

Foundations of Faith

Lesson Three: The Church

Created for Community

Read Genesis 2:18. In God's perfect creation before any sin, what did God say was "not good"? Why?

Story on our need for community and acceptance

One of the greatest needs of the human heart is relationship. When you became a child of God, you became a member of God's family, the church. The church is not a place of worship or a meeting. The church is a gathered group of believers. We were created for this kind of community. We all need God, and we all need the church to find acceptance and fulfill His plans for our lives. Jesus and the church are inseparable.

Read Ephesians 1:22-23. What do these verses teach us about the church? _____

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What do these verses tell us is God's will for us regarding being with other believers regularly?

Describe your past view of and experience with the church. _____

Personal testimony on what the church has meant in your life

Church life

The best description of church life in the New Testament is more of a series of snapshots than a definition. Numerous passages help us see what Jesus intended for His body, the church.

Read Acts 2:42-47 and circle the characteristics of the early church that stand out to you.

v. 42 - *They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

v. 43 - *And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.*

v. 44 - *And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;*

v. 45 - *and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.*

v. 46 - *And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,*

v. 47 - *praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."*

Purpose of the Church

Read I Peter 2:9-11. What is God's purpose for the church? _____

Read Matthew 28:19-20. Describe the four things Jesus commands His followers to do in these verses in your own words.

Acts of Obedience

Jesus has instructed us to obey all that He has commanded. Baptism, the observance of the Lord's Supper, and giving, are three specific commands Jesus gave us that demonstrate our relationship and commitment not only to him, but also to other believers.

Baptism

Water baptism is a public declaration that you believe in Jesus. Baptism is not optional but the first command Jesus has given new believers (Acts 2:38). Water baptism is a symbolic act through emersion in water. It does not have the power to forgive sin. But baptism does signify to the world, "I am not ashamed to identify with Jesus Christ or His family."

Read Romans 6:3-4. What does water baptism symbolize according to these verses? _____

The Lord's Supper

Read I Corinthians 11:23-26. According to these verses, what has Jesus instructed his disciples to do? Why? _____

We call this ordinance from Jesus the Lord's Supper. It ought to be regularly observed wherever and whenever the people of God are gathered. When we receive the Lord's Supper, it is a time to examine our actions and faith (1 Corinthians 11:23-29), to remember what He has done for us on the cross and renew our covenant of love together with Him.

Giving

God also asks the church to be a giving community. Monetary giving is often a test of the disciple's faith, love and obedience. Everything we have is from God, and He is our provider. We can trust Him with our money and our lives.

What do the following verses teach us about giving?

Malachi 3:8-10 _____

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 _____

Acts 20:35 _____

Personal testimony of the joy of giving

YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Commit to a lifegroup and Sunday morning attendance.
- Begin this month giving 10% of your income to a local church or group of believers.
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share the gospel this week.
- Share this lesson with someone who is ready to be trained.