

Celebrating God at Church, Part 1 | the purpose

I. What is Church?

- The Greek word translated church is *ekklēsia*. Generally speaking, in the Greek that word simply referred to an *assembly* of people. For example, in Acts 19:32, we read that many of the Ephesians were ignorantly stirred into an uproar against Paul and his traveling companions.
- The first usage of the word in the NT comes from Jesus Himself in Matthew 16:18.
- The first *written* usage of the word is in James 5:14.
- Just because people walk into a church building or participate in a service or light a candle or preach a message, does not mean they're part of the church. (Acts 2)
- True church membership happens when you're born again. Whether you like it or not, if you are a born again follower of Christ, then you are a member of the church. And as a member, you have responsibilities.

II. The Purpose of Church

- **Born again believers are to assemble because they love God and He commands it.**
 - If we neglect that physical assembling of believers, then we're ignoring the command of God. (Hebrews 10:24-25)
 - We can't fulfill the One Anothers when we tune in to an online church either.
 - This is another reason that Paul, under the inspiration of God, refers to us as a body. This illustrates that each believer in the assembly has a special and necessary role to play. If for some reason your liver decided to neglect the assembling of your body parts today, there would be a problem. And there are a lot of churches out there suffering from liver failure. There are a lot of amputated local bodies out there. And some of that may have to do with the fact that you don't assemble.
- **God commands its to assemble so that we may play a vital part in the process of teaching and being taught, ministering and being ministered unto, loving and being loved, reaching and being reached.**
 - Ephesians 4:11-16
 - God gave the church men whose sole responsibility was to equip the saints — that's those of us in the church — to do the work of the ministry and build up the body of Christ so that we can introduce more people into the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God so that we can all become mature just like Jesus Christ and not easily lead astray by failure philosophies. Instead, the church is to be filled with people who speak to each other in Truth and love so that they can all grow together into the head, Jesus Christ. And the passage says it once again, it ends by saying the whole purpose of this is to grow and build itself up in love.
- **We assemble so that the church may grow, not only quantitatively as new people are added, but also *qualitatively* as we are matured into the image of Christ.**

The church exists to celebrate Christ, unify us together in His Truth, and subsequently be built up, strengthened, matured, and equipped to introduce others to the body so they can celebrate Christ and continue the process.