A photograph of a sandy beach with several footprints in the sand. The ocean is in the background, with a small island visible on the horizon under a blue sky with some clouds. The text "THE CHURCH THE FAMILY." is overlaid in a black box with yellow text.

**THE CHURCH
THE FAMILY.**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

What is the church?

From the moment of His conception,
Jesus' mission was **tied to our spiritual recovery.**

An angel told Joseph that the child that Mary was carrying was conceived by the Holy Spirit. **The child was to be named Jesus "because He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21;)**

This **redemptive theme** was echoed by Jesus throughout His public ministry. He said He had come **'to seek and to save what was lost'** and **"to give His life as a ransom for many."**
(Luke 19:10; Matthew 20:28;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The mission of Jesus involved
Securing forgiveness of sins through
the sacrifice of Himself upon the cross.

Didn't Jesus come to build His church?
you might ask. (Matthew 16:18). **Yes.**

Is the church, then, something **in addition**
to Christ's redemptive mission? **No.**

The FIRST CHRISTIANS WERE JEWS!

As we can readily appreciate, the Feast of Pentecost was **a special JEWISH festival** WHEN Jews from all over the Roman world came together in JERUSALEM.

**BUT THE SAME GOSPEL MESSAGE
WAS NOT FOR THE JEWS ALONE!**

When we think also of the most famous verse in the Bible **John 3:16-17**; “For God **SO LOVED THE WORLD**, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whosoever believes** in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

NOT God So Loved the Jews scattered around the **WORLD** but **GOD LOVED the WORLD BOTH THE JEW AND GENTILE** was to receive the **opportunity** of salvation through the sacrifice of the Christ.

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL NATIONS.

Jesus after His resurrection in Matt 28:19; Says
“**GO THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS,**
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”:

**Not just the Jewish Nation ALL nations.
That includes the Gentiles!**

Again IN Acts 1:9; Jesus before His ascension says “when
the Holy Spirit has come upon you, **you will receive power**
to testify about My death and resurrection with great effect,
to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea,
in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

NOT JUST THE JEWS in Jerusalem, but throughout
Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
The **GENTILES** are **INCLUDED** in Jesus instructions.

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL NATIONS.

We cannot over look the statement made by Peter in Acts 2:39; "The promise is **to you and your children** - (Jews) **AND TO ALL WHO ARE AFAR OFF...**"

Who are THEY who are afar off?

**This is not just the JEWS far away!
This INCLUDES the Gentiles.**

Remember what Jesus said in **John 10:10-17**;
"as the Father knows me and I know the Father;
and I lay down my life for the sheep.

**There are other sheep I have that are
not of this fold, and I must lead these too.**

They too will listen to my voice,
and there will be only one flock."

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL NATIONS.

And Paul writing in **Ephesians 2** has what could be described as an inspired commentary on this statement of Jesus!

Eph 2:11; “Do not forget, then, that there was a time when **you who were gentiles** by physical descent, termed the uncircumcised by those who speak of themselves as the circumcised by reason of a physical operation”

“Do not forget, I say, that **you were** at that time **separate** from Christ and **excluded** from membership of Israel, aliens with **no part** in the covenants of the Promise, **limited to this world**, without hope and without God.

BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS, YOU THAT USED TO BE SO FAR OFF HAVE BEEN BROUGHT NEAR, BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL NATIONS.

In Acts 10; Peter has a VISION that describes in no uncertain terms that the GENTILES ARE TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF SALVATION.

So much so that IT IS PETER who makes THE FIRST GENTILE CONVERTS with Cornelius and his house hold.

THE GOSPEL IS SAME FOR ALL NATIONS.

One error which certain religious groups are guilty of is when they argue that **THE TERMS OF SALVATION** are **DIFFERENT** for Jew and Gentile.

They say the gospel presented by Peter, as recorded in Acts 2:38; was meant for Jews **ONLY**, whilst the message later presented to the **GENTILES** - non-Jews - was different.

People such as the 'Plymouth brethren' - sometimes known as 'THE OPEN BRETHREN' - often use a Bible known as **THE SCHOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE**, which introduces the Book of Acts with a statement which runs like this:-

“Acts is in two chief parts: In the first section (1-9:43) Peter is the prominent personage, Jerusalem is the centre, and the ministry is to Jews. Already in covenant relations with Yahweh, they had sinned in rejecting Jesus as the Christ. The preaching, therefore, was directed to that point, and repentance (i.e. "a changed mind") was demanded.”

In the second division (10:1 - 28:31;) Paul is prominent, a new centre is established at Antioch, and the ministry is chiefly to Gentiles who, as "strangers from the covenants of promise" (2:12;), had but to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" to be saved.

**Because we are NON Jews,
people today need 'ONLY BELIEVE.'**

THE GOSPEL IS SAME FOR ALL NATIONS.
Remember EPHESIANS 2:11-13; tells us. (Notice
that Paul is sending this letter to NON-JEWS.)

"YOU GENTILES, YOU WHO WERE ONCE AFAR OFF
...have been brought near in the blood of Christ."

This is the very expression which PETER used
on the DAY OF PENTECOST. So, when he said that
God's promise of salvation was to JEWS, and
to 'ALL WHO ARE AFAR OFF' - he meant that
THE SAME CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL MANKIND.

In ACTS 19:1; Tells us 'Paul ... CAME TO EPHEBUS'. And
then, v13 records that:- "On hearing this they were baptized
in the name of the Lord JESUS".

Evidently, at Ephesus, Paul both preached and practised
baptism, as always among the Gentiles.

THE GOSPEL IS SAME FOR ALL NATIONS.

In ACTS 18:8; “Many of the Corinthians, (Gentiles) hearing, believed and were baptized.”

**We need not be afraid to tell people
that in order to be saved,
they must accept the same conditions
that Peter preached on that day.**

**All must hear the Gospel, believe the Gospel,
All must respond to the gospel of grace
by believing, repenting, confessing
and being baptized.**

THE GOSPEL IS FOR US TO RESPOND TO:-

Another **error** which is quite common which misapplies Acts 2v39; "even to as many as the Lord
Our God shall CALL'

They say “**there is nothing we can do for salvation
God has to call us, this is based
on the false doctrine of so- called
PREDESTINATION, or ELECTION.**”

Those who preach that “**there is nothing we can do**” include J C Sproul SEE NOTES ON John 6; Calvinist Robert W. Yarbrough sets forth the same argument that Sproul does but in more detail.

