

About Our Church



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Our congregation is a local congregation of the churches of Christ, a worldwide fellowship of congregations which maintain unity of organization, doctrine and purpose based solely upon the New Testament authority of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 3:17). Churches of Christ recognize no central human authority, such as a "mother church," an earthly headquarters, a president of a denominational body, a conference, or a head of the church other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather, churches of Christ function locally and autonomously under the leadership of a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4. A study of these passages also reveals that the terms elder, bishop, pastor or shepherd, and overseer are used interchangeably). Churches of Christ endeavor to function doctrinally in compliance with the Holy Spirit inspired instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles (Colossians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 4:6), seeking to duplicate as much as possible the church that is revealed in and approved by the New Testament. Consequently, the Lord Jesus Christ is recognized as the sole head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:13-18), and the New Testament as the code by which He governs His church (Galatians 3:24-25; Hebrews 8:4-13; 9:15-18) and to which His church must be in submission (John 14:15).

What is the church of Christ?

It is a church that is revealed in the New Testament. The word "church" is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which is a compound of two other Greek words: *ek*, which means "out of" and *kaleo*, which means "to call". Thus, the church is the "out called" ones. In the New Testament the word "church" first occurs in Matthew 16:18 where it is used in a general sense to refer to all who belong to it (Matthew 16:18; also Ephesians 5:23-25). The word translated as "church" is used in a local sense, referring to the Lord's people in one congregation or particular geographical area (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1). The church is not given a proper name by inspiration, but it is designated by the following terms: The "body of Christ," (Eph. 1:22-23); the "bride of Christ" (Rev. 21:9); "church of God" (Acts 20:28); "church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15); "church of the first-born" (Heb.12:23); the "family" of God (Eph. 3:15); the flock" of God (1 Pet. 5:2); the "fold" of Christ (Jn.10:16); the "general assembly" (Heb. 12:23); "God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9); "God's husbandry" (1 Cor. 3:9); "God's heritage" (1 Pet. 5:2); the "habitation of God" (Eph. 2:22); the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Gal.4:26); the "house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15); the "house" of Christ (Heb. 3:6); the "house hold of God" (Eph. 2:19); "the new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:2); the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15); a "spiritual house" (1 Pet.2:5); the temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16); and "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16).

The Establishment Of The Church

The beginning of the church is discussed in Old Testament prophecies such as Isaiah 2:2-3 and Micah 4:1-2. It is here seen that the house of God, the church (1 Timothy 3:15) would be

established in the "last days", which is the New Testament age (Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 2:16-17). The church would be "established in the top of the mountains," for example, in the midst of other governments (the Roman Empire and her vassal states), and "exalted above the hills," surpassing all civil governments. It would be established when the "word of the Lord" went forth from Jerusalem (Acts 10:34-35), and "All nations shall flow unto it," that is, people of all nations would enter it (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 10:34-35).

Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:31-35), and Daniel's prophetic interpretation of it (Daniel 2:36-45) reveals that the Messianic kingdom was to be established in "the days of these kings." The four universal empires of the vision were: (1) the Babylonian Empire (606-536 BC), (2) the Medo-Persian Empire (536-330 BC), (3) the Macedonian Empire (330-63 BC), and the Roman Empire (63 BC to AD 476). "These kings," then, referring to the days of the Roman Empire. During the Lord's personal ministry the church had not been established, as is shown by the following references: AD 27 - The kingdom was "at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2), and "come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:9). Around AD 28 - "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:9-10). AD 29 - "I will build my church." (Matthew 16:16-18). Some of the apostles were not to taste death until the kingdom had come (Mark 9:1). Before Jesus's ascension into heaven, His disciples noted that the kingdom had not yet been restored (Acts 1:6), but from the events of Acts 2 onward, we can see that the words kingdom and church cease to be used in the future tense and are used in the present tense, for example, AD 37 - "persecution against the church." (Acts 8:1); AD 60 - Christians are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son (Col. 1:13); AD 65 - instructed regarding behavior suitable for the "church of the living God." (1 Tim. 3:15); AD 96 - in the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:9), and the seven Asian churches (Revelation 2 and 3). The necessary conclusion is that the terms "church" and "kingdom" are synonyms referring to the body of Christ's disciples and that it was established on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2.

