

It is God's will for every Christian to be an active member of a Biblical Baptist church.

**Church** – An organized, visible, assembly of baptized disciples who gather for the purpose of carrying out the Lord's mandate: to teach (disciple) all nations.

**Key verse: 1 Timothy 3:15** "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

The Lord Jesus started his church during his lifetime using the baptized converts of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:5,6, 13-17, even Jesus was baptized). The Lord commissioned 12 as apostles to carry out His work. To **edify** His church, the Lord Jesus instituted **Church Discipline** (Matt. 18), the **Lord's Supper** (Matt. 26), and **The Great Commission** (Matt. 28). Pentecost was a public authentication of His church (BTW, the day of Pentecost was observed during the first day of the week: Sunday).

**Psalms 22:22** "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." (**Hebrews 2:12** "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.") (**Matthew 26:30** "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.") – The church was predicted (congregation, singing). The Lord Jesus fulfills the prophecy according to Paul, when did this take place? During Jesus' lifetime.

**Acts 1:13-15** "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. (v.14) These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. (v.15) And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)" – The 3,000 souls that were saved and they were added unto the church by baptism (Ch. 2:41, 42). The congregation was 3,120 baptized disciples that made up the church at Jerusalem.

**1 Corinthians 12:27** "Now ye are the **body** of Christ, and **members** in particular." – "**Ye**" – referring to the Corinthian church members (1:2). They make up "**the body**" of Christ (or His church is the body) and they make up the members of His body in Corinth. Christ's churches are localized but Christ is the head of each and every church (through his omnipresence; Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 11:3). Christ works through local churches. Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism teach a universal, mystical body of Christ which is joined upon by the Christian at the point of salvation. This is not Biblical, and this is contrary to the Biblical model and mandate of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 11:2** "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." – The church is espoused/betrothed to her husband, the Lord Jesus Christ. She is to be kept pure for her Lord. The Bride metaphor culminates in the Eternal Kingdom which includes all who are saved from the Old Testament saints and the New Testament believers, the Tribulation saints, the Millennial Kingdom saints. Salvation, not church membership, is the sole requirement for having a part in the New Jerusalem which is the Bride of the Lamb (Rev. 21:9,10). Christ loved the church and is the example of how husbands ought to love their wives (Eph. 5:23,25 ff.).

**Ephesians 2:19-22** "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the **household** of God; (v.20) And are **built** upon the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, **Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone**; (v.21) In whom all **the building** fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (v.22) In whom ye also are **builded together** for an habitation of God through the Spirit." – The Biblical church is like a building. A component of many parts.