THE GOSPEL IS FOR US TO RESPOND TO:-

He writes, "**Draw**" in 6:44; translates the Greek **helkuo**.

Outside John it appears in the New Testament only at Acts 16:19: "they seized Paul and Silas and **dragged** them into the marketplace...."

"John's Gospel uses the word to speak of persons being drawn to Christ (12:32;), a sword being drawn (18:10;), and a net full of fish being hauled or dragged to shore (21:6,11;)."

"The related form **helko** appears in Acts 21:30; ("they dragged him from the temple") and James 2:6; ("Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?")."

"It is hard to avoid the impression that John 6:44; refers to a "forceful attraction" in bringing sinners to the Son" ["Divine Election in the Gospel of John, in Still Sovereign, p. 50, fn. 10].

THE GOSPEL IS FOR US TO RESPOND TO:-

“**Predestination CALL:-** In the OT **helkein** denotes a powerful impulse, as in Cant 1:4, which is obscure but expresses the force of love. This is the point in the two important passages in Jn. 6:44; 12:32.”

“There is no thought here of force or magic. The term figuratively expresses the supernatural power of the love of God or Christ which goes out to all, (12:32;) but without which no one can come. (6:44;)”

“The apparent contradiction shows that both the election and the universality of grace must be taken seriously; the compulsion is not automatic. [p. 227].”

THE GOSPEL IS FOR US TO RESPOND TO:-

What? The compulsion is not automatic?

But this is exactly what Sproul and other Calvinists argue that **helkuo** means in John 6:44;
“God literally and irresistibly compels, drags, or forces the elect to come to Christ.”

Yes, **HELKUO** can literally mean drag, compel, or force **in certain contexts**.

(John 18:10; 21:6,11; Acts 16:19; 21:30; and James 2:6),

But it is not the lexical meaning
for the context of John 6:44;
nor for that manner, John 12:32;

THE GOSPEL IS FOR US TO RESPOND TO:-

Sproul confidently states that "linguistically and lexicographically, the word means **to compel**," but where is the citation of all the lexical evidence to support this statement?

Paul tells us plainly in 2 Thess 2:14; that **GOD CALLS US THROUGH THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL** and **NOT** through some mysterious, miraculous call.

Everyone who is **willing to LISTEN to the Gospel**, **will be CALLED by God.**; and responding to the call and responding in obedient faith to the Gospel, **they may be saved.**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

The church had its beginning because the gospel had been preached, believed, and obeyed for the first time. The church will grow where the gospel is preached, believed and obeyed.

The church can be restored when the gospel is preached, believed and obeyed today.

Acts 2:40; (as well as Acts 2:38;) is proof positive that Peter was not a Baptist, a Calvinist, or any other "**heir**" of the Reformation.

It would never occur to a Calvinist to say, "**Save yourselves.**" Many of them **teach that the sinner does nothing and can do nothing in his salvation.** Some inconsistently teach that a man must believe, but that he can do nothing; (Yet John 6:28-29; Says faith is a work.)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

Bible faith is not a naked, dead faith.

Bible faith encompasses obedience from the heart.

WE BELIEVE that we are saved by faith.

That's why we believe that repentance, confession and baptism is necessary for salvation:-

The one in whom We have faith in (Jesus) said so.

What a strange logic it is that reasons:-

"I believe I am saved by faith in Christ and **therefore I **don't** have to believe or do what He says."**

Baptism for the remission of sins is a part of faith.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

When the Bible says that we are not saved by works but by faith, it is teaching that **we cannot merit salvation. Once we have sinned we have forfeited forever salvation on the basis of our meritorious works.**

None of those works can remove one sin. It is only by turning to God in faithful obedience to the gospel that **He forgives us by His grace.**

The Lord added people to the church daily the same way He added them in Acts 2:41; by their receiving the Word and being baptized.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.
We are ADDED to the church today the same way.

**The conditions of church membership and
the conditions of salvation are the same.**

**This is to be expected, since the church
is the body of the saved.**

You cannot JOIN the church of YOUR CHOICE

**When you are saved by the sacrifice and
the resurrection of Christ and your obedience
to His commands YOU ARE ADDED by CHRIST
TO HIS BODY THE CHURCH.**

**“Those who accepted His message were baptized,
and about three thousand were added to their
number that day.” Acts 2:41;**

**Thus BEGAN the “Body of Christ,”
or the “CHURCH” as we understand it.**

**For Many Today “CHURCH” means:-
If you stopped several people on
the street and asked them to describe
a church, what would they say?**

**Some would likely begin to describe
A place you go to.**

A building with a steeple or an organization.

**Our word “church” comes from
kuriakon.**

**later kirk, later church.
= dedicated to the Lord.
= a holy place, or temple.**



**For Many Today “CHURCH” means:-
In the Greek language, the original language
of the New Testament. The word EKKLESIA,
means:- “The Called Out” Or
“The Assembled Together For A Definite Purpose.”**

**The word “ekklesia” was also used to denote
the whole company of redeemed people.**



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

The Church is also referred to as
“The Body Of Christ.” (Ephesians 1:23;)

The Church is **the sanctified** people of God.



It is better to think of Christ's Church as
a living organism rather than an organization.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

This word **ekklesia** literally meaning "**called out.**" Jesus said **He would build His church by calling people to be His disciples**, forgiving their sins and **reconciling them** to God and to each other through His death and resurrection.

When Scripture is compared with Scripture, a picture emerges of **the church as a community of people whom Jesus has saved.**

For example, Paul says that Jesus bought the "**church of God**" "**with His own blood.**" Acts 20:28;

John says that Jesus bought individuals:- "with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." (Rev 5:9;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

What then is the church? The church is made up of people who accept the reign of Christ over their lives, who through the blood of Christ have had their sins forgiven and been brought back into a loving relationship with God.

We can fine-tune our picture of the church by looking at the activities of Saul of Tarsus, later to become the great apostle Paul.

Before his conversion to Jesus, Paul gave the church a rough time.

In persecuting the church,
Paul did not **vandalize holy buildings!**
Instead, Paul **persecuted holy people:-**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

"Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison." (Acts 8:3;)

Later he recalled that those he persecuted were people who had come to believe in Jesus and had called upon the Lord for their salvation. This was the church that Paul had persecuted. (Acts 22:4,19; Galatians 1:13;)

Putting all this together we see that the church does not include all people, not even all religious people.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Sometimes the word “**church**” is used to describe a local assembly of believers that meets together in a particular city or house. 1 Corinthians 1:2; (Matthew 16:18;)

God adds people to His church family when they surrender their lives to Jesus as Lord.

