

## 7. Who Needs Church Anyway?

Let's agree on what Church is before discussing if it is needed or not. The Church did not exist during the Old Testament times. It was instituted at the beginning of the New Testament as "The Present Age." To understand the Church as it now functions, let's first take a look at how the people of the Old Testament worshipped or fulfilled their contract with God.

During the Old

**The Church;  
What is it?**

Before the Church (Old Testament Times), Men Came to God to Worship and Ask for Forgiveness through a Priest. A Curtain Separated Men from God in the Temple. When Jesus was Crucified the Curtain was torn from Top to Bottom by God. The Church was formed so that Man could come directly to God rather than continue approaching Him through a Priest.

Matt 27: 45, 50 - 51

**Church 1**

**Matthew 27: 45, 50 - 51**

From the sixth hour to the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabach-thani?" which means, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

This is what is so significant about Jesus' execution. Holy God could not continue His close fellowship with His son due to our sins being on him at that time.

The Old Testament practice was for a separating curtain to remain between God and the Hebrew people. Only the High Priest could go behind the temple curtain to offer prayers on behalf of the people and hear from God to instruct the people. With the removal of the curtain, we can all now approach God without a priest.

Testament times, God worked through His servant Moses to set up a portable tabernacle and a system of Priests. The tabernacle was a tent-like structure with three courts. The outer court was for all worshippers or believers. The inner court was for the priests and the third and smallest court was for God. It was called the Holy of Holies. A curtain separated the Holy of Holies from the inner court and only the high priest could go behind the curtain once a year to pray for the sins of the people. People did not pray directly to God. They confessed their sins to a priest and offered sacrifices as a means of worship. The priests would slay the animal sacrifices on behalf of the worshipper. In other words, the people did not come directly in contact with God during the Old Testament times. Priests

interceded for them. There were a few exceptions for special people like the priests and elected prophets or spokesmen for God to the people. The curtain was thick and strong. It was made of skins and woven materials.

## Jesus Started The Church

### He Is The Head of the Church

Matt 16: 18

Col 1: 18



Once the people of the Old Testament took up residence in Canaan (present day Israel), they built a more permanent temple to replace the portable tabernacle.

The Church as we know it was established by Jesus at the beginning of the New Testament age or the New Covenant age in which we now live.

Reading the account of the crucifixion of Jesus in Matthew 27: 46 and again in verses 50-51, "*About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sa-bachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?'.....*" And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from the top to bottom!" At that moment, the Church was instituted!! The curtain was removed which symbolically separated people from God. People no longer needed a priest. *Individual believers can now directly approach God because God accepted the death of His Son as payment for all of our sins!*

Church 2

#### Matthew 16: 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.

#### Colossians 1: 18

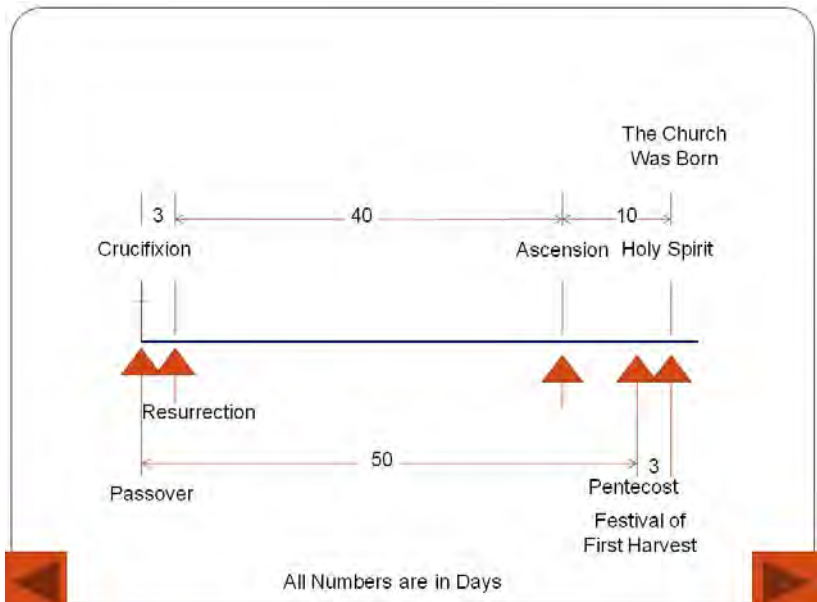
And He is the Head of the body, the Church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have supremacy.

