

Theological Premises for Public Gatherings of the Church

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- Jesus of Nazareth has been made both Lord and Christ through the resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:36)
- All authority in the state and the church comes from the Father through Him (Psalm 2:7-9; Matthew 28:18)
- The state has authority from Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, to order the civil society for the public good of the whole, otherwise known as the common good. (Daniel 2:37; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 6:14-16; Revelation 19:16)
- The symbol of the state's authority is the sword given to him for the execution of evildoers (Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:4).
- The church has authority from Christ, the Overseer and Chief Shepherd, to order the ecclesiastical society for the good of the body and the glory of God (1 Peter 2:25, 5:4; Hebrews 13:7-17)
- The symbol of the church's authority is the keys of the kingdom given to her for opening and closing the door of heaven (Isaiah 22:20-22; Matthew 16:17-19).
- In the public worship of the church, those gathered are admitted into heaven by the merits of Christ and the power of the Spirit (John 14:3, 15-18, 21, 17:24; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Gal 3:1; Ephesians 2:13-22, 3:14-19; Hebrews 10:19-22, 12:22-25)
- Therefore, the power of the keys, in the hands of the church, is primarily concerned with opening the door of the church to penitent sinners and admitting them to public worship where they meet with Christ. This communion of sinners with Christ in public worship is one of the rewards of Christ's Cross (Psalm 22:22; Hebrews 2:12).
- Christian worship is ordered by the Risen Christ in his Word and is to be executed by church officers (1 Corinthians 14:33, 36-40; Philippians 1:1).

- Christian worship is made up of three things: preaching, prayer, and the observance of the sacraments (Of Preaching: Matthew 3:1, 4:17; Acts 2:41-42; Romans 10:14-15; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 2:16-17, 3:8-9, 4:11-12; Philippians 1:18, Colossians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:12-15; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Titus 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-2, 2:1-4, 12, 4:2, 12:24-25, 13:7, 22; James 1:22; 1 Peter 1:22-25; 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 John 1:3; Revelation 1:10-20, 10:1-3, 22:16-22. Of Prayer: Matthew 21:13; Acts 2:42; Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 1:16, 2:19-22, 3:14, Revelation 5:8, 8:3-4. Of the Sacraments: Acts 2:41-42, 10:47-48; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25; 1 Peter 3:21; Revelation 19:9)
- Given the nature of each of these elements and their relation to each, especially that between preaching and the sacraments, Christian worship can only be observed in a public physical gathering in the same location (Exodus 35:1; Numbers 11:24-25; 1 Samuel 7:6; 2 Chronicles 20:4; Ezra 3:1-2; Psalm 107:2-3; Acts 12:12, 14:27, 15:30)
- The state, being in the hands of sinful men, may err and has erred throughout history by transgressing the limits of its authority (1 Samuel 15:14; 1 Kings 11:29-31, 12:16; 2 Chronicles 26:18; Psalm 2:1-3 Matthew 22:21; Acts 22:25; Acts 19:39-41 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12)
- When the state transgresses its God appointed bounds, especially in matters of faith and worship, it is the duty of the church to obey God rather than man (2 Chronicles 26:16-18; 1 Kings 19:18; Exodus 7:16-17; Acts 5:27-33; Revelation 13:8-9)