As a part of His eternal plan, God designed the purpose of this body of believers.

To Be Like Jesus. (Romans 8:28-30;) “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

“For those God foreknew **he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, **He also called; those He called, He also justified; Those He justified, He also glorified.**”

Changed Into His Likeness.

God's spirit provides Christians with the ability to be changed into His likeness and to receive His glory.



**Through the inspired word,
we can know how
to be Christ's disciples.**

That Is What He Has Called Us To Be.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The church is specifically for those people whose sins have been forgiven, whose faith rests in Jesus for salvation, people who have a new relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the true church which Jesus came to establish NOT a building.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Corby Tuesday night class 1987.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

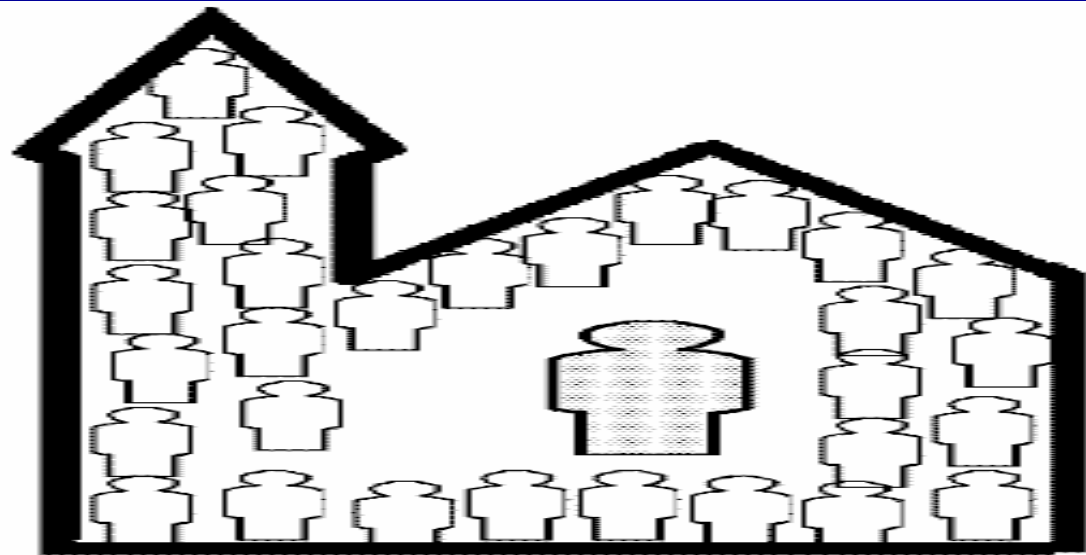
An Every Member Ministry.

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 ... “Now the body is not made up of one part but of many ...

Now **you are the body of Christ**, and each one of you is a part of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:12-27;)

*“You, like
living
stones, are
being built
into a
spiritual
house”
1 Peter 2.5*



His Disciples.

The word “**Disciple**” means to be a follower of another’s teaching or to discipline one’s life to be like that of another.

The church is made up of individuals who have committed their lives to be like Jesus and give Him the authority over our lives.
(John 8:31-32;)

The continual **study of God’s word**
and the **disciplining of our life to His teaching**
Will help us be **a true Disciple,**
A Member Of His Body, The Church.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The concept:- Christ refers to the union of all His people with Himself. **Rom 12:4-5;**

“For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

NO meetinghouse or church building!

NO wealth to speak of!

NO public esteem!

FAMILY MOTIVATED BY LOVE!

John 13:34-35;"A new command I give you:-

Love one another. As I have loved you,
so you must love one another.

By this all men will know that you
are my disciples, **if you love one another."**

Jesus said that when disciples love one another,
the world has sufficient evidence
to know whose Disciples they are.

A major identifiable characteristic
of Christ's Church ought to be
the way we love one another.



LIVING TO GLORIFY GOD.

The Lord wants us to be blessed and glorified by Him, as well as to bring glory to Him.

“In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.”

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

Ephes 1:11-12; 3:20-21;



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

**They were the FIRST PEOPLE TO BECOME KNOWN
AS CHRISTIANS. Acts 2 39-47; 11:26;**

**IT was the FIRST congregation
of the CHRISTIAN age!**

**IT was the LARGEST congregation
of the CHRISTIAN age!**

**IT was the FASTEST GROWING
congregation of the CHRISTIAN age!**

**IT had the most ILLUSTRIOUS members
of any congregation -ALL THE APOSTLES.-**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The church is the body of Christ. Every Christian is a member of that body with a distinctive contribution to make to the life of the body.

The Lord has structured the church like a body composed of different and varied members.

It is this variety that enables our physical body and the body of Christ to function effectively. Within the church the members are different. This is God's design and purpose.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Furthermore, it is God's prerogative to give us a particular gift or talent, therefore there should be no jealousy among the members for the differences are of God's creating.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function.

So in Christ we who are many form one body, each member belongs to all the others.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

“God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you.”

“If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously;

**If it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.
(Romans 12:4-8;)**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Within every congregation of God's people the gifts he has bestowed must be nurtured and developed so that the church can function effectively.

Each member must strive to use the gifts, abilities, the talents, they have received from the Lord.

This is clearly addressed in Paul's letter to the saints at Ephesus. “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”

“It was He who gave some 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.”

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

**“From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”
(Ephesians 4:7-16;)**

The church must engage in a shared ministry where each member has a contribution to make to the community of faith.

Furthermore, the church must encourage members to use their abilities and provide them the necessary opportunity to do so.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The gifts we have will minister both to the church and to those outside the community of faith. When this occurs we will witness the body of Christ at work in our world. **Just as Jesus intended.**

Upon This Rock I Will Build My Church.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked His disciples,

"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." **"But what about you?"**

He asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Glorified Through His Church.

**The lord empowers His church
to do more than we could imagine.**

**It is through His church that
He will be glorified forever.**



Jesus Brought Glory To God!

John 17:4;

“I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave Me to do”

In this verse, Jesus explains how He brought glory to God.

WE also **can glorify God** by doing what He has for US to do as a part of His Church.

The Church will bring glory to God as a body of believers **by accomplishing** what God has purposed for us, the church, to do.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by My Father in heaven."

