

THE LOCAL CHURCH

INTRO
QT: Bill Hybels said:
 - "Local church is the hope of the world"
QT: Unknown said:
 - "I like the church, I just
 Don't like the people." ;-)



Today: What is the church?
 Why do I need it?

THE CHURCH IS GOD'S IDEA

- A. The word church is used **79** times in the Bible; nearly all of them refer to the local church.
- B. Most of the instructions for the church can only be fully carried out by a group of people that **KNOW** one another.
- C. God calls **EVERY** Christian to be part of a local church because it is **not possible** to live out the Christian life without being part of a local church.
Ex: Snow boarders – "I experience God in mountains" Great-who wouldn't!

WHAT IS THE LOCAL CHURCH?

- A. The New Testament three word pictures to describe the local church **Family, Army & Body**. What do all these have in common? Individual parts or members combine together to create something that is **MORE** than just a sum of the parts.

I. THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY.

Note: Functional family :-)/ God is our Father & "Father knows best!" :-)

II Corinthians 6:18 I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty

I Timothy 5:1-2 Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

- A. God's family values **UNITY**.

Ephesians 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Philippians 1:27 ...stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.

PIC: My 4 boys – work HARD keeping them unified (Your brother is best friend!) ;-)

- B. God's family has life transforming **RELATIONSHIPS**.

- 1. The **ONE ANOTHER** verses contain 33 different commands given over 50 times. Examples...

John 13:34 A new command I give you: **Love one another**. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 15:7 **Accept one another**, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, **bearing with one another** in love.

Ephesians 4:32 Be **kind and compassionate to one another**, **forgiving each other**, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:21 **Submit to one another** out of reverence for Christ.

Note: "Not being fed"?!? Wrong standard! "Am I committed in relationships?" – Right!

- C. God's family is **LOYAL** to one another.

Hebrews 13:5 ... God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'

John 13:34 As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Hebrews 13:1 ~~Keep on loving each other as brothers.~~

Note: "We live in world of 'disposable' relationships.' **Never** "irreconcilable differences" in Church!

Ex: It's easy to 'love' those we don't know (starving children in Africa)

II. THE CHURCH IS AN ARMY.

- A. An army has an OBJECTIVE. **Ex: Our 'Marching Orders'! ... Great Commission:**

Matthew 28:18-21 All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 5:13, 14 You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.

Ex: World domination! 20/20 vision "Win Utah, Reach the world!"

- B. An army has an ENEMY.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Ex: People talking bad about the church & pastors - satanic

- C. An army makes SACRIFICES.

1 Timothy 2:3 Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

Ex: Fall on a grenade for each other! (time, money, compassion, defending, etc.)

III. THE CHURCH IS A BODY.

Romans 12:4 (LIV) Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other, and each needs all the others.

Ex: People talking bad about the church & pastors - satanic

- A. The church grows through its connection with CHRIST, the Head.

Ephesians 4:15-16 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.

Ex: Some churches rarely talk about Jesus – not so at The Rock!

- B. Each part has been given a NECESSARY purpose.

1 Corinthians 12:7 (selected) Now to **each one** **v Insert your name here!** the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ... The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable ... God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Note: Not just pastor! (Ex. Mark Driscoll – Mars Hill collapse)

- C. Each part exists for the sake of the REST.

Romans 12:4-5 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.

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Ex: Imagine Peyton Manning's HAND 'cut off' – claiming to be "all that"! ;-)