



HONEST QUESTIONS

Part 4: About Church

1. Discussion Question.

Why is it necessary to go to church when we can worship at home and watch good church programs on TV?

2. Key Words

- _____: A metaphor for the church depicting Jesus Christ as the head, and believers as the body, each having a distinct synergistic role within the church so that interconnectedness takes place.
- _____: The word "church" is derived from the German word *Kirche* which is derived from the Greek word *kuriakos*, meaning "belonging to the Lord."
- _____: A word derived from the Greek word *ekklesia* referring to a gathering or assembly of people.
- _____: A Greek word meaning "fellowship," "communion" or "sharing together."
- _____: A group of believers who gather together for worship, instruction, fellowship, and ministry in a given geographical area.
- _____: A term used by Reformed theologians who see the nation of Israel as being replaced in the New Testament by the church, or "spiritual Israel." Dispensational theologians on the other hand regard Israel and the church as two eternally separate entities with which God deals in different ways.
- _____: All people, regardless of their denominational affiliation, who have accepted Christ as Savior. A community of all true believers for all time

3. What are the purposes of the church?

- Purpose #1: _____

Col. 3:16b. "as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

Eph. 1:12 (NLT). "God's purpose was that we who were the first to trust in Christ should praise our glorious God."

Eph. 5:19b. "Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord."

- Purpose #2: _____

Eph. 4:12. "To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

Col. 1:28. "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ."

- Purpose #3: _____

Matt. 28:19. "go and make disciples of all nations."

Luke 6:35-36. "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

4. What are the marks of a true church?

Since any group of people can gather together and call themselves a "church," what are the marks of a true church? Wayne Grudem suggests 12 factors that make a true (pure) church.¹

- The preaching and teaching of _____ . (Titus 1:9)
- The proper use of the _____ . (1 Cor. 11:17-34)
- Right use of _____ . (1 Cor. 5:6-7, 12-13)
- Genuine _____ . (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17)
- Effective _____ . (Col. 4:2; 1 Pet. 3:12)
- Effective _____ . (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13:34-35; Acts 2:44-47; 1 John 4:7)
- Effective _____ (Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3-7)
- Biblical church _____ . (1 Tim. 3:1-13)

¹ Wayne Grudem, An Introduction to Systematic Theology, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2000) p. 874.

- Spiritual power in _____ . (Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 4:20; 2 Cor. 10:3-4)
- _____ of life among members. (1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 12:14)
- Care for the _____ . (Acts 4:32-35; Rom. 15:26; Gal. 2:10)
- Love for _____ . (1 Pet. 1:8; Rev. 2:4)

Additionally, all Christians are to “*excel in gifts that build up the church*” (1 Cor. 14:12), not only to increase in the number of church members but also (and in fact primarily) to the “edification” or growth of the church toward Christian maturity.

5. Why are there so many denominations?

The term “denomination” in general refers to anything distinguished by name (e.g. Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, etc.). The Bible in no way addresses the idea of compartmentalizing of the church into denominations.² There are right reasons and wrong reasons for organizational separation (denominations).

Discussion

What might be some *wrong* reasons for compartmentalizing churches into denominations?

Discussion

What might be some *right* reasons for compartmentalizing churches into denominations?

Discussion

Should local churches that share common doctrine and practices join together to take advantage of combined resources, or should they break into smaller churches?

6. Is the church losing its power against evil in the world?

When we recognize the rapid growth of evil that is seen daily in our society, we may wonder if the church has power to make any changes at all.

Discussion

What do the following verses tell us about the church’s power regarding spiritual warfare?

2 Cor. 10:3-4. “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”

² Walter A. Elwell, Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001) pp. 335-37.

Exercise

Read Ephesians 6:10-18. Try to match the armor/weapons below that the church has for spiritual warfare to the best usage descriptions.

<u>Armor/Weapon</u>	<u>How Used</u>
____Belt of truth	a. Protects us our minds from doubting God's saving work for us.
____Breastplate of righteousness	b. The only offensive weapon that is used against Satan when we are tempted to sin.
____Footgear	c. Used to defeat Satan's lies and deceptions
____Shield of faith	d. Used to protect us from Satan's temptations and setbacks. Helps us look forward to Jesus' ultimate victory over evil.
____Helmet of salvation	e. Used to oppose Satan's attacks in getting us to think that spreading the Good News is worthless and hopeless.
____Sword of the Spirit/Word of God	f. Used to oppose Satan's attacks in getting us to think we are worthless and unloved in God's eyes.

7. How does God use the church to bless us?

All of the blessings we experience in this life are ultimately undeserved—they are all of grace (1 Pet. 5:12). Many of these blessings come from within the fellowship of the church.

Discussion

What do Christians miss when they neglect involvement in a local church?

Discussion

What are some of the activities within the life of the church that God has used to personally bless you?

Supplemental Reading

Theology for the Community of God, by Stanley J. Grenz (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994). This book has one of the most complete works on the subject of the church.