"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." (Matthew 16:13-19;)

Controversy surrounded the identity of Jesus; Opinions were in a constant state of flux. Some said he was an evil troublemaker, while others said He must be from God.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Jesus was aware of what the opinion polls were saying when He asked His apostles who people thought He was.

Their reply showed the extent of the speculation surrounding His identity.

Was He any of the above-mentioned characters, or was He someone else.?

Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the **Son of the living God**, came by way of divine revelation from the Father and **not by human speculation.**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

When Jesus spoke about building His church upon a rock, what was He referring to? In answering this question **it is vital that we not lose sight of what the Father had just revealed about Jesus.**

When the Father endorsed Jesus as His Son, **He was saying that Jesus is God the Son, Equal in every way to God the Father. (John 10:30-36;)**

It does not make sense to think that **Jesus would talk about building His church and, in the very same context, have nothing to say about the revelation the Father had just made known about Jesus' true identity.**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

**When we think of building something,
we think of the need for a foundation.**

**If the building is to last, then the foundation
must be solid. The church that Jesus came
to build must also have a solid foundation.**

**It will have to be a foundation which has been tested
and found reliable, a foundation which can endure
for all time, and one upon which all generations
of Christians can confidently place their faith.**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

There is only one Person who qualifies
to provide such a foundation:-

Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

**JESUS DEITY IS THE SOLID ROCK, the unshakeable
foundation upon which the church rests.**

The writings of the apostles **confirm** that
**the church is indeed built upon Jesus, that He alone
is the rock upon which it has been established.**

Scripture says that the church is '**built on the
foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ
Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.**' (Eph 2:20;)

**'For no one can lay any foundation other
than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.'**

(1 Corinthians 3:11;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Binding & Loosing? After giving Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Jesus delegated authority to him to carry out his ministry.

"Whatever you shall bind on earth," Jesus said to Peter, "shall be bound in heaven, and **whatever you shall loose on earth** shall be loosed in heaven."
(Matthew 16:19;)

This was **not a blank cheque** for Peter to do whatever he wanted.

The authority to bind and loose was given in the context of preaching forgiveness of sins through the gospel.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

This harmonises with the Lord's parting words to the apostles:- "If you **forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.**" (John 20:23;)

Binding and loosing are equivalent to retaining and forgiving sins. How does this work out in practice? On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached the gospel and 3000 people believed that message and **received forgiveness of their sins.** (Acts 2:38-41;)

These people were loosed from their sins when they were forgiven. The sins of those who rejected the gospel were retained or bound.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The authority to bind and loose was not exclusively Peter's, though he played a prominent role.

All the apostles Matt 18:18; were engaged in opening the way to heaven **through preaching the gospel**, thereby binding and loosing the sins of the impenitent and the penitent.

However, this does not exhaust the meaning of the Lord's words.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The authority to bind and loose was given by Jesus to every congregation of believers. Jesus made provision for the church to deal with problems that present themselves in the local congregation.

“He said that when an offender in the church **refuses to repent** of his wrongdoing, having first been confronted privately.”

“**Then** before witnesses, and **finally** before the church, the fellowship of the church is no longer to be extended to that person. He is to be **cast out until he repents.**”

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

What the church does on earth is what God has already done in heaven. That is what the Lord meant when He gave instruction not just to Peter, but to the whole church:-

"Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

(Matthew 18:19;)

The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven?

What then did Jesus mean when He gave Peter the **"keys of the kingdom?"**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The most prominent statue in some of our local church buildings is that of **Peter**. He is an austere figure seated upon a throne, with one hand raised toward heaven and the other **holding two large keys**.

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

How are we to understand these words? By putting a number of questions to the problem we are trying to solve, **we can arrive at the correct answer.**

What are keys used for?

Keys are used to **allow us access** to places previously closed.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

When Jesus gave Peter the keys of the kingdom of God, He gave him the means of opening the way into the kingdom of heaven.

How did Peter use these keys to allow us access into the kingdom of heaven?

Peter was the first to preach the gospel to both the Jews and Gentiles.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Those who believed in Jesus were baptised in His name and entered the kingdom of heaven.
(Acts 2:38; 10:48;)

Of course, the **other apostles** were also engaged in this evangelistic work, but Peter did have a prominent role to play initially.

Keys were spoken about by Jesus
on another occasion:-The time he rebuked the religious leaders of his day for the way in which they abused the truth that God had revealed.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The way they handled truth was a hindrance rather than a help to those who heard them.

"Woe to you lawyers!"

Jesus said. "For you have **taken away THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE**; you did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

Luke 11:52;

The church that Jesus built.

When Jesus spoke of the **keys of the kingdom** He symbolized **the gospel**, which opens the way back to the Father **for all who will embrace its message.**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

When a person is baptized for the forgiveness of his sins, he is washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 6:11;)

“Every sin that a person has ever committed is washed away by the blood of Jesus” (Rev 1:5;)

He also has become a child of God because of his faith and obedience to the gospel. (2 Thess 1:8;)

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal 3:26-27;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

A Christian is a "**new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor 5:17;).

Remember, the Christian has died to sin (old things have passed away); **the sinful man has been put to death and has been born again.** (John 3:1-7;).

“Therefore **we were buried with Him** through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also **should walk in newness of life.**” (Romans 6:4;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The question most frequently asked at this point is,

"But what happens if I sin now?

Must I be baptized again?"

The answer is that a person must repent of any sin which he commits and confess it to God who is

"faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9;)

We do have the important responsibility to make sure that we are trying our best to obey God in all things.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

**“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”
(1 John 1:7;).**

In other words, once we come in contact with the blood of Jesus (at baptism), it continues to cleanse as we make every effort to please God, to walk according to His truths in loving obedience.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

An additional blessing is that the Lord adds the saved person to the church. (Acts 2:47;)

What is the church? It is NOT a man-made organization. The Bible presents it as the body of Christ. Jesus died to obtain this body of redeemed people; He "purchased it with His own blood." (Acts 20:28;)

It is so precious to Him that He nourishes it and cherishes it. (Ephesians 5:29;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The book of Ephesians discusses the church and its relationship to Jesus.

Paul writes that God "put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body. . ." (Ephesians 1:22-23;)

Paul also writes that Jesus is "the head of the church" and "the Saviour of the body." (Eph 5:23;)

Paul then mentions several other things about Christ and the church.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having any spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:25-27;).

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The Church Belongs to Christ. The church belongs to Jesus because He paid the price for the church.

