

“How Can I Find the Right Church?”



Should You “Attend the Church of Your Choice?”



- The church belongs to Jesus who built it (Matt. 16:18)
- He is the head of the church (Eph. 1:2-23)
- We should attend the church of Jesus’ choice, not ours!
- This will require diligent search

How to Find the Right Church



1. Determine the identifying marks of the church in the New Testament
2. Look for a church that has the same characteristics

1 Timothy 4:1–3 (ESV)



1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, **2** through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, **3** who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

Another Way to Look for a Church



1. Find a church and determine its claims and teachings.
2. Evaluate those claims in light of the Scripture.

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Identifying Marks of the New Testament Church



- Its members were called Christians or disciples (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16)

The Church – Made up of Christians



Acts 11:26 (ESV) — 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

1 Peter 4:16 (ESV) — 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Identifying Marks of the New Testament Church



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- The name of the church indicated that it belonged to Jesus (Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16), rather than to any human, group of humans, or doctrine.

The Church – Named After Jesus



Acts 20:28 (ESV) — 28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the **church of God**, which he obtained with his own blood.

Romans 16:16 (ESV) — 16 ... All the **churches of Christ** greet you.

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- It proclaimed to the entire world salvation based upon faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31) and repentance from sins (Acts 17:30), for those who were baptized (i.e. immersed in water) to have their sins forgiven (Acts 2:38) and washed away (Acts 22:16)

The Gospel the Church Preaches



Acts 16:31 (ESV) — 31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

Acts 17:30 (ESV) — 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

Acts 2:38 (ESV) — 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins

Acts 22:16 (ESV) — 16 ... Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

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- Local congregations worked and worshipped under the oversight of elders (Acts 14:23; 11:30; 20:28) who met specific qualifications (Titus 1:5-9)

Local Church Leadership



Acts 14:23 (ESV) — 23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 11:30 (ESV) — 30 And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 20:28 (ESV) — 28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

The Elder's Qualifications



Titus 1:5–9 (ESV) — **5** This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— **6** if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. **7** For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, **8** but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. **9** He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

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- Their worship and congregational activities included:
 - Partaking of the Lord's Supper (breaking bread) on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

The Lord's Supper



Acts 20:7 (ESV) — 7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (ESV) — **23** For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

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Voluntary Contributions



1 Corinthians 16:1–2 (ESV) — **1** Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. **2** On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

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 - Teaching and preaching the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42)
 - Prayer (Acts 2:42; 12:5)

Teaching/Preaching & Prayer



Acts 2:42 (ESV) — 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 12:5 (ESV) — 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

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 - Singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16-17)

Singing



Ephesians 5:18–19 (ESV) — 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

Colossians 3:16–17 (ESV) — 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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- **The church worked together to build up each Christian into full maturity in Jesus Christ through faith, knowledge and active love (Ephesians 4:11-16)**

The Church: Growing Up in Love



Ephesians 4:11–16 (ESV) - **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.

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Matthew 7:7 (ESV)



7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.