

The Church, the Kingdom of God and Church Planting

By
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Definition: What do we mean by “Church?”

Ekklesia in Greek –the word means literally, “*the called out ones*” thus an assembly of citizens in the Greek culture. See **Acts 19:32, 39, and 41**; where Ekklesia is a secular civil assembly. In the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) it is the congregation of Israel in the wilderness. **Acts 7:38**

In the New Testament the Christian community of saints on earth or heaven or both.

Jesus and His brethren = the church. In **Matthew 16**, Jesus used the word ekklesia and called it “my church” (assembly).

Hebrews 2:12 (quoting from Psalms 22:22).....*I will declare your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to you....*”

The writer of Hebrews attributes this saying to the Lord Jesus who calls the members of His church...*“my brethren...”*and says He...*will sing praise to you in the midst of the assembly...”* which is the church.

Therefore- It is a congregation of the called out ones, those who have been predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, called, justified and glorified. **Romans 8:29-30**

John 6:68=the true church are those who don’t stumble at the sayings of Jesus-

John 5:24 “*most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment but has passed from death to life.*”

These are men and women under the kingship and dominion of King Jesus. They are in the Kingdom of God and His Word is the constitution that governs them.

What then is the KINGDOM OF GOD in relationship to the church?

Definition: we can define the Kingdom of God as, “*God’s people, in God’s place, under God’s rule.*”

Defined as such, anywhere you find God’s people, living under God’s rule, serving in God’s place (purpose & will), you can find the Kingdom. However, this happens only when they are in God’s place (doing his will and purpose) and under God’s rule. When the King is ruling in and through one of His children, the kingdom of God has come to earth. This was Christ’s meaning when He said, “*the kingdom of God is within you.*”(**Luke 17:21**)

Illustration: If twenty believers are gathered together, but they are a carnal, fleshly body of Christ, the King will not manifest His presence or glory.

When those same twenty Christ-followers are a Spirit filled body of Christ; they are an earthly extension of the King and His rule. They can and should manifest “Kingdom Come” reality among them. They have been given the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (**Matthew 16:19**) they are God’s people in God’s place, under God’s rule. In this instance the Kingdom and the church can be the same-as they should be.

Kingdom Awareness

The local church must never become just an earthly man- made institution. Nor is it a corporation doing God’s business. The church is to be the place on earth where you find the King doing His work by reigning and ruling in and thru His people. When king Jesus is ruling, demons flee, the sick are healed, the lost are saved, the Kingdom is come in manifested glory. That is to be the goal of every pastor and people- to see the Kingdom come when they gather together to worship, pray, praise, and proclaim.

Take Aways:

1. We know that the Gospel we preach is the Gospel of the Kingdom. We proclaim that the King has come and has brought His kingdom with Him. King Jesus is reigning in and through His Church. He is returning again to establish His reign and rule on the earth.
2. Church planting is not about gathering a few people together so a pastor can have a job and take up an offering to support himself. Church planting is an attempt to establish the Kingdom of God in a designated, specific local community. Church planting is to be a spiritual venture, bathed in intercessory prayer, advanced by a powerful presentation of the Gospel, and followed up with mentoring the newly saved with Biblical teaching.
3. We know that the church and Kingdom of God are not identical. All those who are in the Kingdom belong to the church, but not all those who are members of a local church are in the Kingdom of God. This is why God’s sheep must be fed, protected, and guided. Sheep are fragile creatures and must have a Shepherd lest they perish. Church planting will never succeed without a shepherd to watch over the new flock. Mentoring a man as a Shepherd is vital to the success of the new Christ community. The Shepherd gives the Sheep the training and teaching they need to live the Kingdom life and reach others with the Gospel.

“I will build my Church...” THE CHURCH IS BUILT BY JESUS:-

MATTHEW 16:18- We have the first mention of the word church—“*ekklesia*” here!

1. Only Christ can build His Church. The church is not built upon Simon Peter! When Peter by the help of the Holy Spirit was allowed to see Jesus as the Christ,
2. Jesus promised to build him into a church that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. He was handed over the keys of the kingdom to bind and loose.

