for Community

Read Genesis 2:18. In God's perfect creation before any sin, what did God say was "not good"? Why? _____

For man (people) to be alone; People need help; He created us for community

Story on our need for Community and Acceptance

One of the greatest needs of the human heart is relationship. When you became a child of God, you became a member of God's family, the church. The church is not a place of worship or a meeting. The church is a gathered group of believers. We were created for this kind of community. We all need God, and we all need the church to find acceptance and fulfill His plans for our lives. Jesus and the church are inseparable.

Read Ephesians 1:22-23. What do these verses teach us about the church? _____ Jesus is the head of the church;

The Bible also describes the church as Christ's body, fellow citizens, God's household (family), a building in the process of being built;

a temple of God – where His presence dwells.)

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What do these verses tell us is God's will for us regarding being with other believers regularly? _____

We need to meet regularly to spur each other on and to encourage one another.

Describe your past view of and experience with the church. _____

Personal testimony on what the Church has meant in your Life.

Church Life

The best description of church life in the New Testament is more of a series of snapshots than a definition. Numerous passages help us see what Jesus intended for His body, the church.

Read Acts 2:42-47 and circle the activities and experiences that characterized the early church.

v. 42 – "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer".

v. 43 – "And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe: and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles."

v. 44 – "And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common..."

v. 45 – "...and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need."

v. 46 – "And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart..."

v. 47 – "...praising god and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."

What would attract you to this type of community? _____

Purpose of the Church

Read Ephesians 3:10-11; 20-21. What is God's purpose for the church? To reveal His wisdom to the world; To glorify God

Read Matthew 28:19-20. Describe in your own words the four things Jesus commands His followers to do in these verses. _____

To "go" to another person with the gospel; Take the initiative; even to the nations; Lead other people to follow Jesus

(make disciples); Baptize them with water when they choose to believe; Teach them to know and obey all Jesus commanded

Acts of Obedience

Jesus has instructed us to obey all that He has commanded. Baptism, the observance of the Lord's Supper, and giving, are three specific commands Jesus gave us that demonstrate our relationship and commitment to other believers.

Baptism

Water baptism is a public declaration that you believe in Jesus. Baptism is not optional but the first command Jesus has given new believers (Acts 2:38). Water baptism is a symbolic act through emersion in water. It does not have the power to forgive sin. But baptism does signify to the world, "I am not ashamed to identify with Jesus Christ or His family."

Read Romans 6:3-4. What does water baptism symbolize according to these verses? Our death to sin and new life in Christ

The Lord's Supper

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. According to these verses, what has Jesus instructed his disciples to do? Why? _____

Eating the bread and drinking the cup to symbolize His death and a way to remember His death and proclaim Him

We call this ordinance from Jesus the Lord's Supper. It ought to be regularly observed wherever and whenever the people of God are gathered. When we receive the Lord's Supper, it is a time to examine our actions and faith (1 Corinthians 11:23-29), to remember what He has done for us on the cross and renew our covenant of love together with Him.

Giving

God also asks the church to be a giving community. Monetary giving is often a test of the disciple's faith, love, and obedience. Everything we have is from God, and He is our provider. We can trust Him with our money and our lives.

What do the following verses teach us about giving?

Malachi 3:8-10 We should not rob God by holding back tithes (10% of our income) and offerings

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 God wants us to give generously, willingly and cheerfully;

Acts 20:35 It is more blessed to give than to receive

Matthew 23:23 Justice, mercy and faithfulness

Personal testimony of being Blessed by Giving.

YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Commit to a Square One Group or Point Team and Sunday morning service.
- Begin this month giving 10% of your income to a local church or group of believers.
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share the gospel this week.
- Share this lesson with someone who is ready to be trained.