

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Some definitions: God's household Pillar & foundation of the truth Church of the living God
Some love church – some don't. Some are healthy – some dysfunctional.

The Bible says **we** are His holy places now –

1 Peter 1:15-16: *But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct, be set apart from the world by your godly character and moral courage; because it is written, "You shall be holy and set apart, for I am holy."*

Matthew 16:18: *And I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hell (death) will not overpower it by preventing the resurrection of the Christ.*

Peter = "piece of the rock" (petros). On this rock = a huge rock, a foundational rock (Petra)

Chuck Colson: *Biblically, the church is an ORGANISM, not an ORGANIZATION.*

A MOVEMENT, not a MONUMENT, not a PART of a COMMUNITY, but a WHOLE NEW COMMUNITY. It is not an ORDERLY GATHERING, it is a NEW ORDER with NEW VALUES, Often in sharp CONFLICT with the values of the surrounding community.

The church is about PEOPLE, NOT the PROGRAM.

PEOPLE **IN UNION** with JESUS CHRIST!

We're in conflict, not because of personalities – but because of who we're IN UNION WITH.
IF we were in union with God and His desires, we wouldn't care about the other stuff.

THE CHURCH IS ABOUT 3 THINGS: Common LOVE, LIFE, and LONGING

COMMON LOVE: *Our common love is that He loves us and died for us!*

1 John 4:12: *But if we love one another with unselfish concern, God abides in us, and His love, the love that is His essence, abides in us and is completed and perfected in us.*

Acts 2:42: *They were continually and faithfully devoting themselves to the instruction of the apostles, and to fellowship, to eating meals together and to prayers.*

COMMON LOVE OF GOD

1 John 1:3: *And indeed our fellowship, which is a distinguishing mark of born-again believers, is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

COMMON LOVE FOR GOD:

1 John 4:10: *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation, that is, the atoning sacrifice, and the satisfying offering for our sins, fulfilling God's requirement for justice against sin and placating His wrath. Beloved, if God so loved us in this incredible way, we also ought to love one another.*

COMMON LIFE: *Our common life is our commitment to obey Him!*

Acts 2:42-47

They were continually and faithfully devoting themselves to the instruction of the apostles, and to fellowship, to eating meals together and to prayers.

A sense of awe was felt by everyone, and many wonders and signs (attesting miracles) were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed in Jesus as Savior were together and had all things in common, considering their possessions to belong to the group as a whole. And they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing the proceeds with all the other believers, as anyone had need. Day after day they met in the temple area continuing with one mind, and breaking bread in various private homes. They were eating their meals together with joy and generous hearts, praising God continually, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord kept adding to their number daily those who were being saved.

What every Christian should do – worship, evangelism, community, service, discipleship

CHURCHES GROW	STRONGER	THROUGH	WORSHIP
	LARGER		EVANGELISM
	WARMER		COMMUNITY
	BROADER		SERVICE
	DEEPER		DISCIPLESHIP

This is CORPORATE – BUT INDIVIDUAL AS WELL!

1 Corinthians 12:27

Now you collectively are Christ's body, and individually you are members of it, each with his own special purpose and function, that God has appointed and placed in the church for His own use...

COMMON LONGING: *Our common longing is to serve Him to the finish!*

1. Obey JESUS' COMMANDS
2. Jesus' RETURN
3. See others come to know God

There is a tension: we want Jesus to return but we also want to save souls
GOD WANTS US WORKING – today and to finish!

Philippians 1:21-24

For to me, to live is Christ – He is my source of joy and my reason to live – and to die is gain, for I will be with Him in eternity. If, however, it is to be life here and I am to go on living, this will mean useful and productive service for me; so I do not know which to choose if I am given that choice.

I am hard-pressed between the two. I have the desire to leave this world and be with Christ, for that is far, far better; yet to remain in my body is more necessary and essential for your sake.