

# THE CHURCH

## His Body the fullness of the One who fills all in all Eph 1:23

The bible in its entirety encompasses two subjects--Christ and His Body (which is the church.) The Geek word for church is *ekklesia*, which literally means the called-out ones, an assembly, a gathering of citizens. From this definition we can see that it does not refer to a building, but rather the believers assembling. Obviously it is not practical or even possible to put all believers across time and space under one roof. So that is why there are churches. Churches are the visible aspect of the Church.

### Worldwide (Universal)

The Church comprises all the saved, and transcends time or space, and is beyond the touch of man.

The Church is the Body of Christ.

The Church is invisible

The Church has no organization

The Church is spiritual

**Even as the body is one and has many members, yet all members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.** 1 Cor. 12:12, 28

Even as a human body is a unified whole with many different parts, so also is the body of Jesus Christ. There is great diversity in the body of Jesus Christ, both in appearance and function, yet each member has a common root and a common goal.

**...the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.** Col. 2:19

Both words picture well the wonderful unity in the body by cells, muscles, arteries, nerves, skin, glands, etc. It is a marvellous machine working together under the direction of the head.

**For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand in order that we would walk in them.** Eph. 2:10

**I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.** Matt. 16:18b

Jesus also offers a promise - the forces of death and darkness can't prevail against or conquer the church. This is a precious promise in the heat of battle, assuring us that victory is sure.

The "body-like" unity of Christians is not a goal to achieve; it is a fact to be recognized.

### Local (Congregational)

A local church comprises all the saved in a certain locality or city; a group of believers in Jesus Christ who meet in some particular location on a regular basis.

A church is a miniature Body of Christ

The churches are visible

The churches are organized

The churches are spiritual and physical

**To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:** 1Cor. 1:2

There is not just one specified local church in any one area necessarily. There are many local churches in larger cities.

**Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.**

1 Peter 4:10

**And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ.** Eph. 4:11-12

The purpose of these gifts of leadership is also clear. It is that saints (God's people) might be *equipped* for the work of ministry (service), so that the body of Christ would be built up (expanded and strengthened).

**Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for the building up... For God is not of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints** 1 Cor. 14:26,

33

Conclusion:

**For just as in one body we have many members, and all the member do not have the same function. So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.** Rom. 12:4-5

The church is the Body of Christ and the Body is an organism for Christ to grow and express Himself in the believers' life.

In the body of Christ there is unity but not uniformity. We err when we neglect either aspect; unity should never be promoted at the expense of individuality, and individuality should never diminish the church's unity in Christ. Christ is our common ground and we are one Body in Him.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) With the definition of the "church" in mind, what are your thoughts on the phrase "I am going to church"?
- 2) In respect to the Body of Christ, how do you view other believers who do not meet in the same place as you?