

UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL CHURCH

WHAT IT IS & WHY IT MATTERS FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN

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WHAT ISN'T THE CHURCH? (PROBLEM)

- The church is not a metaphor.
- The church is not coffee with friends.
- The church is not a human project.
- The church is not a voluntary association.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? (PRINCIPLE)

- The Pleasure of God - Out of love (not need) God created a people to give a share of His life.
- The People of God - God establishes a family to love and to serve in His creation
- The Presence of God - God's people are the body of Christ who display His presence and power.
- The Power of God - God's people have a unique authority (derived) in their kingdom work.
- The Proclamation of God - God's people are ministers in words, declaring His special grace.
- The Provision of God - God's people are ministers in works, displaying His common grace.
- The Purpose of God - God had always intended to gather a people to display His love and glory.

WHY DOES THE CHURCH EXIST? (PURPOSE)

- Love God: The Upward Ministry of Worship
- Love Neighbor: The Outward Ministry of Witness
- Love One Another: The Inward Ministry of Nurture

HOW DOES THE CHURCH FUNCTION? (PROCESS)

- As a Ministry of Presence: Inhabit the local community with Gospel intentionality as a holy temple in the Lord.
- As Ministering Priests: Serve as God's ambassadors in the community and spiritual ministers in the congregation under the high priesthood of Christ.
- As Ministering Pilgrims: Oversee the congregation's allegiance to Christ and His kingdom as the international and eschatological people of God.
- As a Ministry of Proclamation: Administer the institutional forms of God's covenant people for the work of the Gospel.

WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN A CHRISTIAN AND A CHURCH? (PARTICIPATION)

- As Christ's bride, a church is where Christians are united to the Lord under the new covenant as His marriage partner.
- As the Father's children, a church is where Christians live with and love one another as members of God's family.
- As Christ's body, a church is where Christians are assigned to serve one another as ministry associates.
- As Christ's ambassadors, a church is where Christians participate in mission in the community and the world as missionary associates.