Paul wrote to the elders in Ephesus, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the **church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**” (Acts 20:28;)

Take notice again of that last phrase, “to shepherd the church of God **which He (Jesus) purchased with His own blood.**”

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

**When Jesus died on the cruel cross,
He made the ultimate sacrifice so that man
could be set free from his bondage to sin.**

**For our benefit, the price
that Jesus had to pay was His life.
His blood had to be shed.**

**The shedding of Jesus' blood wrought
great benefits for the followers of God.
In **Hebrews 9:11-17**; The writer explains
the benefits of the shedding of Jesus' blood.**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Take notice of the following excerpts from the text:-

v11 "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come . . ."

v12 " but **with His own blood** He entered the Most Holy Place **once for all**, having **obtained eternal redemption . . .**"

v14 "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit **offered Himself** without spot to God, **cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**"

v15 "And **for this reason** He is the Mediator of the **new covenant**, **by means of death**, . . . that those who are called **may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.**"

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Because Jesus shed His blood,
several great things became reality:-

- 1) Jesus became our High Priest.
- 2) He established a new covenant.
- 3) Our consciences have been cleansed
from dead words.
- 4) We have become God's own people. (In 1 Peter
2:9; Peter referred to Christians as God's "**own
special people.**" ("a peculiar people." - KJV.)

Through the shedding of His blood,
Jesus paid the price for His people, the church.
This death made possible man's redemption.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The apostle Paul wrote, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephes 1:7;)

It is easy to see that Jesus not only loved us enough to die on the cross for our sins;

He also wants us to grow and mature as Christians.
It is also easy to see how many churches there are:-
There is one head and one body. (church.)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Paul wrote in his letter to the Christians in Ephesus,
“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him
to be head over all things **to the church, which
is His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”
(Ephesians 1:22-23;)

According to the apostle Paul, Christ is the head
over all things to the church, His body.
This simply means that the church (those
called out of sin) is the body of Christ
and that **Christ is the head of the church (body.)**

This concept becomes even more clear when
we consider the words of Paul in Galatians 3:27;
“For as many of you as were baptized
into Christ have put on Christ.”

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Here we plainly see that when a person is baptized, **he is baptized INTO Christ, baptized into His body.** Paul wrote, “For by one Spirit we were all immersed **INTO** one body . . .” (1 Corinthians 12:13;)

This one body was **referring to the body of Christ, the church.** Since the church belongs to Christ and it is the body of Christ, **only Christ can add people to His church.**

Luke wrote, “And the Lord **added to the church daily** those **who were being saved.**”
(Acts 2:47;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Paul states that very truth in Ephesians 4:4:-

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling."

This description makes perfect sense; after all, each of us has one head and one body.

Jesus is head over the entire church.

In the New Testament the word church is used in two senses: it is used in the sense of **the entire body** of believers (**as we saw it in the book of Ephesians**); and it also refers (most of the time) to a **local congregation** of God's people, such as **"the church of the Thessalonians."** (1 Thess 1:1;)

The Family of God are Worshipers of God.

To worship means to adore or praise God so that He will receive the glory and honour He deserves.

Jesus discusses **True Worship** from God's Perspective in John chapter four.

In this passage of scripture Jesus was speaking to a woman from Samaria.

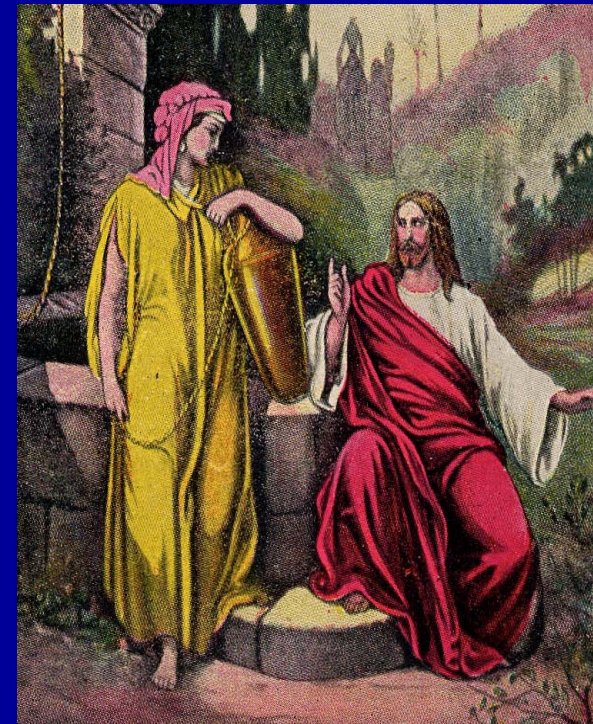


The Family of God are Worshipers of God.

He told her something about her personal life that revealed to her that He must be a prophet.

Therefore, she asked Him about the right place to worship, likely thinking a prophet would know about such matters.

Jesus' reply indicates that true worship **is not about A PLACE** to go but **a condition of the heart.** **That is what gives glory to God.**



The Family of God are Worshipers of God.

John 4:23-24; Jesus declared: "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

A Disciple is to Worship God.

Worship is what you are doing when your heart and mind are centred on living like Jesus.

It must be **from the heart** with **emotion** and **spirit** and in **accord with the truth** revealed in God's Word.
His Family, The Church, Lives To Adore Him.

The Family of God are Worshipers of God.

What is WORSHIP? **Two words** translated “**worship**” in the New Testament may help in understanding the meaning of the term.

First:- “proskumeo (Comes from pros, toward; And **kuneo**, To Kiss), Means “To Make **Obeisance**, Do **Reverence** To.” (W.E. Vine.)

This word is the most frequently used word for “**worship**” in the new testament.

Worship is an internal act from **the heart** and not an act of ritual or mindless rote performance.

The assembly of individual worshippers on Sunday morning should be a time, but not the only time, when this takes place.

The Family of God are Worshipers of God.

Second Word “**Latriuo**” It Means “To Serve,
To Render Religious Service Or Homage.” (W.E. Vine)

Worship or Praise is given to God
by **a life of service**. In Daily Living
we can Serve and Worship God by serving others.

**Worship is not confined to a praise or worship time
in a church building**, but is something
that should take place twenty-four hours a day,
seven days a week.

Jesus used both words
in His response to Satan while
being tempted in the wilderness.
(Matthew 4:10;)



Praise and Service.

