

As we will see in a moment, the church has a great work to accomplish. But let's first look at how the church is meant to function.

**The Church Functions under Pastoral Leadership**

📖 1 Timothy 3:1-7

These verses list the requirements for a *bishop* or *pastor*. God's design is that the church function under the leadership of a Pastor. Timothy himself became the Pastor of the church at Ephesus.

📖 Acts 6:2-3. **Q.** What should the Pastor be free to do?

**The Church Functions to Fulfill the Great Commission**

📖 Matthew 28:18-20. Write out Matthew 28:19,20

The main purpose of the church is to preach the gospel, baptize those who are saved, disciple them, and train them to be soul winners themselves. The church can perform other functions, but fulfilling the Great Commission as given in Matthew 28 ought always to be the main focus of the church of Jesus Christ!

**Tuesday – Self Check!**

1. Who is the head of the church?
2. What is another name for the church?
3. What can we refer to a local assembly of believers as?
4. Under Jesus Christ, who has God intended to lead the church?
5. What is the main purpose of the church?



**11 The New Testament Church**

**Thursday** *The Founding of the Church*

**Read** Matthew 16:15-18 **Q.** What did Jesus say that he would build?

Some use the above passage to teach that Jesus would build the church upon the Apostle Peter. This view is unscriptural. The other disciples did not recognize Peter as pre-eminent over the church (see Matt 18:1, Mark 9:33,34). At one point, Paul openly rebuked Peter for hypocrisy because "he was to be blamed" (Gal 2:11). The Bible does not support the teaching of Peter as the authoritative head of a church hierarchy. Christ is the head, and the builder of the church. 📖 Colossians 1:18

Although in God's plan since before the world began, the idea of the New Testament church was foreign to the Jews and to generations of Old Testament saints.

📖 Colossians 1:25-27. Paul is speaking of his ministry to the church. **Q.** In verse 26, what does Paul call the *dispensation of the church*?

Even the \_\_\_\_\_ which hath been \_\_\_\_\_ from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.

Now look again at verse 27. **Q.** What is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles? \_\_\_\_\_

God's plan for the New Testament church, the indwelling Holy Spirit and Salvation for all of mankind was a hidden mystery until its revelation by Jesus Christ. Jesus promised to build his church, and after his resurrection he sent the means by which he would build it (the indwelling Spirit or *Christ in you*).

On the day of Pentecost we see the gift of the indwelling Spirit shed upon the disciples, and understand more completely what Christ meant when he said "I will build my church". Today, this work continues as men and women of God yield to the power of the indwelling Spirit and obey his commands for the church.

**The Church as The Body of Christ**

📖 1 Corinthians 15:9, Eph 1:22, Eph 5:25-27, Col 1:18,24

What did Paul persecute? \_\_\_\_\_

What is Christ the head of? \_\_\_\_\_

What did Christ love and give himself for? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the church also referred to as? \_\_\_\_\_

The Bible refers to the church as the *Body of Christ*. In this sense, the term *church* refers to all born-again believers. The church in this sense has no form or function, and *will not* until it is gathered together and presented to Christ at the rapture (Eph 5:25-27). The majority of occurrences of the word *church* in the New Testament do not refer to the church in this sense, but rather to local, visible assemblies of believers.

**The Church as A Local Assembly**

📖 Rom 16:5, 1 Cor 16:19, 1 Pet 5:13, 1 Cor 1:2, Col 4:15

Notice that in each of the above passages, the church was located *somewhere*. Some churches met in homes, others in rented facilities and some in the synagogue. The important thing to remember is that the “church” was not the building, but the assembly of believers. This is made clear by a verse like Colossians 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church *which is in his house*.

📖 Heb 10:25. The functioning church is the local, visible assembly of believers. It is this assembly that we are exhorted not to forsake in Heb 10:25. It is the local, visible assembly of believers that is to evangelize, baptize, receive members, exhort,, rebuke and discipline. These functions cannot be performed by an unorganized, universal church.

**The Church is Independent**

The churches in the New Testament were local assemblies, and were independent of each other. They didn’t answer to a church hierarchy. This is the pattern that today’s church must follow.

The church is made up of baptized believers who are submitted to each other, and to the headship of Jesus Christ. Without submission to the headship of Christ the church loses it’s purpose and power. Without a mutual submission the church cannot exhort, reprove, rebuke or discipline as scripture requires.

The relationship of believers in a church is a unique one. Unlike other organizations, the church membership is called out by God. For this reason, a church likely has men, women and children within it from all ethnicities, social statuses and heritages. Though the membership is vastly different, it is meant to be bonded in love. This is the reason that we oftentimes refer to a local assembly of believers as a *church family*. (see Eph 3:14,15)

📖 1John 3:14 Q. How do we know we’re passed from death to life?

📖 Colossians 3:12-17. These verses give instruction regarding the behaviour of believers toward one another.

Q. Can you count at least 16 exhortations in the above verses regarding how believers should interact with each other?

Among other things, the Bible instructs us to: receive, serve, forbear, forgive, teach, admonish, comfort, edify, exhort, prefer, have compassion on, be kind to, submit to, pray for, confess faults to, be kindly affectioned to, and to love one another.

What a special relationship that God has intended for believers! Unity and victory in the church comes only when it’s members exhibit these great character qualities toward one another.

Psalms 133:1 says *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*

A spirit of envy, pride, gossip and contention in the church quenches the Holy Spirit and causes disunity in the church. **How is your relationship with your Church Family?**