Peter had spoken from heavenly inspiration and it was this inspiration or foundation rock that Christ built the Church – not the man Peter. The Church shall prevail against the forces of evil (Hades).

Christ is the Head of the Church which is His body on Earth.



Some misunderstand that the Church is a place or building or an impersonal institution. The Church is a group of Christians bonded together for the common purpose of



participating in and furthering the cause of the Kingdom of God. They are spiritually baptized into the Body of Christ which is called the Church.

Jesus is the present Head of the Church. This is no job for a mere man! The Church is called the Body of Christ. It is made up of members. Romans 12: 4 states, *“For just as in a single human body there are many limbs and organs, all with different functions, so all*

*of us (Christians), united with Christ, form one body (the Church), serving individually as limbs and organs to one another.”* The inspired writer identified Church members (Christians) as having differing but essential functions in the

## The Church Is a Group of Baptized Believers

They Have Agreed To Meet Together in Faith and Fellowship



## Jesus Is The Head of the Church

### The Church is the Body of Christ

Jesus Is the Great Shepherd  
A Pastor is the Shepherd Or Overseer  
Deacons/Elders are Servant Undershepherds

Church. God has a purpose (ministry of service) for each Christian through the local Church. Just as the function of the ear is not the same as that of the arm, Christians are gifted to perform different (not all the same) functions or ministries through the Church. A Church with members that refuse to function is a crippled Church!

In the Church where Papaw serves, a Pastor is called of God to shepherd the flock of members that make up the Church. The Pastor is to perform his duties under the direction of the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. Papaw is a Deacon (servant) that serves as an under-shepherd in support of the

## Each Member [of His Body] Has Been Gifted to Minister

Ephesians 4: 7 – 16

1 Cor 12: 11-23



Each Member of the Body has been Gifted to carry out the functions of the Body. If Each Member Does Not Carry out his/her Function, then the Church will not Accomplish What God has Planned Through the Church

Church 3

### Ephesians 4: 7 – 8, 11 - 13

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men."

It was He who gave some (gifts) to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

### 1 Corinthians 12: 11 – 13

All these are the work of the one and same Spirit, and He gives them (gifts) to each one, just as He determines. The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized (enveloped) by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Pastor. Papaw's principle service is teaching.

Christians that think they can please God and not be an active member of a local Church are in serious error. The Bible mandates that the Church be unified under Christ to 1) evangelize (bring people into the Kingdom by sharing the good news of Christianity), 2)

disciple (teach to a level of understanding and self-dependence upon God) and 3) provide members opportunity to serve.

The Greek word for Church is Ecclesia. It means “Called out ones”. The Church is to be a people called out from the world system in which they live. Cultural habits make this a difficult assignment for new Christians who have grown accustomed to the ways of the world. Remember that the Christian has a spiritual enemy called Satan or the

## The Greek Word For Church Is EKKLESIA

“Called Out Ones”

Separated From the World System

We are not to be entangled in the Affairs of this World but to be a separated people that obey the Great Shepherd rather than the god of this world!

*The True Church  
Is The Body  
of Jesus Christ  
on Earth  
Through Which  
He Extends His  
Influence*

Eph 3: 10 – 11  
II Cor 5: 20



Jesus is Depending Upon The Church to Continue the Ministry He Started.  
We Are His Ambassadors On Earth

Devil who uses the things of this world to reward those who will follow his ways. The Church is to distinguish itself by being different from the culture by using the Bible as its handbook for living rather than the accepted ways of this world.