**Both praise and service to others
are expressions of worship
described in Hebrews 13:15-16;**

**The words spoken by believers in songs
and prayers, As well as acts of service
to others, are Praise to Him.**



The Family of God study God's word

Corby Tuesday night Bible class 1987.



The Family of God study God's word

2 Timothy 2:15; **New King James**

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God,
a worker who does not need to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.”



2 Timothy 2:15; **Living Bible**

“Work hard so God can say to you, “Well done.”

Be a good workman, one who does not need
to be ashamed when God examines your work.

Know what His Word says and means.”

2 Timothy 2:15; **New Revised Standard**

“do your best to present yourself to God

as one approved by him, a worker who has no need
to be ashamed, **rightly explaining the word of truth.”**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

All the individual congregations of God's people make up the church as a whole. But each one is Christ's church in one particular geographical area. How many different kinds of churches are there?

The Bible speaks of only one.

Remember, Ephesians 4:4; says that there is **"one body."** In any area today, however, one will find a number of churches, all with different names.

It is very clear from scripture that God sent His Son
To save souls and establish
one body of believers.

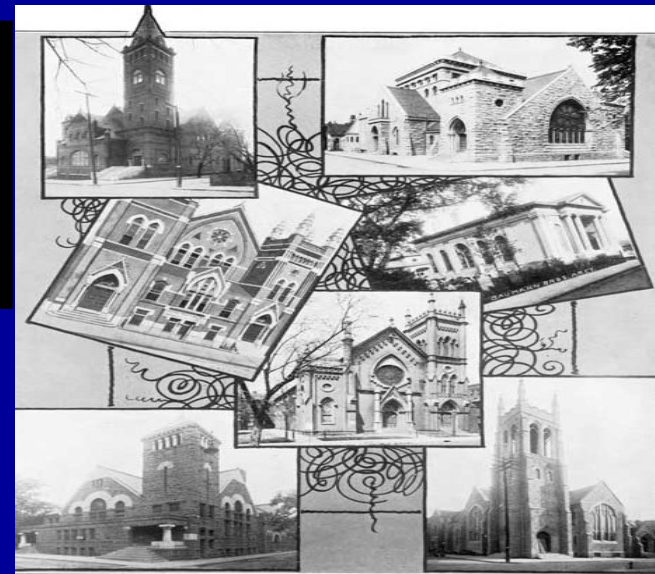


THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

His eternal plan for His disciples was that love and unity would exist, not division and separation.
(Ephesians 4:1-6; John 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 4:17;)

Denominational division that exists today is the result of hundreds of years of people teaching different doctrines and all calling themselves followers of Jesus.

These religious groups did not come from the Bible; some man (or group of men) started them.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Bible Name.

Christians Acts 11:26;

Bible Descriptive Terms.

Churches of God.

(1 Cor. 11:16; 1 Thess. 2:14;
2 Thess. 1:4;)

Church of God.

(Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22;
15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim 3:5;)

Church of the firstborn.

(Hebrews 12:23;)

Church of the living God.

(1 Timothy 3:15;)

Churches of Christ.

(Romans 16:16;)

Man's Names

Seventh Day Adventist.

Baptist.

Roman Catholic.

Community Church.

Church of England.

Episcopal.

Latter Day Saints.

Lutheran.

Methodist.

Pentecostal.

Presbyterian.

Unitarian.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

In all the references, we see descriptive terms
example Romans 16:16; where Paul used
the phrase in the Greek it is the assembly
or called out by Christ.

Paul was not using “**called out by Christ**” as a title,
but instead, a simple statement of ownership.

**We are called out through the gospel
to belong to Jesus the Christ.**

**All the descriptions refer to the same church,
the church that Jesus Christ built.**

God Didn't Plan For Division.

Division is not what God planned nor is He glorified by it. This division results from human nature and only serves Satan's Purpose.

It causes Christ's church to be weakened rather than united.

Most differences could be eliminated if believers would study God's word together, pray for and with each other, and love one another.

It should be the effort of all believers to develop a unity of faith that God intended and is glorified by.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

We must do our best to understand and apply the teachings of Christ and His apostles.

We need to build upon the right foundation.

Paul wrote, “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” (Ephes 2:19-20;)**

The apostle Paul warned that all who would teach something different than what was taught by Christ and His apostles would be accursed.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, **if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.**” (Galatians 1:8-9;)

These seem very strong word by Paul yet Paul's warning is in harmony with Jesus' teachings. Jesus said, “Every plant, which My heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up.” (Matt 15:13;)

This warning applies to any and all who attempt to establish a religious belief **not in harmony with what Jesus and the apostles have already laid down.**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

The Lord is head over just one body.

Paul wrote: **“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”** (1 Corinthians 12:13;)

When we are baptized for the remission of our sins and the Lord adds us to the church, we may bring with us many ideas and practices that are false.

We must learn the truths that are taught in the Bible, and our goal must be to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10;).

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

When Christians began to divide themselves into separate groups in Corinth, Paul accused them of being carnal (fleshly) rather than spiritual.

For when one says, "**I am of Paul,**" and another, "**I am of Apollos,**" are you not carnal? (1 Cor 3:4;)

Those who are **saved by the blood of Christ** are all in one body. **His body.**
Unity is what Jesus prayed for! (John 17:20-21;)
It ought to be what all true believers want.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

**We have not been placed in separate spiritual bodies that hold conflicting views;
there is one body, one church.**

Even Jews and Gentiles

(who hated one another) are both members of the one body. Consider the following test.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands, that at that time you were without Christ,”

“being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”

“**But now** in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, **who has made both one**, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us.” (Ephesians 2:11-14;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Now all men everywhere (rich or poor, black or white, male or female) can all be one in the church the body of Christ. (Galatians 3:27-28;)

“Paul goes on to say that the church was a mystery which was hidden in ages past but now is made known to all.” (Ephesians 3:1-7;).

What a privilege we have to share a relationship with God through Christ and through our faithful obedience be part of **the church which is the body of Christ, a spiritual kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4;)**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God!" (1 John 3:1;)

We have several responsibilities in return.

First of all, having been cleansed of sins, we must do everything we can to keep ourselves pure.

(1 John 3:3;)

Second, having been born again, we must grow spiritually. (1 Peter 2:2;)

During that process we will learn that the whole body (the church) is "joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share. . ."

(Ephesians 4:16).

