

FP: The Church

The Church is Jesus' marvelous plan for our lives after baptism, and it is how he helps us to remain faithful and effective in this sinful world.

1. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

The Spirit baptizes us into the body of Jesus, his church. The church consists of distinct yet unified parts, just like a human body. God himself has arranged it this way (v.24). No one in the church is insignificant (v.14-17) and we should be in complete unity (v.25). Not only are we to be unified with each other, but also we need each other (v.21). We should never let ourselves think that we do not need someone in the church.. We are the church; each of us must actively look for the distinct yet unified ways we are to support this body. How will you help build up the body of Christ?

2. Ephesians 4:1-6, 11-16

Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the church requires humility, patience, gentleness, and selflessness (vv.1-3). We maintain unity on the essentials of doctrine (vv.4-6). God provides specific leadership roles within the church (v.11) in order to prepare us for works of service which build up the body in Christ-likeness and love (vv.12-16).

3. Hebrews 3:12-14

Christianity is a "one another" religion, not a solo endeavor. We have the charge and the responsibility to be deeply involved in each other's lives. Daily encouragement helps everyone stand firm until the end (You may wish to refer to additional "one another" verses – James 5:16, 1 John 4:19-21).

4. Hebrews 10:22-25

After being washed in baptism, we need the continual encouragement of brothers and sisters to stay the course. Consider ahead of time how you can spur on fellow Christians in the fellowship. Also prepare to receive biblical input that will result in greater love and good deeds. We are to be committed to the meetings of the body. Why is missing meetings of the body described as a bad habit? Why and when do we meet?

5. Hebrews 13:17

God has structured his Church according to his will (Ephesians 4). It is important that we respect the order that God has established. Leaders are held accountable for how they lead and members of the Church are accountable for how they follow.

6. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Just as God and Satan cannot live in harmony, as disciples we cannot be irrevocably tied to those who do not share our standards. Dangerous examples of yoked relationships include Marriage/Dating, business partners, and roommates. In these relationships we are powerfully drawn to mirror the life of those we are yoked to (just like with oxen).

7. 1 John 2:15-17

A disciple of Christ will not be attracted to the same things the world is attracted to. When a disciple seeks a marriage or dating partner they will be attracted to a Godly man or woman who shares their convictions. To seek out a relationship with a non-disciple is to show that the love of the father is not in him. A disciple needs to be committed to dating and marrying only disciples.

8. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

God loves a cheerful giver. Our giving supports the body as we reach out to a world in need of Jesus. As Christians, we give generously and cheerfully. Our giving financially is important to God (Malachi 3:8-10).

9. Acts 2:40-47

The first 3000 converts joined together in devotion to the Apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. This is a beautiful view of the early church. How would you like to be part of such a church?

Additional Scriptures

- Colossians 1:15-18 – Christ is the head of the body, the Church
- Ephesians 2:19-22 – We are members of God's family
- 2 Corinthians 8:7 – We should excel in our love and giving
- Romans 12:1-8 – We all have different gifts
- Mark 3:31-35 – Jesus' family are those who "does God's will"