

“TFT Bible Class will equip you with Christian values, principles and doctrines with the aim of transforming you to become an effective disciple in the ministry of Christ.”



TOPIC 1.2.1

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IN A BELIVERS'S LIFE

KEY LEARNING OUTCOME

- Will be exposed to the difference between the church as a body of Christ and the local church as an institution.
- Students will have a better understanding of why it is important to associate with and be part of a local church.

OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON

- To understand what the church is.
- To understand the role of the church.
- To understand the believer's role in the church.

Introduction

A believer/ Christian is one who has believed the good news – that Jesus is who He says He is, the Messiah/Christ, and has given their life to Him, the believer repented and accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour, he /she is now a person of Faith.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

A believer is a person who belongs to the body of Christ. We are born again into the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:27

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1.2.1 WHAT IS A CHURCH?

- The word Church (Ekklesia) means - called out, called to gather in one place for a particular purpose, sort of an assembly.

Matthew 16:18

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades will not overcome it.

- What rock is Jesus referring to? He is referring to the revelation that Peter had, that Jesus is the Son of God.
- The church belongs to Christ, founded/Established on the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah/Saviour and Son of God.
- According to 1 Corinthians 12:27, the church is the people. Verses 12 to 14 of 1 Corinthians 12 specifies the manner in which the church is being built – it is the Holy Spirit baptising believers into union with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:27

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

- The Ekklesia is the Lord's act of calling Christians out of the world to form a new community/family or body – the Church of Christ.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- The church's purpose is to bring people back to God, through the message of the Gospel. The mission of Jesus Christ became the mission of the Church.

John 20:21

*Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you!
As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

We can further define the church in two parts:

i. The Body of Christ

The church is the Body and Christ is the head. It is also referred to as the Universal Church).

The word universal means relating to all people/things in the world.

When person is Born-Again they become part of the body of Christ, they are now a child of God, where ever they may be around the world. All Christians around the world whatever race or continent they are from, they belong to the Body of Christ. A Born-Again Christian has been born of the Spirit and the same Holy Spirit is the one that joins us into the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

ii. The Local Church

The Local church is the congregation where you live, the physical area where believers gather e.g. The Freeway Tabernacle.

The local church edifies and equips the believer for Gods calling and ministry, hence it is important that when a person receives Jesus as Lord, they should belong to a family of believers (the local church). A local church is more than just a building, it's a place where we meet with other believers, where we are taught sound biblical doctrine, it's a place where we pray and worship.

Ephesians 4:11-13

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Examples of Local churches in the New Testament:

- The church in Jerusalem Acts 8:1, 11:22
- The church in Rome - Romans 16:5
- The church in Corinth - 1 Corinthians 1:2
- The churches Galatia - Galatians 1:2
- The church in Thessalonica - 1 Thessalonians 1:1
- The Home of Philemon was a church - Philippians 2

The Bible describes the Church and believers as:

i. A Family

The bible often refers to believers as brothers and sisters in Christ, and as Brethren (1 Timothy 5:1-2, 1 Peter 3:8)

1 Timothy 5:1-2

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

ii. The Flock

Jesus is the Good shepherd we (the Church) are His sheep (John 10:14, Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 5:2-4)

John 10:14-16

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me...— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

iii. The Bride

Jesus is the Bridegroom and the church is the Bride (Matthew 25:10, John 3:29, Ephesians 5:23-25, Revelations 19:7-9):

- In Ephesians 5:23-27 Paul describes the love the husband has for his wife.
- The book of Revelation 19:7-9 sets out the setting when the Bridegroom (The Lord Jesus) finally meets with the Bride (Church) and get united in the New Earth.