

Church

When we accept God's offer and receive the Holy Spirit, we become a member of God's family. Every spiritual child needs to become a part of a spiritual family. God is our heavenly father, and all believers are like brothers and sisters of the same family. "This household is the church of the living God..." (1 Timothy 3:15). The household is not a building, and the "church" is not a place of worship, but a group of believers.

1. How does the Bible describe the relationship between Jesus and His followers?

Romans 12:5: _____

Ephesians 1:22-23: _____

2. What does church look like?

Acts 2:37-47: What do we learn here about church?

Church can meet everywhere: in parks, schools, cafés, church buildings, offices or at home in the living room.

3. A definition of church (according to the Book of Acts)

Covenant

A group of people who have been baptized and decided to follow Jesus. A group of people who see themselves as a church and commit to do God's will together.

Functions

- **Worship:** Praising God and being in His presence
- **Fellowship:** Lovingly caring about each other and being ready to sacrifice for each other
- **Prayer:** Being together in relationship with God and talking with Him
- **Training:** Reading the Bible and learning to obey God in everyday life
- **Ministry:** Showing God's love by serving others
- **Multiplication:** Sharing the Gospel and making disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit

Leaders

Healthy churches have leaders who care about all the members and help them to learn more about God and to do His will in all parts of their lives.

4. Three duties we have as the church

1) Joining with Jesus: Baptism

The word “baptism” means “to immerse, submerge” as cleansing or washing. Just as Jesus was baptized, everyone who believes in Him needs to be baptized as well. Jesus commands His followers at the end of the Gospel of Matthew: “... baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

The meaning of this verse becomes clear in Acts 2:38:

Water baptism is also called the “washing of rebirth” (Titus 3:5). Romans 6:1-11 explains this meaning:

In the same way that Jesus was buried and then rose again to life, we go under water in baptism and come out of the water with a new life. Our old nature dies and we're no longer “slaves of sin”. That means we no longer have to sin. We're now a “new creation” (2Corinthians 5:17). In baptism we bury our old life and our new life begins, a totally new lifestyle guided by the example of Jesus.

2) Remembering Jesus: The Lord's Supper

Jesus personally set the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of His death and shedding of blood for our sins. (Luke 22:15-20)

When we take the Lord's Supper, it helps us to remember and to give thanks. Isaiah 53:5b:

When we receive the Lord's Supper, we have time to examine our actions and faith (1 Corinthians 11:23-29)

3) Giving: Offerings

Offerings are thank-you gifts given to God as acts of worship. We offer sacrifices to God in many areas of our life, e.g. with our time and our abilities. God has also asked us to give parts of our finances to him.

Ask God: What should I invest my time in? How should I invest my money?

