

God-Ordained Institutions: The Church, Part 1

Introduction

Three Major Pictures of the Church: body, building, field

1. A Body: Loving Unity

Hallmark of true disciples of Jesus. What He prayed for in John 17, so that the world would believe the Father had sent the Son and that we are His people. Sin creates division. True righteousness connects people. Love God. Love others.

Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16 (cf. Ephesians 5: pattern for marriage)

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, **12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. **15** Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

In relation to its members: edification
Building one another up into Christlike
maturity—doctrinal and practical

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11-27

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; **5** and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; **6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. **7** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. **12** For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. **13** For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. **14** For the body does not consist of one member but of many. **15** If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. **16** And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? **18** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. **19** If all were a single member, where would the body be? **20** As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. **21** The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” **22** On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, **23** and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, **24** which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the

body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Great variety among the members of the body of Christ. Everyone is needed, strong and weak. Different gifts. We need each other to grow spiritually.

How are you building up others in the church body?

How are they building you up?

What are their names?

One Another Covenant

2. A Building: Worship

1 Peter 2:4-5

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The parts of the building have to be connected to function as designed. Here it is a

temple—a spiritual house where a holy priesthood offers up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

God-centered people who love Him above all else; purpose is to make God's name great in the earth

Ephesians 2:19-22

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

The foundation is the Word—the prophets and apostles.

Christ sets the design for the structure—the Cornerstone—everything must line up with Him.

Just as the shekinah (dwelling place) glory of God filled the tabernacle built by Moses and the temple built by Solomon, so the Spirit is to fill the church

People filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5) speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord, giving thanks, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ

Changes everything about their relationships—wives, husbands, children, parents, slaves and masters (workers and employers)

In relation to God: worship

3. A Field: Life and Growth

1 Corinthians 3:5-9

⁵ What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸ He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

A field alive with the life of God. Farmers labor in vain if there's no life in the seed; no rain, no sun. He gives the growth.

John 4—Samaritan woman at the well at Sychar; fields white unto harvest

Parable of the Sower—wayside, shallow rocky soil, choked by thorns, good soil

Acts 8—scattered like seed by persecution; wherever Christians went, they carried the gospel seed—displayed and proclaimed the good news; resulted in a harvest of souls everywhere they went

Day of Pentecost—harvest festival; feast of firstfruits

End of the age, wheat and tares separated, good wheat gathered into the barn
(Psalm 1—the wicked are like the chaff the wind drives away)

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
Raise the Song of Harvest Home

In relation to the world: evangelism