Apply: Likewise, anyone who is given a revelation of Christ as the Son of God, and believes that revelation, is born again, and is given the privilege to build into this church and the same key

that was given to Peter is handed over to them. They get the mandate to bind and loose.....*where two or three are gathered in my Name I shall be in their midst.....whatever they bind or loose on earth shall be same in heaven...***Matthew 18:18**

3. Christ is the head of the church which is His body-**Ephesians 5:23, Col 1:18**

4. The church is also the house of God-**Hebrews 3:6**

WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT

-It is not a building with a steep roof, a steeple, and tinted windows.

-It is not a manmade institution or denomination but rather a living body-the body of CHRIST on earth.

It is not every member of a given local church in a given denomination but rather true saints who are submitted to Christ's rule.

PLANTING THE CHURCH

In the New Testament it is evident that the church met in houses. **1Cor 16:19**"*Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartedly in the Lord, with the church that is in their house...*"**Romans 16:13** *...Greet Aquila and Priscilla, my fellow workers in Christ...vrs5 likewise greet the church that is in their house"*

While the church in Jerusalem frequented the temple and Paul hired the school of Tyrannus in Ephesus, the church of the New Testament predominately met in houses. This is indisputable. A home is a conducive environment for planting the church. You don't need spent money on rent, buy sound equipment, have a choir etc.

In ACTS 16:13-15 we read of Lydia who..."*opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul...*" She was baptized and said to Paul... *if you judge me to be FAITHFUL to the Lord, come to my house and stay...*"

It seems that a house church grew up in her home and this is where the brethren met, vs. 40..."*So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed...*"

The biblical model of planting the church is in the house.

Acts 2:42- *and they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine (the teaching of Christ) and*

fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers, Vs 46. "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple and from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart"

Acts 20:20-21- Paul proclaimed-preached and taught publically and from house to house.

7 STEPS IN FRUITFUL CHURCH PLANTING

There are 7 steps in fruitful church planting that if put in place and practiced we can have a lasting impact in our communities.

1. Prayer-

Gather and pray in agreement for the will of God to be done-**Mt 18:19-20**

Pray for souls to be saved-**2nd Peter3:9**

Pray for the lost by name-**John 6:44, 65 and Psalms 2:8, Mt 7:7**

2. Evangelism-

Reach out to the community with the **Jesus Film** and **Evangecube**.

Make converts and start following up those who have prayed the sinner's prayer, by getting names and other contact information. Visit and encourage them. Let them know which house around their village you are meeting in and invite them there.

3. Nurturing-

Begin to care for the baby Christians by feeding them the milk of the pure word of God.**1st John 2:12-14** Let them know that their sins are forgiven for His name sake, and let them come to the knowledge of the Father. Introduce them to the NLIC manuals Vol. 1 & 2 so that they come up strongly. Let them understand the 1st principles of the oracles of God as listed in Hebrews 6:1-2 through these new beginners' manuals (NLIC)

4. Disciple making

Have each one of them discipled in the Word of God and not in a great ministry or person or leader.

- Teach them the precept and principles of the Word of God that they may grow thereby.
- Teach them how to hear the RHEMA word of God- **ROMANS 10:17**

5. Training and Equipping

Teach them how to do a basic Bible study, set them basic assignment of Bible reading, study, prayer and witnessing.

Go along with them, let them see you do it and then allow them to do as you watch. Appreciate them when they do well. Correct them in love where they have not done well.

6. Church planting

As they grow in capacity and numbers split them in small clusters to be responsible of their own as you do the oversight. Bring on board new villages.

7. Emerging of new ministries.

As you get more responsible workers, you have new ministries emerging. Their spiritual gifts will begin to be seen. Leadership follows the giftings. This is how one can reproduce himself in others.

With this model many shall be reached and have a direct conduct with the disciple leader.

As they grow in numbers they can affiliate to a registered ministry for formality, but the DL will still have a direct touch and spiritual oversight. Plots and buildings come in as the Lord supplies resources.

7. Sons/Timothys

This are the men you can count on in the ministry. Since they have been proved by God and approved by you, you can go along with them in father/son relationship as Paul went along with men like Timothy, Titus, etc. This are the men who will propel this ministry.

They are not just slaves who are out for wages. They are sons/slaves of Christ who have an inheritance. They can take over the baton from you and move on even better as it was in the case of Elijah and Elisha.

Even when you are not present, you can still be felt hard in this men. This is what we call legacy- a lasting fruit that will continue even minus your physical presence.

Grace and peace to you.