

CHURCH



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Compiled by TOMS - 04/2020

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The goal of this write up is to briefly shed light on the word “church”.

Who/What is Church?

Most people understand that the word “church” refers to a building. From a biblical stance, church is not a building. Church (ekklesia in Greek) refers to an “assembly”. In this case, we are referring to the assembly of the whole body of believers.

The church is an assembly of the called-out ones to God. When Christian believers gather or assemble, that is referred to as the church. Therefore, not every gathering or assembly of people is a church.

Jesus first mentioned the word church (ekklesia) in the following scripture.

- Matthew 16:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my **church**, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

The writer in Hebrews admonishes us to not neglect our meeting together (assembling).

- Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)

²⁵ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our **meeting together**, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

- **Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV)**

²⁵And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 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.

What Jesus did for the Church.

- **Acts 20:28 (NIV)**

²⁸Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. **Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.**

After reading the above scripture, the question we all need to ask ourselves is this
“Did Jesus Christ’s blood buy buildings or people?”

Church is living and active.

The comparison provided in Ephesian 5:24-30 between the marriage institution and church serves as a great example that church is indeed not a building, rather an assembly of believers.

- **Ephesians 5:24-30**

²⁴Now as **the church** submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved **the church** and gave himself up for her

²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

²⁷and to present **her** to himself as a radiant **church**, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does **the church**

³⁰ for we are members of his body.

Ephesians 5:24-30 is another portion of scripture where we see the word church mentioned frequently. Every time the word “church” (ekklesia) is mentioned in this portion of scripture it is compared to a living entity (marriage).

In verse 24 – the submission of the church to Christ is compared to the submission of a wife to her husband.

In verse 25 – the love and sacrifice of Christ is compared to the kind of love a husband should have for his wife.

In verse 26 and 27 – the process of love and sacrifice Christ showed the church was for the purpose of holiness and cleansing with the word so that the outcome will be “a church without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

In verse 27, the church is referred to as “her” (throughout scripture, the church is known to be the bride of Christ).

In verse 29 – the care of our bodies, is compared to the care that Christ has for the church.

All these and more, suggest to us that the church is certainly not a building. Rather, an assembly of Christian believers.

Leadership in Church

- James 5:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the **elders of the church** to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

The Church glorifies God

- Ephesians 3:20-21 (The Voice)

²⁰ Now to the God who can do so many *awe-inspiring things, immeasurable things*, things greater than we ever could ask or imagine through the power at work in us,

²¹ to Him be **all glory in the church** and in Jesus the Anointed from this generation to the next, forever and ever. Amen.

Church is characterized by the many actions and emotions demonstrated and illustrated in scriptures

- I Corinthians 11:18, 22 (NIV)

¹⁸ In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a **church**, there are **divisions** among you, and to some extent I believe it.

²² Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the **church** of God by humiliating those who have nothing?

An inanimate object (a building) cannot divide itself (vs 18) neither can it respond to actions of humiliation (vs 22).

Jesus is the head of the church and the church is the body

- Ephesians 1:22-23 (NIV)

²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be **head** over everything for the **church**,

²³ **which is his body**, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

The church is referred to as “the body of Jesus”. Though body (soma in Greek) is used here symbolically, it still helps us understand that “church” is not inanimate. Church is living. However, the body of Christ is made up of all Christian believers.

Other scriptures about church.

When Paul sent greetings to the church, he was not sending greetings to the building, rather to the people (the church) in the various locations.

- Romans 16:5 (NIV)

⁵ Greet also the church that meets at their house.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

Paul refers to the church in their house—not a church building, but a body of believers.

- Galatians 1:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

² and all the brothers and sisters with me,

To the **churches** in Galatia:

- Philemon 1:2 (NIV)

² also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to **the church** that meets in your **home**:

- **1 Timothy 3:15 (KJV)**

¹⁵ But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the **house of God**, which is **the church** of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.