

## 12. The Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish.

**When we become Christians, we become a part of Christ's church. The church is described as Christ's body, and He is the head. Church members need to keep in close contact with Christ and with each other through meeting regularly for worship.**

- The church is Christ's body. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13
- Christ is the head. Ephesians 1:22-23
- The church is also described as Christ's bride which He is preparing for the great marriage in heaven. 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-8
- Acceptance of Christ brings adoption into the family of God. John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:19-22
- Acceptance of Christ leads to separation from worldly practices. 1 John 2:15; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18
- God had a special congregation in Old Testament times too. Genesis 12:3; Acts 7:38
- Christians need to meet together for worship and encouragement. Hebrews 10:24-25
- We should invest our gifts, energies, and abilities in building up the church. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:11-15

*Texts for further study:* Ephesians 3:8-11, 5:23-27; Colossians 1:17-18

**Christ has given His church authority and a mission on the earth. Its authority is founded upon Himself as the Word of God, and upon His word, the Bible.**

- In answer to the members' prayers, Christ gives His church the ability to make decisions in harmony with His will. Matthew 16:13-20, 18:18
- My mission as a church member is to lead others from the world into Christ's church. Matthew 28:19-20

### Personal Application

-  What part did the church have in helping me come to know Christ as my Saviour?
-  Why is fellowship with other believers important?

### Commitment

- Father, with joy I confess that Jesus Christ is my Saviour, and I rejoice that You have adopted me into the family of God. I want to unite with Your body on earth, be part of the family, share Your grace and church fellowship with others.