

The Church is Your Family

Howard Thomes

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The church – your local group of believers – will encourage and guide you as you grow spiritually.

Written by GodLife

When you became a follower of Jesus, you were “born again” (John 3:3). Can you imagine being a newborn baby just coming home, and your parents left you alone on the floor, giving you no food, milk, clean diapers, or love? That would be terrible!

The Church -- Not a Building, But People

As a physical family makes sure you get fed and loved, the church – your local group of believers – will encourage and guide you as you grow spiritually.

One of the most important things your church does is remind you often of the main points of the gospel:

- Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for your sins and rose again to show His power over death,
- Everyone who has by faith received God’s free gift is forgiven of their sins and becomes God’s child,
- Jesus lives in each believer today through His Holy Spirit, giving them power to live a God-pleasing life.

The Church is a Team

Not only do YOU need the church, but the church needs YOU! Imagine a soccer team where everyone wanted to be the goalkeeper. How ridiculous to have 11 goalies! God has designed the church with different roles -- meaning, the team is not complete without you, and you are lacking without the team.

"But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body" (1 Corinthians 12:18-20).

Don't Let the Wolves Get You

When a pack of wolves goes hunting, they try to separate young or weak animals from the herd, where they are easily captured and eaten. *Satan looks for people to devour, just like wolves do (1 Peter 5:8). By spending time with other believers, you'll grow strong in your faith. Then, you can resist the devil, and he'll run away from you (James 4:7).*

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Look to Jesus

Do you meet with other believers regularly? If not, ask God to help you find a group of strong believers to meet with. He knows how desperately you need to be connected to other followers of Jesus, have a spiritual family and share this message with someone who needs to hear it. If you do not have a church family, ask God to lead you to one or to a Christian in your area.

The Body of Christ

In God's word, the Apostle Paul describes the church not as an Organization, but an Organism – the "Body of Christ."

Written by Hope on 24/11/2013

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. – 1 Corinthians 12:12

In God's word, the Apostle Paul describes the church not as an Organization, but an Organism – the "Body of Christ." He goes on in this passage to explain what this means in practical terms:

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. (1 Corinthians 12:15-16)

Each member of Christ's body plays a different yet important role, and is a critical part of the whole.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" (1 Corinthians 12:21)

None of us should consider others (or ourselves) to be less important than another. Different does not mean better or worse. The one part that IS supreme is the Head, which is Jesus Christ Himself.

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

If someone steps on your toe, you don't say, "The toe hurts." You say, "MY toe hurts." When you look in the mirror and see pimples, you don't say, "The face is breaking out," but "MY face is breaking out." In the same way, when your brother or sister in Christ is suffering physical or emotional pain, you don't say, "That's not my problem." You go to that person and see how you can help. And if you can't change the situation, it may be enough just to "weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15).

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There are two distinct, but equally important, meanings of Christ's body, the church. One includes every believer in the world, and is commonly called The Church. When you became a Christ-follower, you became part of The Church. But at the same time, every believer is called to become part of a local body or church. It's in that context that all these relationships happen, and it's where personal ministry takes place. Next week we will look more closely at relationships in the Body of Christ and what they mean in daily life.

Prayer, Care, and Share Jesus

Scripture: *1 Timothy 3:15: "...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."*

Because being part of a church is so important in the life of a Christian, and to the church's surrounding community, why don't you help a new Christian that you're mentoring find a local church that is right for them?

You can invite them to your church, or a church that is close to where they live. Make sure that the church you suggest is a healthy church, is welcoming and teaches from the Bible. Encourage this person to attend a church so they can worship together with other believers, grow spiritually, be encouraged, and serve one another while displaying Christ's love to the local community.

Let the church also be a place where you can offer prayer, receive prayer, and carry out your personal ministry in building God's Kingdom. God can use the body of Christ to lift an entire community, neighborhood or village out of oppression and into a life that is filled with the Holy Spirit.

In your area, there may be no church to attend or one to which you can easily invite someone. If you can, get a group of Christians you know together. Even if it is a small one, believers meeting on a regular basis to worship, pray, and look for ways God may use them can make a powerful and lasting impact on their community for His Kingdom.

Why Do I Have to Go to Church?

Is it enough to just follow Jesus?

Written by GodLife on 02/05/2017

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. — 1 Corinthians 12:27

Did God give us a list of steps we must take before we can go on to maturity? In a way, yes! An interesting Bible passage warns us not to get stuck in our growth, but to move on to maturity. In doing this, it actually gives us seven "basic things" mature believers need to understand clearly. It begins

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with our personal relationship with God. It moves to our earthly identification with God's people. And it ends with the ultimate heavenly destiny of all God's people.

Are you ready for a tour? Turn [to Hebrews 6](#) and follow carefully along.

Just You and God

“Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God...” (Hebrews 6:1)

Every follower of Jesus needs to clearly know Who He is. He's *“the only Son, who is truly God” (John 1:18)*. He loves us so much that He left heaven to live under His own Law. He was tempted in every way, but He remained perfect and sinless. He suffered rejection, mockery and a cruel execution to take the punishment our sins deserve. He said, *“It is finished,” (John 19:30)* when He died, and *His resurrection proved it was true.*

For this “once for all” sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10-14) to work for me, I had to realize all I ever did only increased my guilt. My works were “deeds that bring death.” If there were any other way for me to escape hell, “it was useless for Christ to die” (Galatians 2:21). Believe this, pray humbly to receive Him, and trust that He's able to save you forever, and you become a child of God (Hebrews 7:25; John 6:37).

You and the “local church” — the people of God near you

“And we shouldn't need to keep teaching about baptisms or about the laying on of hands...” Hebrews 6:2a

As the passage implies, God did not save you simply so that you could enjoy eternal life. As His child, you're part of a family with a mission. Not to keep teaching already-saved people the same things over and over, but *to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” (Matthew 28:19)* But until a new believer has been baptized, he or she needs to be taught.

Water baptism is a public ceremony identifying you with Jesus and the other “called-out” people of God (that's what “church” means). In order to do this, you have to have fellowship with other Christians, even if it's only with one or two other people who follow Jesus. “Laying on of hands” takes it a step farther — this means publicly choosing and sending someone out for service. God empowers each believer “so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong” (Ephesians 4:12).

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You and *the “universal church”* — the whole family in heaven and earth (*Ephesians 3:15*)

Finally, the passage ends with two more important points: “...the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.” (Hebrews 6:2b).

When Jesus returns, there will be a resurrection (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-58*). Believers who have died will be raised and united with those still living on earth. This is so that, in heaven, the work of the entire Church can be judged at once by Him (*2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5*), and He can *“show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:7).*

In this lesson, it's easy to see that we're not meant to live the Christian life alone. You might be able to think of exceptions: missionaries who travel to places where there is no church. Isolated believers in countries where Christians are persecuted. Those whose family members do not allow them to attend. But these are the special cases, because those who are denied church fellowship are the very ones who want it most! Christian children whose parents do not take them to church long to know what it is like. Isolated believers do their best to meet in secret or find a substitute, like broadcast or online services. Remote missionaries are going for the very purpose of establishing a church.

As *Hebrews 6:1-2* shows us, there really is no way to move on to Christian maturity, to serve in the role for which God has called and empowered you, to accomplish the deeds for which He deserves praise in heaven, without being a part of an assembly of believers.

Pray this week:

Father, will you teach me everything I need to know about being a member of the Body of Christ?