When Jesus left his disciples and returned to Heaven, he gave them the responsibility of

continuing the work He had started. These were not highly educated men but were very ordinary men like fisherman, tax collectors, etc. Imagine trusting such a tremendous responsibility to such a lot! The Christian is to never think of himself as being inadequate or unworthy of being responsible for service ministry. Jesus is depending on us for this awesome

### Ephesians 3: 10 – 11

His intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### II Corinthians 5: 20

We are therefore Christ's Ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

responsibility just as he was with his immediate disciples.

There are many very important tasks to be performed by the Church (Christians). These tasks require many members cooperating together. Papaw once had a pastor that said it is

*The Church Is To:*

- Worship and Praise God
- Make Disciples; that make Disciples
- Pray; Teach others to Pray
- Teach the Bible
- Tell Lost People About Jesus
- Provide Fellowship
- Send Jesus' Message Around the World
- Practice Stewardship
- Perform Baptisms
- Observe The Lord's Supper
- Care for the Poor

**This Course started as part of the Ministry of a Church.  
People Who are Saved Are Probably Saved Because Some Church  
Member was Obedient.**

**Some Churches Participate in a Cooperative Program to Send  
Missionaries Around the World.**

God's sovereign choice to conduct His work on Earth through Christians rather than to send angels to do it.

Church is to be a sanctuary or safe haven for all people in need. Church is not for a special select people. Fellowship is a basic human need and all people seek it from some

source. Clubs, bars, civic organizations, societies, churches, etc. All offer fellowship. Some succeed better than others. In the Christian realm meeting and sharing provides fellowship. This might be accomplished around a meal table, over a cup of coffee or just

*Ordinances:*

- 1. Baptism - To Be Performed Before Partaking of the Lord's Supper*
- 2. Lord's Supper- Act of Obedience Through Bread and Grape Juice [Fruit of the Vine]*

1 Corinthians 11: 23 - 29

- The Supper used the "Fruit of the Vine" and Unleavened Bread (No Yeast or Bacteria)
- The original manuscripts do not call for Wine but Fruit of the Vine (Wine is fermented)
- The Bread Represents Christ's Body (Free of Sin)
- The Fruit of the Vine Represents Christ's Blood (Life)
- The Christian is to be Baptized Once
- The Lord's Supper Can be Taken Often in Remembrance of Him

spending some time together in a common interest like fishing, bowling, etc. Working together on a construction project, dramatic presentation, or a school field trip is another type of fellowship. Helping someone by meeting his physical, spiritual or physiological needs is yet another type of fellowship the Church is to provide.

Churches often cooperate by pooling money resources to send the message of Christ around the world. This is usually accomplished by sending missionaries to other locations. Of course modern communications make it possible to broadcast the message

of Christ to all parts of the world. The Church is to actively seek ways to broadcast the good news (gospel) of Christ to everyone in the local community as well as the world.

Church 6

**1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 29**

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you. The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Only Christians should take the Lord's supper. It is a very serious and solemn practice. The Christian should first search his heart, confess his sin, and meditate on what Christ has done for him.

Biblical stewardship is an attitude of the heart. The Christian comes to realize that all he has and all that he is comes from God. God created each person in His image and equipped him with health, dexterity, brightness of mind and unique skills. Since the Christian understands that he has been bought at a great

price and he has died to his selfishness, then he comes to understand that he is a manager or custodian of the life and resources he has at his disposal. This is true stewardship. The Church is to provide an environment in which each Christian can practice stewardship.

Jesus set the example of water baptism in the river Jordan. Though John the Baptist thought he was unworthy to baptize Jesus, Jesus insisted that he do so as an example to the generations of Christians to follow.

Baptize means to dip, plunge or submerge. It is a symbolic testimony that the one being baptized is no longer the person he once was. Originally baptisms were performed in public places like lakes, streams and even the ocean.

