

1. church - a basic definition:

- = a building used for Christian religious services
- = religious services held in a church
- = a particular Christian group

– Merriam-Webster.com

#1577 ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*

- from 1537 ἐκ = out of or away from and 2564 καλέω *kaleo* = to call
  - used 118x in the NT
  - translated – “church” 115x
  - “assembly” 3x
- = any gathering of people convening for any number of purposes, including people assembled by chance tumultuously
- = in a Christian sense: those called by God out of the world by salvation into the kingdom of His beloved Son
- = in the Bible “church” always refers to people, never to a building  
(Acts 19:32, 39; 7:38; Eph 1:22-23; Acts 13:23, 9:31)

2. Since Pentecost Jesus is building His church

- He is continually and constantly caring for and sustaining His church
- He loves His church as His beloved bride
- He gave Himself up and died for the church  
(Mt 16:18; Acts 1:4-5, 2:1-4; Eph 5:25-27)

3. The Scripture speaks about the church in two distinct ways

- a) the **UNIVERSAL** or **INVISIBLE** church
    - it is an organism – a living entity
    - every true believer, who has repented and been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is a member
    - every true believer who has died and is alive with the Lord is a member
    - as the church began at Pentecost so it will be completed at the Rapture
    - it is a mystery not known in previous generations but hidden in the manifold wisdom of God  
(Eph 1:22, 3:3-12)
  - b) the **LOCAL** or **VISIBLE** church
    - it is an organization
    - it is an assembly of professing believers in a given community
    - it consists of people who are born again but it may also have members who say they are believers but really are not
    - this may happen through ignorance, deception, or hypocrisy
4. The church practices two rites or ordinances
- a) baptism
  - b) communion (the Lord's supper)  
(Mt 28:19; 1 Cor 11:23-32)

5. Most churches are governed according to three basic ways of oversight

- a) authority rests primarily in one head elder
  - b) authority to oversee the church lies in a group or committee of leaders
  - c) final authority lies in the vote of the members of the congregation
  - d) or a combination or variation of two or all three of the above
6. Elders are accountable for the spiritual leadership of the flock and deacons do the practical work of leadership under the elders
7. The Local Church functions best when all its members exercise their spiritual gifts for the common good
8. The purpose of the Local Church is four-fold
- a) to glorify and exalt the Lord
  - b) to be a witness of the gospel of Jesus to a lost and dying world
  - c) to bring the believers to spiritual maturity by edifying, teaching and equipping them for a life of loving service to the Lord
  - d) to live in the world in a way that is worthy of the Lord and demonstrative of the kingdom  
(1 Chr 16:29; Ro 3:23; Jn 4:23; Mt 28:19-20; Col 2:6-7; Eph 5:15-17)