

Practical Theology – Lesson 19 – “The Church”

“The Church”

Definition of “Church” – what the definition means

Ekklesia – Translates literally as “the called out ones”, commonly used at the time of writing as any formal assembly, but **used in the New Testament to refer to all believers, or to local assemblies of believers.**

Universal Church

The Church is the body of believers of the Church Age, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, if we are believers, and all included in instructions to the Church, and in promises for the Church.

- **Statement of Faith: Section 12a** – Universal Church
- I Corinthians 12:13 – One baptism, one body
- Ephesians 2:19-22 – One household, one temple

Dispensational Nature: Old Testament believers are not part of the Church, and those who believe in Christ during the Tribulation period and Millennial Kingdom are not part of the Church. The Church is the body of believers from Pentecost to the Rapture.

Why the distinction? Because the instructions and promises are different.

Local Church

Many examples of local assemblies in the New Testament, especially in the addresses of the epistles, and in references in the Book of Acts.

Statement of Faith: Section 12b – Local Church

Local Church Activities – Modern, and in the New Testament:

- Meet on Sundays (commemorate resurrection)
- Collect offerings for the ministry of the saints – local and missionaries
- Worship, Prayer, Bible Study, Hymns
- Practiced Baptism (identity) and the Lord’s Supper (remembrance)
- Oversight by elders, ministerial oversight by deacons

Truth of the Simplest Form

- Matthew 18:20 – Where 2 or 3 are gathered in the name of Jesus Christ
 - Recent WebEx, Midnight Bible readings, Nursing Homes
- Hebrews 10:25 – Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together

Why the importance? Because Believers need one another, and 2 or 3 is often all you can get.

Evangelistic and Ministerial Commission

Matthew 28:18-20 – The purpose we are to fulfill, especially as the Church

Statement of Faith: Article II Purpose

Problem In practice, Christians tend to prioritize either personal ministry or Church ministry, but both our personal walk and communal ministry through the Church are both essential – we can’t pick one and neglect the other. If we abide in Christ, and the Church is His bride, we should care for the Church.