

9:31); one congregation (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2); and, independent bodies of Christians (2 Corinthians 16:1).

There were two classes of inspired men in the early church; they are: the Apostles (Acts 10:41; 13:31; 2 Peter 1:16; John 20:22-23) and the Prophets, i.e., inspired teachers (Acts 11:27; 13:12; Ephesians 4:11). The Apostles and prophets had ceased in the church today (1 Corinthians 13:8). Today, there are three classes of officers; namely: Elders (also known as bishops, pastors, overseers, presbyters, shepherds), (Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:3-4); Deacons (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13); and, Evangelists or preachers or ministers (Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5). Elders' duty is to oversee and feed the flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:17; Titus 1:5,7; 1 Peter 5:1-4); Deacons are to serve the church (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13) and Evangelists are to teach and preach the word of God (Ephesians 4:11; I and II Timothy and Titus). Any other office apart from these is unscriptural.

**Christ's Teaching:** Jesus Christ gave the church His doctrine. False teaching or accepting another gospel will condemn souls (Galatians 1:6-10). One must not go beyond the things which are written (I Corinthians 4:6). If anyone goes on and does not abide in His doctrine, he does not have Christ (II John 9). If one does abide in His doctrine, he has both the Father and the Son (II John 9). Nothing can be added or subtracted from the scriptures without penalty from God (Revelation 22:18-19).

**The Church today:** Today, there are in many communities New Testament church; which is not a denomination; but is faithful to God's word; is one in fact and teaching; gains members by obedience to the gospel; has the same freedom from human powers; has the same names for its members; has the same names for the church. You can become a member of the church by obeying the gospel as described in the New Testament and summarized above. For further enquiry, please, contact us through the address given below.

**Conclusion:** God loves you and so do we! The next step is up to you. Please contact church of Christ in your locality. We can promise you this when you do, you will find down-to-earth, friendly people who love Jesus Christ, who want to give Him their lives, and who would like nothing better than to share with you what they are finding in Him. Search your communities for the nearest meeting place of church of Christ and pay a visit. You will be glad you did! We will be glad you did! Ultimately, God will be glad you did!

**For more information:**

Visit church of Christ, Kobape Village, Okonfo Area, Ogo Oluwa, Off Osogbo-Gbongan Road, Osogbo, Osun State or any church of Christ meeting in your area.  
[www.cocogooluwa.org](http://www.cocogooluwa.org), e-mail :[info@cocogooluwa.org](mailto:info@cocogooluwa.org)

**Schedule of Meetings:**

Sundays (Worship) - 9.00a.m & 5.00p.m. Mondays (Bible Study) - 5.30p.m.  
Saturdays (Prayer/Singing Class) - 5.30p.m.

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# Let the *Bible* Speak About The Church

Critical examination of any issue is germane to establishing the truth, religious matters not excluded. In the Bible, we are encouraged to: *"Prove all things... Hold fast to that which is good..."* (1 Thessalonians 5:21, consider Matthew 16:13-28; 1 Timothy 3:14-15 and 1 Peter 4:8 also). In the light of these Bible passages we encourage you to kindly pick up your Bible as we critically examine what the Bible has to say on "The Church".

**The Meaning:** The English word: *church* is from Greek word: *ekklesia*. Meaning; the people of God; the collective body of believers. Also, CONGREGATION, ASSEMBLY, THE BODY OF CHRIST. (Nave's Topical Bible). It is not building as many dictionaries would want us believe.

**When was the church established?** Some believed that the church came into existence in the days of Adam, Abraham, Moses, or John the Baptist (Isaiah 2:2-4; Matthew 3:1-2, 4:17, 10:7; Luke 10:9), but some say during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44-49; Mark 9:1; Matthew 16:28). Contrary to all these positions and others, the Bible shows that the promise of Jesus to build the church was fulfilled on the first day of Pentecost after Christ's resurrection in Jerusalem (Matthew 16:13-19; Acts 1 & 2), in line with the prophecies of the Prophets (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-12; Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-5; Daniel 2:38-45) around 33AD.

**To whom does the church belong?** Today, it is not strange to hear people saying: 'My church', 'our church', 'their church' attempting to differentiate that one particular church belongs to one particular person or group of people. Such people are recognized by titles such as 'Pope, Primate, Founder, General Overseers, etc'. In contradistinction to the above belief and thinking, the Bible declared unequivocally that Jesus the Christ is the owner of the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 12:28, 15:24; 1 Timothy 4:16; 1 Peter 1:19, 5:2; Hebrews 9:14). He is the saviour of the body (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18), which comprises both Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 3:28; John 10:16; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1:22-23; Colossians 1:9-20). The church was built and paid for by Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:13-18; Acts 20:28); built on Christ as the only foundation

(I Corinthians 3:11); not built on Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or any other man (I Corinthians 1:12-13); fully established on the first Pentecost after Christ arose from the dead (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Mark. 9:1; Acts 2). Note, He did not built any denomination and that is why you cannot find any denominational name in the New Testament, name it, Catholic, orthodox, protestant, eastern, western, international or indigenous.

