

LESSON 8: THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

The church. Some think of it merely as the building that you go to worship in every Sunday and Wednesday. It is a physical place. Others believe that the church is made up of all the Christians in the world. What do you believe is the church? Who is included? Are there criteria to be involved in the church?

JESUS' DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

Read Matthew 16:13-19

- ▶ What is the church based upon?
- ▶ What are the requirements for being a member of the church?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:13-17

- ▶ Do you have to be baptized to be part of the church?

WHO IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Now that we have a description of how Jesus defined the church and who the members of the church are, we will take a look at the makeup of the church and its function in our lives.

Read Colossians 1:16-18

- ▶ Who is the head of the church?

Read Proverbs 11:14, 24:6, and 11:4

- ▶ So if Christ is the head of the church, then why do we vote on anything?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

There are two purposes within the church that can be summed up as vertical and horizontal. The vertical pertains to one's relationship with God, while the horizontal aspect involves relationships with other people.

Read Zechariah 8:20-23, Matthew 18:19-20, and John 15:6-8

- ▶ What are some aspects of the vertical purpose of the church?
- ▶ What are some areas of our lives where we can show others Christ?

Read Romans 15:5-7

- ▶ What are some aspects of the horizontal purpose of the church?

- ▶ Is it possible for Christians to never disagree?

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CHURCH

Read Hebrews 10:24-25

- ▶ What are our responsibilities as Christians in the church?

Read Romans 12:4-5

- ▶ What kind of gifts does God give to the church?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

- ▶ What is our responsibility to those in church leadership (Pastor and staff)?

Read 1 Peter 5:1-3

- ▶ What is the responsibility of the church leadership to the members?

Conclusion

There needs to be a unity in the church based on the understanding that the church is composed only of people that have been convicted and surrounded by the Holy Spirit. We believe that Christ is the head of the church, and even though we vote, we are voting to find what the head of the church says. We have a horizontal responsibility to encourage and disciple each other, but even more importantly we have a vertical responsibility to have a strong relationship with God. We need to live in such a way to use our gifts to impact others. Our lives should be so different that people will gravitate to us and ask what is it that we have and they do not, what is it that is different about us, and how they can have it, too?