

Week Three

I BELONG... TO A CHURCH

What is Church?

UNIVERSAL CHURCH: Romans 12:5, Ephesians 2:19-22, Colossians 1:16-20 & 3:11

LOCAL CHURCH: 1 Corinthians 11:18, Acts 2

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Foundational Truth We believe that the true Church is composed of all those who have been SAVED by God's GRACE through faith and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and are thereby united together in the BODY OF CHRIST of which He is the Head. This UNIVERSAL Church is the pillar and ground of truth, manifest in the fellowship and ministry of LOCAL churches. The two biblically mandated ordinances of the Church—BAPTISM and THE LORD'S SUPPER—visibly and tangibly express this gospel, strengthening our faith. They are to be celebrated by the church in obedience to Christ, but in themselves are NOT a means of SALVATION.

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Church Organization

If the church are the people who believe, how can there be individual churches?

There was massive growth in the early church and DIFFERENCES arose (people have different likes, passions, needs, theological views, etc.). So as the church grew, it needed to be organized—not just in who does what, but why we do those things. Now, there are hundreds of thousands of church organizations around the world that have their own identity and vision and personality.

Group Discussion:

Have you ever had a time where you felt like you DIDN'T belong? How about when you DID belong? What was the difference?

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU *BELONG* TO CHURCH?

Universal Church Faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Local Church Engaging in corporate worship with other believers and allowing yourself to be known.

Church organization Buying-in and engaging the mission and the vision. Some churches call this membership or ownership . . . we merely call it “committed”.

What does it look like to be committed?

1. Committed to **GROWING**—personally and corporately (Hebrews 5:14).
2. Committed to **UNITY**—within your church family and leadership (John 17:22-23).
3. Committed to **ATTEND**—being a part of the corporate church gathering on a regular basis (Ephesians 3:10).
4. Committed to **GIVE**—supporting the work that God is doing through the church by giving back to God financially (1 Corinthians 16:2).
5. Committed to **SERVE**—utilizing the gifts and passions to meet the ministry needs, engaging in eternal Kingdom work (1 Peter 4:10).

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM A CHURCH ORGANIZATION?

To model CHRIST in action, attitude, leadership, and direction.

Philippians 2:1-4—*Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

Romans 12:8—*. . . if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

To faithfully TEACH the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12—*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Galatians 1:8—*But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!*

Help you GROW in the unity of Christ.

Ephesians 4:14-16—*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Group Discussion:

Why is it important to be a part of a local church body?

Hebrews 10:24-25—*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to MEET TOGETHER, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

1. The church is a vital part of our SANCTIFICATION process (growing love and good works).
2. The church is a place of ENCOURAGEMENT.
3. The church is a place where we are expected to be in SCRIPTURE.
4. The church is place for us to GIVE . . . not just RECEIVE. (It is a responsibility of each believer to gather, be an encourager, and to stir up others in love and good works.)

Take Home Assignment:

1. Read about Morning Star's history, purpose/core values, and ministries in the appendix, starting on page 62.
2. Complete the SHAPE assessment in the appendix on page 69; come next week with your results.
3. Self-Assessment: Do you believe God has added you to Morning Star as part of our church family?