**Does the church that Jesus built exist today?** Separate and apart from denominations of men, whose existence is evil, unscriptural and anti-scriptural, the church that Jesus built exist today (Matthew 16:18). The rock upon which the church was built, is the grand truth about the personality of Jesus being the son of God (Matthew 16:16; Acts 8:37; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20). The foundation that was used by Paul was this truth - Jesus. (1 Corinthians 3:10; 15:1-4). He is the source of authority and the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18), not Pope or any other person (Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:22-23; Colossians 1:18). Today, we have churches built by men (Acts 5:33-39; 1 Corinthians 1:11-12, 3:1-7; Galatians 1:6-13), who are designated as denominations of men which are not from God. Jesus said that every plants (denominations) which His heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up (Matthew 15:13).

**What was the church called in the New Testament?** It was called the church (Ephesians 3:10 and 108 other passages); the church of God (I Corinthians 1:2; 15:9; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:5); the church of the firstborn (Hebrews 12:23); the body (Ephesians 1:23; Colossians 1:18); the body of Christ (Colossians 1:24; Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:27); the household of God (Ephesians 2:19); the household of faith (Galatians 6:10); the churches of Christ (Romans 16:16); the bride of Christ (John 3:29; Revelation 21:2-9; 22:17); the temple of God (I Corinthians 3:16); the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:21-32); the kingdom of God's Son (Colossians 1:13); the house of God (Ephesians 3:15); the church of the Lord (Acts 20:28); the churches of Christ (Romans 16:16). Note that all these are descriptive names and not proper names as found among denominationalists today.

**What were members of the church called in the New Testament?** The members of the church are called: Disciples (Acts 6:1, 2, 7; 11:26; 20:7); Brethren (Acts 9:30; 10:23; 15:22; 22:5); Believers (Acts 5:14); Saints (Acts 9:13, 32, 41; 26:10; Romans 1:7; Philemon 1:1); Priests (1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 1:6); People of God (Hebrews 4:9); Children of God (1 John 3:1-2); children (I John 3:2); members (I Corinthians 12:27); Christians (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16) and not 'Catholic family', 'Baptist family', 'Deeper Lifer', 'Anglican Communion', etc.

**What were the conditions of membership in the church that Jesus built?** To become a member of the church built by Jesus Christ, you must: **believe** in Christ (John 8:24; Acts 16:31; Hebrews 11:6); **repent** of your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19); **confess** faith in Christ (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10); be **baptized** for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 1 Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:27). Not through problems of life, not by repeating a series of prayers called "sinners prayer" or by laying hands on radio or television sets. Such practices are unauthorized, unscriptural, anti-scriptural and strange to the Bible and must be rejected.

**What did you think these people had in common?** About 3,000 people on the

day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41); Samaritans (Acts 8:5-6, 12); the eunuch of Ethiopia? (Acts 8:35-39); Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:16; 22:14-16); Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:34-38); Lydia and her household (Acts 16:14-15); jailor (Acts 16:31-33); Corinthians (Acts 18:8). As you can observe, they all heard the gospel preached, **believed** in Christ; that He was the saviour of mankind, the son of God. They **believed** that He died, was buried and resurrected. They **repented** of their sins; **confessed** their faith in Christ; and were **baptized** for the remission of their sins. If anyone desire salvation, he/she must take all the steps highlighted above.

**The other facts about the church as revealed in the New Testament:** The church and the kingdom are the same in the Bible. John preached that the kingdom was near (Matthew 3:2). Jesus said: "... I will give you the keys of the kingdom" (Matthew 16:18-19). Paul said, we have been delivered from darkness and translated into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1: 13). Jesus has called us into His kingdom through His gospel (I Thessalonians 2:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:14). Christ is our King-eternal, immortal, invisible (I Timothy 1:17). He is King of kings and Lord of lords (I Timothy 6:15). He loved the church (Ephesians 5:25); shed His blood for the church (Acts 20:28); established the church (Matthew 16:18); called the church His (Matthew 16:18); added people to the church (Acts 2:47); is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23); will save the church at last (Ephesians 5:23).

Dear reader, please note that "in the church" there is: **redemption** (Ephesians 1:7); **forgiveness of sins** (Colossians 1:13-14); **sanctification** (Ephesians 5:25); all **spiritual blessings** (Ephesians 1:3). In the New Testament times there was: **one** family of God (Ephesians 3:15); **one** kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13-14); **one** body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4) **one** bride of Christ (Romans 7:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-23); **one** church of Christ (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4); **one** name for its people (Acts 11:26; Isaiah 62:2), who are added to the **one true church** (Acts 2:47).

**The Worship of the Church:** The faithful in the church must: **worship** God in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24); must meet upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; Hebrew 10:25); must **sing** praises to God devoid of musical instruments (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16); must **pray** (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 2:1-2); must **edify** one another (I Corinthians 14:15-26); must eat the **Lord's Supper** in Christ's memory (Acts 20:7; Hebrew 10:26; 1 Corinthians 11:20-32), and must **give** of their money (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:7) on the first day of the week.

**The scriptural work of the church:** The scriptural work of the church today is: preaching the gospel (II Timothy 4:1-7); teaching the word of God (I Timothy 3:1-2; Ephesians 3: 10-11); visiting the sick (Matthew 25:34-40); and, caring for the fatherless and widows (James 1:27). The New Testament pattern shows that the church has no business in business . It is *ultra-vires* for the church to engage in any kind of business separate and apart from the ones identified in the New Testament as listed above.

**How is the church to be organized?** The word "church" is used four ways in the New Testament: the saved from the beginning to the end of the Christian age (Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 1:1); the saved in one geographical area (2 Thessalonians 1:1; Acts