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Prophesied of by Joel. (Joel 2:28-32;)

Prophesied of by Daniel. (Daniel 2:31-45;)

Prophesied of by Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 31:31-34;)

Promised by Jesus. (Matthew 6:10; 24:14; Mark 9:1;)

Builder would be Jesus. (Matthew 16:18;)

Beginning of church in Acts 2; approx. 33 A.D.

Belongs only to Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:28;)

It is the body of Christ. (Ephesians 1:22-23;)

Christ is it's only head. (Ephesians 1:22-23;)

People are added to it by the Lord. (Acts 2:47;)

It bears no man-made or man-given names.

The church built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ being its chief cornerstone. (Ephesians 2:19-20;)

Some Distinctive Qualities of Christ's Church?

What Does the Bible Say About Celibacy?

Celibacy is a gift from God, but not everyone has this gift. Jesus said, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given."

For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it." (Matt 19:11-12;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Those who are celibate for the sake of the kingdom of God can serve God in ways that a married person cannot.

For example, suppose an opportunity arose for preaching the gospel in a remote and difficult area of the world and there were two candidates for the job: one is celibate and the other is married with a young family.

The obvious choice in this case would be the one who is celibate and free from the responsibility that goes with raising a young family. This is not to say that celibacy is a superior gift to marriage. It is not. **Though it is different.**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

In the early church (and we need to be the same as them), it is obvious that some of the apostles were married as Peter speaks of his believing wife. (1 Corinthians 9:3-5;).

Furthermore, in the church, the family of God, the Bible tells us that the bishops were to be married. (bishop/ elder/ pastor - same person describes different qualities.)

The Bible says a bishop was to be 'the husband of one wife... He must manage his own family well and see that this children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?' (1 Timothy 3:1-5;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

It is not in harmony with the Bible to teach that to be a priest one must be celibate.
There is a separate lesson on Priesthood.

Who are God's Priests Today?

The Priesthood has a long history stretching back into the Old Testament.

We are introduced to Israel's priests shortly after their captivity in Egypt.

From among the twelve tribes that composed the nation of Israel, God chose the priesthood from the tribe of Levi.

The O.T. Priesthood was therefore based entirely on ancestry.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Their duty consisted in representing the people before God and offering sacrifices on their behalf.

However, it was not God's intention that this type of priesthood should last forever.

Jesus introduced a priesthood that embraces all Christians. It would not be composed of men born into the tribe of Levi, but would embrace **all men and women** who have been **'born again of water and the Holy Spirit.'** (John 3:5;)

We do not need to have a vocation to be a priest. Neither do we require years of special training.

Scripture make it very plain that **if you are a Christian you are a priest and part of the 'royal priesthood'.** (1 Peter 2:9;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Furthermore, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20:)

“as a priest, you can offer to God 'spiritual sacrifices.’” (Hebrews 13:15-16;)

Where there is a Christian, there is also a priest.

There is also a temple and spiritual sacrifices can be offered to God. This is the 'royal priesthood' revealed in the Word of God.

Because many do not understand the difference between the Old Testament and the New they go back to the Old Testament for many of their customs and practices and even styles of religious dress
Every Christian both male and female is a Priest.

THE CHURCH - Being God's Messenger.

**God has a very important function
or purpose for His Church.**

**It Is To Evangelize The Entire World
In Every Generation.**



**Evangelism is the proclaiming of
The good news message of salvation.**

(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Ephesians 4:10-11;)

THE CHURCH - Concern For the Lost.

If lost people are to have any eternal hope, the saved people, Christ's Church, must tell them about Jesus so that they too may come to Him for salvation.

Evangelism means
to **tell the good news** in
a simple and understandable way.

D.T. Niles Describes It This Way:-
“**Evangelism is one beggar
telling another beggar
where he found bread.**”



THE CHURCH – Natural Evangelism.

**Evangelism should be
a Natural Act of Saved People.**

If the love Christ has for the lost exists in the church, **sharing the gospel** would be as natural as an apple tree bearing apples or a Grand-father telling others about his Grandchildren.

Robert Munder Describes
evangelism as:-

**“The Spontaneous Overflow
of a glad and free heart
in Jesus Christ.”**



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

9 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

“Once you were not a people,
but **now you are the people of God;**
once you had not received mercy,
but **now you have received mercy.**”

1 Pet 2:9-10;

THE CHURCH - “A Chosen People.”

This passage describes first the privileged place that God has for those in Christ.

Next, Peter through the Spirit states clearly the purpose God has for us.

We are to tell others what God has done for us and for them as well.

If God is to be glorified by the church, then those in His church must be doing what He has given us to do.

Different reasons to meet as a church

**We often speak wrongly of going to church
and there are many reasons
why people say they go to church.**

Many go because it is all about them. They go to be entertained or to get a spiritual warm fuzzy or to feel good about themselves. And if the church does not entertain them or is “boring” they shop for a more entertaining one.

Some go for primarily social reasons. A chance to talk to old friends and to meet new or just to be seen as a “Christian.”

For others it is to gain business contacts and network, or because their job is somehow associate with the church.

Still others because of the kids programs. And if these programs disappeared, they would “church shop” to find one with comparable or better programs.

Different reasons to meet as a church

Many go primarily because **the preacher is dynamic or a good speaker**, and if the preacher left so would they, to **church shop again**.

Others, because **they are new Christians** and have never been anywhere else and **do not know the difference**.

Finally there are those who attend because **they recognise they are the church** because in their heart of hearts, they know **it is striving to teach the One Faith, the One Gospel of Jesus Christ** as taught by the Apostles to Christ's people.

And it is **in this congregation** that **they strive to worship God as they are commanded to do**.

Different reasons to meet as a church

**We come together “primarily” to worship God,
not to worship ourselves or train our children.
The primary focus is on Christ, not on ourselves.**

**The 1st century church came together
first and foremost to worship God,
not primarily to feel good about themselves.
It was not about them,
it was about worshipping Almighty God.**

**It was not about being entertained, hymns or praise
choruses, illustrations or examples, getting out before lunch,
programs, bands, choirs, big screens, or even leaving
with having a “good” feeling about ourselves.
It was about worshipping God in Christ.**

Different reasons to meet as a church

For 1st century Christians, the Church was **not a mere get together** or formality of the weekend.
It was more than an organization, it was a family.

It was not something they endured,
but something they rather cherished
and expectantly waited for.

It was not based on **what is in it for me**
What can I get out of it.

It is based on **what can I bring to worship today.**

It was Christ centred not self-centred.

