

Cornerstone Faith of West Liberty
1 Thessalonians 1:1 – What is a church?
May 25, 2025

I. What is a church?

A. Definition

- A group that is legally called out from another people to be an assembly/congregation

B. Established by Jesus (Matt. 16:18)

Matthew 16:18 (NKJV) *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

1) He is the head (Eph. 1:22; 5:23-25; Col. 1:18)

Colossians 1:18 (NKJV) *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

2) With authority over hell and the forces of darkness (Matt. 16:18; Luke 10:19; Eph. 3:10, 6:11-12; Col 1:18; Heb. 12:28; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; 1 John 4:4)

Matthew 16:18 (NKJV) *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

3) Maintains internal discipline (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:3-5, 6:4; Gal. 6:1)

Matthew 18:15-17 (NKJV) *"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

C. Called...

1) The church of God (1 Cor. 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:5, 15)

1 Corinthians 10:32 (NKJV) *Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,*

2) The body of Christ (Eph. 1:23; Col. 1:18)

Ephesians 1:23 (NKJV) *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

3) Church (Eph. 1:22, 3:10, 3:21, 5:23-25; Heb. 12:23)

Ephesians 1:22 (NKJV) *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,*

D. Has leadership (saw this last week) (Acts 13:1; 14:23; 15:4; 20:17, 28; 1 Cor. 12:28; 2 Cor. 8:23)

Acts 20:28 (NKJV) *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

II. How does one enter?

A. Salvation- (Acts 2: 47, 16:5 Rom. 10:9-11, Eph 2:8-10, etc.)

Acts 2:47 (NKJV) *praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

B. Baptism — (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; 1Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21)

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NKJV) *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

C. Attendance — (Acts 2:42, 46; 5:42; 1 Cor. 11:20; Heb 10:25)

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV) *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

III. What are basic responsibilities?

A. Great commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8)

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV) *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

B. Great commandments (Matt. 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-31; John 13:34-35)

Matthew 22:36-40 (NKJV) *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

John 13:34-35 (NKJV) *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

C. Endure persecution (Matt. 10:22-23, 24:13; Mark 13:13; John 16:33; Acts 8:1, 12:1; 14:22; 1 Thess. 3:4; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12-13)

Mark 13:13 (NKJV) *And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

IV. Challenge—what does that mean for us?

- To live separated unto Jesus (2Cor. 6:14-7:1; Rev. 18:4-5; Rom. 12:2; Col. 1:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:17; Put off—put on—Eph. 4:20-32; Col. 3:1-17)

Romans 12:2 (NKJV) *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

- We need to remember God is into Kingdom—not democratic republic

John 18:36 (NKJV) *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*