Baptism is one of the two ordinances of the Church. It is an act of obedience to Christ to be performed after one is saved. One must never confuse baptism as a requirement for salvation.

Being submerged under water is a pretty good picture of death! Christians just can't live down there without the aid of SCUBA. The Christian would die if the one administering

The image shows a presentation slide with a green background. At the top center, the word "BAPTISM" is written in a large, gold, serif font. Below it, in a smaller gold font, is the definition: "Baptizo: To Dip, Plunge, or Immerse. To Be Engulfed." Underneath that, in a bold gold font, is the statement: "Baptism Does Not Bring Salvation !!". At the bottom of the slide, there is a yellow rectangular box with a gold border containing the text: "Baptism is symbolic of Death to the old way of living and Arising to a New Life In Christ." There are small blue navigation arrows on the left and right sides of the slide.

baptism held him under water too long. Fortunately, we have no record of this ever happening. Instead, the one being baptized is raised up into the good oxygen laden air so he can start breathing again.



Romans 6: 3, 4 reads; *“Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (Previous illustration to the left) We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”* (Previous

illustration to the right)

The second ordinance of the Church is the Lord’s Supper. This ordinance is to be taken often in remembrance of what Christ has done for the Christian. The frequency of taking the Lord’s Supper varies from church to church.

**Romans 6: 1 – 11**

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin, how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized (immersed) into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection. For we know that our old (carnal nature) self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death has no mastery over Him. The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.


We must die to our carnal (sin) nature every day. We will then no longer be under the power of sin!!

Some practice it each month others each quarter. The supper is composed of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. When the Hebrews fled Egyptian slavery they were rushed and the women did not take time to add leaven (yeast) to their bread dough. Later they ate unleavened bread as a remembrance of their being saved from the cruel Egyptian taskmasters. They likened the leaven to sin. Knowing that a little leaven will permeate the whole batch of dough, a little sin in the body will corrupt the whole body. So today, unleavened bread represents the sinless body of Christ.

Some Churches use wine (as Jesus and His disciples likely used at the Last Supper) and others use unfermented grape juice. Those that use grape juice instead of wine apply the same reasoning. No bacteria have permeated the fluid causing the juice to be converted to wine. In either case the liquid represents the blood of Jesus.

*Stewardship:*

*We are to be Custodians or Trustees of All That We Have:*  
*Time*  
*Talents , Skills*  
*Material Possessions*  
*etc.*

Luke 16: 10 - 13 

We are to be Stewards of Our Knowledge of the Gospel and Our Christian Experience  
 I Corinthians 16: 1,2 - Set Aside Weekly  
 Rom. 1: 14 - Share Our Knowledge of the Gospel  
 Matt. 6: 19,21 - Do Not Store Up Treasure on Earth  
 Matt. 6: 25, 34 - Trust God for All of our Needs

The Christian teaching on Stewardship has already been touched on. Though stewardship goes beyond the giving of money to the Church, the Bible has clear instructions about giving monetary gifts to the Church so that it may operate. In the Old Testament times, the Levitical priests

neither farmed nor raised livestock like the other eleven tribes. Their entire life was devoted to the care of the Tabernacle (and later the Temple) and serving the people. The rest of the people tithed or provided ten percent of their goods so that the priests could have food to eat and clothes to wear and the tabernacle / temple facilities could be maintained.

Today, the Church teaches stewardship for the same reason. Staff salaries need to be paid, building construction and maintenance costs, utilities, sending out missionaries, benevolence to the local poor, teaching literature, etc. are all cost items that require funds.

Church 7

Luke 16: 10 – 13

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. SO if you have been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own? No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money (or worldly riches).”

Following the session on The Church continue daily Bible reading (Study Acts 1 and 2) and prayer (pray for God's blessing on the Church universal and your church in particular. Pray for your spiritual leaders.)