

## THE CHURCH

*“The one holy universal church, which is the body of Christ and to which all believers belong.”*

### What is the Church?

We could think of the meeting place the building or the rituals and traditions as religious activities and so on. But, the word “Church” comes from the Greek word “Ecclesia” meaning “to call out from.”

In the Bible, the word church can refer to a local group of believers (Philemon 2; Col. 4:15) and also mean the church universal (1 Cor. 15:9)

So, we need to differentiate between:

1. **The visible church and the invisible church**  
*(Church members & whose names written in the Book of life)*
2. **The local church and the universal church**  
*(Local congregation & churches everywhere)*
3. **The imperfect church and the ideal church**  
*(Striving for perfection through Christ & already gone to heaven)*
4. **The church militant and the church triumphant.**  
*(Church on earth & already in heaven)*

### Biblical Images:

The church is the called out people of God. (cf. Ex. 6:7; 1 Pet. 2:9)

- The Body of Christ                      Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18
- The Bride of Christ                    2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7
- The Building of God                    1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:19-21.

### Basic characteristics of the “Body of Christ” metaphor:

- The unity of the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:3-6)
- The diversity of the members of Christ’s body (Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 12:7)
- God’s Sovereignty over the body (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22, 23)
- The interdependence of the members of the body (1 Cor. 12: 24-26)
- The maturity of the body (Eph. 4:12-16)

**It's relationship to Christ:**

- Christ died for the church
- Christ builds the church
- Christ protects the church
- Christ purifies the church
- Christ intercedes for the church
- Christ prepares for the church

**A model - The early church:** (cf. Acts. 2: 42-47)

- Prayer
- Ministry of God's Word
- Worship
- Fellowship
- Sharing
- Witness

**The Church Sacraments:** The outward sign of the inward grace. The Baptism and The Lord's supper

**The purpose of the Church:**

The church is not a passive society in the world. It receives its power and direction from Jesus Christ, who has given it His authority to fulfill His mission.

- Guarding the Truth (I Tim. 3:15)
- Correcting the unruly (I Cor. 5:9-13)
- Challenging evil (Jude 19-21)
- Evangelising the world (Mt. 28:18-20)
- Serving the world (Titus 3:8)
- Glorifying God (I Pet. 4:12-14)

**Conclusion:**

- Believe in the universal church and belong to the local church.
  - Pray and participate in your local church for fulfilling God's purpose in and through it.
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