Different reasons to meet as a church

We ought to long for the day when the church is more concerned for the lost and honouring and glorifying the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Than bickering over having to sit for an extra 15 minutes in a service than we want to.

Or complain about how cold it is or how hot it is in the building.

We today cannot seem to get so excited,
dedicated, invested, sacrificial, **about God**
that it would cause us
to **give up** our hard earned money.

Sing so loud we lose our voices,
sit through temperatures we don't like
for hours and hours on end! **That's crazy!**

So we just go home
turn on the t.v. to catch up the highlights
of the **Saturday football at Wembley stadium**
and **watch 50,000 dedicated**
and sacrificial people do these very things.

Encouraging And Maturing Each Other.

God wants all of His children to grow and mature into the likeness of His Son.



**The leaders and every member of the congregation
have the responsibility to encourage
One another to growth and faithfulness.**

**(Ephesians 4:11-13; Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:23-25;
Galatians 6:2; 9-10; 1 Thessalonians 5:14;)**

THE CHURCH - God's Task For His Children.

**We need to be telling the lost about Jesus.
We need to be meeting one another's needs.**



We need to be bearing each other's burdens.

**These are some of the tasks
God has given to His children.**

THE CHURCH – We all have a part to play.

The church described in scripture
is compared to a body.

Every part of a person's body must be working properly for a person to be considered healthy.



Every member of Christ's body, the church,
has been given some ability
to function as a part of the body.

Each one must discover, develop, and
use the God-given gifts he or she has and
help others find their place to serve as well.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

Rom 12:4-8; “Just as each of us has **one body** with **many members**, and these members do not all have the same function, so **in Christ** we who are many **form one body**, and each member belongs to all the others.

We have **different gifts**, (talents. Abilities) according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is **preaching**, (telling forth) let him use it in proportion to his faith.

If it is **serving**, let him serve; if it is **teaching**, let him teach; if it is **encouraging**, let him encourage; if it is **giving** to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is **leadership**, let him govern diligently; if it is **showing mercy**, let him do it cheerfully.”

THE CHURCH – HOW CAN I HELP.

**Ask Yourself,
“What Do I Enjoy
Doing?”**

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”

**What Have I Been
Trained To Do?**

“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides.”

**How Can I Use
That Ability
In The Church
To Glorify God?**

“so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

1 Pet 4:10-11;

THE CHURCH – SAVED TO SERVE.

When a believer uses his gift
in serving others, God Is Glorified.

Everybody Has A Part To Play.

Everyone must
fulfill their part.
(1Corinthians 12:12-26;)



THE CHURCH – and our Human Body.

It does not take much for a human body to become crippled.

Dropping A heavy weight on your toe would cause you to go limping about.

Your whole body would be somewhat affected.

When one part is hurt, other parts of the body come to give aid.



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

Members of Christ's body are interwoven with each other and sympathetic to each other's hurts.



This kind of loving care and service is evidence to the world that Christ's Church truly lives today.

Paul instructed the church at Ephesus with the following words.

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

“It was he who gave some 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.”

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” Eph 4:1-16;

THE CHURCH – WORKING TOGETHER.

**When God's children are working together
in serving others.**



**Each one doing his part, the body grows,
and more glory and honour goes up to God.**

THE CHURCH – IN OUR FUTURE.

**One day, only the Father knows when,
Jesus is coming to take His Bride,
The Church, Home to Heaven. (Revelation 21:2;)**

**He will present a sanctified body
of worshippers to the father.**

(Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57;)

**He wants God's people
to look forward to that day of glory
and be encouraged.**

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18;)



Jesus taught His disciples

How to prepare for His Return.

While He was on earth, Jesus taught His disciples how to prepare for his return. He wants us to always be ready for His coming. (Matthew 25:1-13;)

He wants us to use the talents and blessings that He has given to us while we look forward to His return. (Matt 25:14ff;)

He wants our faith to be active in serving others, not passively waiting for that day. (Matt 25:31-46;)

In each case He tells how magnificent our eternal home will be. It is a home that Jesus has prepared for us and to which he will take us. (John 14:1-3;)

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

**“Therefore, my dear brothers,
stand firm. Let nothing move you.
Always give yourselves
fully to the work of the Lord,
because you know
that your labour in the Lord
is not in vain.” 1 Cor 15:58;**

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

We need to get back to the Bible!

for our understanding of what is a Christian?

What should a Christian believe?

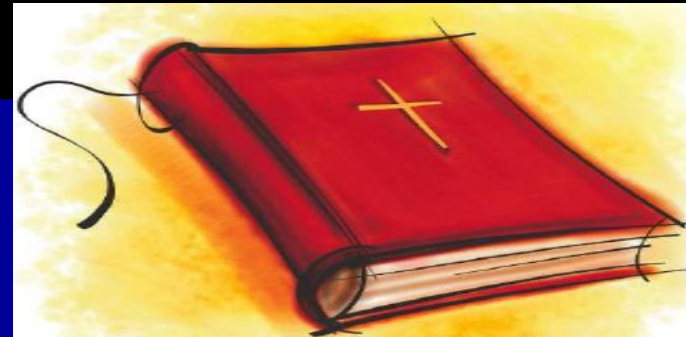
How should a Christian behave?

**What is a Christians responsibilities
towards God and man?**

**Acts 2:37-42; The beginning of the Church,
3000 give their lives to Christ.**

The early church was incredibly dynamic!

Why?



THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD

Conditions Then.

They HAD the Holy Spirit!

They were humans!

**They lived in an ocean
of people who
didn't know God!**

God WAS God

It was a Wild culture

Conditions Now.

We HAVE the Holy Spirit!

We are humans!

**We live in an ocean
of people who
don't know God!**

God IS God

It is still a Wild culture

Why shouldn't we be like them?

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

When we surrender our life to Jesus and by faith are buried with Him in baptism, God promises us the forgiveness of all our sins. (Acts 2:38).

God gives us His Spirit to live in us as a guarantee of our inheritance. (Ephesians 1:13-14;).

The Lord also adds us to His family of saved people, His church. (Acts 2:42, 47;).

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF GOD.

We need to **prayerfully consider** how important it is **for us as a child of God** to be **involved in a local congregation** of Christ's church.

Not only do **we need instruction and encouragement** to help us grow, but **the congregation needs us** to help them be a healthy body of believers.

By **working together** in our community to **accomplish God's purposes**, **God will be glorified and His church will grow.**

THE CHURCH THE FAMILY.

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**Next in the series:-
The Teaching and Fellowship?**