



The Growing Christian

Study #5: The Local Church

Basic Discipleship Course

www.therockmiami.com

THE LOCAL CHURCH

God has established three great institutions on earth: the family, the civil government, and the local church. The local church is the institution created by God to reach the lost and mature and disciple the saved. God's plan to mature and equip Christians takes place within the context of the local church. Paul gives his disciple Timothy the following instructions in the book of 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

1. What is the local church?

The local church is a group of Christians that serve the Lord in a specific geographic area. The Bible mentions this group as part of the "body of Christ," and it is formed by people who are saved by His grace. In 1 Corinthians 12:27, Paul writes to the Christians in the Greek city of Corinth and tells them that they are "the body of Christ."

Paul metaphorically describes the universal church (the total sum of all believers) as a human body in 1 Corinthians 12:14-27. Also the Bible says:

- a. Each member has a different function, v. 14-20.
- b. No member could function by itself, v. 21.

- c. Every single member is important, v. 22-24.
- d. A body functions normally as a unit, v. 25-27.

2. What is the function of the church?

The first local church in the Bible was created in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41-47). The first church is an example for us and we can copy and imitate the activities that they practiced. The following list describes the most important things that they did:

- a. Baptism, v. 41.
- b. Fellowship with each other, v. 42.
- c. Prayer, v. 42.
- d. They taught the Word of God, v. 42.
- e. The Lord's Supper, v. 42.
- f. Gave testimony of the power and the grace of God, v. 43.
- g. They helped and ministered to each other, v. 45.
- h. Reached their community with the gospel, v. 46-47.
- i. Glorified and Praised God, v. 47.
- j. They strengthened and affirmed the saints.
Ephesians 4:11-12.

3. How do I begin to serve in my church?

There are three things that you need to continually practice throughout your Christian life:

- a. Observe and learn: Your first priority is to submit to the teaching of the Word of God and to become the man or woman that God wants you to be. Obey what you learn. Matthew 11:28-30 and James 1:22-25.

- b. Participate in all church meetings: In time you will spiritually grow and be able to contribute as a volunteer to serve in a ministry. Matthew 4:19 and Hebrews 10:25.

- c. Take initiative: In time you will be able to help others with their needs and concerns. You will help them with their spiritual baby steps. 2 Timothy 2:2.

Note: Be patient! This process takes time. Remain faithful to the local church where you are at.

Review

1. What are the three institutions that God established on earth?
2. What does Paul call the church in 1 Corinthians 12?
3. The first local church in the Bible began in Jerusalem. In Acts 2:41-47 we see the main activities of the first local church (Jerusalem). Number the activities of the local church that are found in these verses.

Verses to memorize:

Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:27; 2 Timothy 2:2

Notes