The Organization Of The Church

In the church in the universal sense, the New Testament reveals no central earthly organization. Over the church in this sense the Lord Jesus Christ presides as "head" (Ephesians 1:22-23), and "the blessed and only potentate." (1 Timothy 6:15). God established that each local congregation be completely autonomous, or self governing under Christ. There is no organic governmental relationship between congregations, but there is a definite order or organization to be found in each congregation (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

- Elders are to be appointed "in every church," or local congregation, and they hold the highest office in the local congregation. The qualifications of elders are given by inspiration (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11). The duties of elders are to oversee the congregation and preserve it from error (Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9-11; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
- Deacons were also appointed in congregations (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Philippians 1:1), and were to be subordinate to the elders.
- Evangelists were also found generally in the New Testament church (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 21:8; 2 Timothy 4:5). They were also called "preachers" (1 Timothy 2:7) and "ministers" (Romans 13:4; Ephesians 6:21), whose duty was to preach the Word to both the lost and the saved (1 Corinthians 9:16; 2 Tim. 4:1-4).
- Teachers also performed an important work in the church (Ephesians 4:11). Their function was to teach the Word of God to others, either publicly or privately (2 Timothy 2:2; Acts 18:26; 1 Timothy 1:3; 4:11; Titus 2:40).
- Congregations were also composed of members, whose duty it was to serve the Lord to the best of their ability (Romans 12:4). Identification with a local congregation was a practice

in the apostolic church (Romans 16:1). (Please take a moment to read ["Identifying With A Local Congregation"](#) by clicking on the underlined title.)

Worship In The New Testament Church.

A special day was ordained for the New Testament church as a day of assembly and worship (Hebrews 10:25). On the first day of the week the New Testament church assembled to "break bread" (Acts 20:7). On this day they also made a contribution to the Lord's work (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

Inspiration reveals what the saints did in worshipping the Lord when they were assembled: They observed the Lord's Supper (Act. 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29); they sang hymns of praise (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19 - rather than riot drunkenly as the pagans did); they engaged in prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 2:1, 8); they gave of their money unto the Lord (1 Corinthians 16:1-2); they continued steadfastly in apostolic doctrine, worship and service (Acts 2:42). The New Testament also teaches that important attitudes must accompany acceptable worship: It must be done in spirit and truth (John 4:24); it must be performed with grace in the heart toward God (Colossians 3:16); the heart is to be filled with praise (Eph. 5:19); praying and singing must be done with spiritual understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15) and not in ignorance; worship must not be done in formality, but must spring from the heart (Matthew 15:7-9, 13); reverence must be had for God in order to serve and worship Him acceptably (Hebrews 12:28).

The Mission Or Work Of The Church

The work of the church may be stated briefly under these three items: **Evangelism**, which is to preach the gospel to others (Ephesians 3:10; Acts 8:1-4; 13:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 1:8), **edification**, which means that the church is to strengthen and edify its own members (1 Corinthians 14:12; 2 Corinthians 12:19; Ephesians 4:16,29), and **benevolence**, which means that the church must also minister to the poor and needy (Galatians 6:10; Romans 12:13; 15:25-27; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4; 9:6:11).

Membership In The Church of Christ

Membership in the church of the Lord was considered vital in the days of the apostles and remains vital today. Christ died for the church, and the ransomed were members of it (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). Since the church is the "bride of Christ", we are not espoused to Christ when we are not in it (Revelation 21:9). The church is God's dwelling place, and we must be in it for Him to dwell in us (Ephesians 2:19-22). To be delivered to the Father when the Lord returns, we must be in His kingdom, which is His church (1 Corinthians 15:24).

The New Testament clearly reveals how people then become members of the church:

- By experiencing the new birth (John 3:5).
- By being converted (Matthew 18:1-3).
- By obeying the terms of salvation as stated by the Lord in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

Thus, by obeying the will of the Lord in salvation, we are added to the saved/church by Him (Acts 2:41, 47).