

Next Steps

1. Church

- **God's Called out People**

The word for 'church' in the Bible is *ecclesia* which means a 'called out assembly'. This means that the church is a gathering of people who have been called out of the world, called into the new-creation community and are called to continue assembling together for the glory of God and the good of one another. The church is not a building, a club or a business, but a family of brothers and sisters who belong to Jesus and therefore to one another.

That you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

1 Peter 2:9

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.

Colossians 1:13

Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ... you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord...in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:13, 19, 21-22

- **Jesus is the Head**

As the risen conqueror of sin and death, who loved the church and gave himself for it, Jesus has become the Lord and Master of the church. The church is called to entrust and submit herself to Jesus's leadership and authority. Therefore, the church does not look to popes, pastors, vicars, bishops, priests, governments or monarchs as their ultimate authority, but to Christ.

Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone

Ephesians 2:20

Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore...the church is subject to Christ.

Ephesians 5:23-24

I will build My church

Matthew 16:18

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.

Colossians 1:18

- **The Purpose of Church**

We don't go to church, we are the church. When we gather together, we gather as the church. Jesus' desire is to one day present the church to his Father as his spotless bride. The Spirit of God works in us each day to draw us closer to Jesus and transform us more and more into the likeness of Jesus. The purpose of the church, then, is to bring glory to God by pursuing this goal in everything that it does. First, we point each other to Jesus, through reading, singing, preaching and praying; through loving, serving, helping and encouraging each other and through keeping each other accountable as we seek to follow Christ. Second, we seek to proclaim this message to the world through our words and actions.

Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:18-19

That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 5:26-27

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

Ephesians 3:20-21

- **Our Responsibility to Church**

Christ made himself our head, that we might become a body of people who faithfully gather together regularly to hear and obey his word. We are called as a family to not just attend and spectate, but to commit ourselves to the life, health and work of his body. We are charged to contribute our time, finances, energy and skills to the church body as a whole and the needs of our brothers and sisters individually.

Exhort one another daily, while it is called "TODAY," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 3:13

Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another.

Hebrews 10:24-25

Let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32

2. Bible and Prayer

- Bible Reading

God speaks to us through the Bible. In the Bible we learn about God's character, will, work and promises. God's goal is to point us to Jesus and produce his character in us as we continue an ongoing personal relationship with him. One of the ways he accomplishes this is through our daily reading, trusting, and obeying of his word as the Spirit applies its truths to our lives and empowers us to live them out.

It is good to read the Bible daily. There is no set pace for Bible reading or amount of Bible that you should read daily.

As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

1 Peter 2:3

And so we have the prophetic word...which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place.

2 Peter 1:16-19

- Prayer

Prayer simply means to talk to God. It is a precious privilege. God hears us when we speak to him. He hears us when we:

- adore him for who he is (praise)
- give him thanks for what he has done for us (thanksgiving)
- talk to him about our sin (confession)
- talk to him about our suffering (lament)
- ask him for the things we need (supplication)
- ask him to provide for and help others (intercession)

It is good to make prayer a part of your daily life. There is no set time or place to talk to God.

Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

Ephesians 6v18

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Philippians 4v6

3. Symbols

- **Baptism**

Water Baptism is the public declaration and physical symbol of the inward and spiritual truth that you have trusted in Jesus as your Saviour, and that, as a result, you have died and risen again with him. Therefore, baptism is only for those who have made a conscious decision to trust Christ and is, therefore, not for infants. As a symbol of death, burial and resurrection, we believe that immersion is the biblical method of baptism. As a church ordinance, baptism should take place amongst your local church family.

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.

Matthew 28:19

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and...were added to them.

Acts 2:41

When they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

Acts 8:12

Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?

Acts 10:47

- **Communion**

The Lord's Table, also known as Communion, is the public declaration and physical symbol of the inward and spiritual truth that you have trusted in Jesus as your Saviour, and that, as a result, you have received Jesus as the Bread of Life and the True Vine. Therefore, the table is only for those who have made a conscious decision to trust Christ. Although, the bread and wine (grape juice) does not become the literal body and blood of Jesus, the table is still a deeply reverent experience as we reflect on the suffering of Christ. Therefore, it is important to be in an attitude of repentance before God and others. As a church ordinance, the table should take place amongst your local church family.

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that The Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in

remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

4. Church Leadership

- Pastors

Pastors (Shepherds), also known as Elders and Bishops (Overseers), are qualified men called by both God and the church to be the leaders, under Jesus, of a local church. They are charged with the responsibility of preaching God's word, praying for the people, equipping the saints and leading Christlike exemplary lives. So long as he is faithful to scripture, the pastor has the authority to "reprove, rebuke and exhort" his brothers and sisters. The responsibility of the church towards their pastors is to entrust themselves to them, follow their leadership, pray for them and financially support them.

If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence... not a novice...Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

The elders who are among you I exhort...shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:1-3

He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Ephesians 4:11-12

Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:14

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine.

1 Timothy 5:17

Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

Galatians 6:6

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:17

- **Deacons**

Deacons are qualified men, called by both God and the church to support the pastors by fulfilling the interpersonal mercy ministry of the church. The original intent of the office of deacons was to free up the pastors for the prayer and preaching ministry of the church by handling the details of certain ministries that are not beneath the pastors, but would distract from their main calling.

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

Acts 6:1-4

Deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

1 Timothy 3:8-12

5. Evangelism

The word 'gospel' means good news. It is good news that Jesus came to earth, lived a perfect life on our behalf, died for our sins and rose again to give us the free gift of eternal life. The word for good news in the New Testament is evangelion. Evangelism, then, is the act of telling other people about this good news.

- **With Our Lives**

Jesus calls us and empowers us to live in such a way that the world around us would begin to see that God really has transformed us. Our kindness, honesty, generosity, patience and love speak volumes to the people around us.

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God...

1 Peter 2v12

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5v16

Be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

Philippians 2v15

- **With Our Words**

We are also called and empowered to tell others about what Jesus has done in our lives and what he can do in theirs. God loves to enable us to share the gospel with our family, friends, colleagues, neighbours and others.

Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Mark 16v15

Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

1 Peter 3v15

You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Acts 1v8

- **With Our Prayers**

We can pray for those we share the gospel with, we can pray for our families, friends, neighbours and even politicians and rulers. We can also pray that God would help others as they share the gospel.

I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2v1-4

Pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ.

Colossians 4v3

Brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honoured.

2 Thessalonians 3v1

- **With Our Finances**

Missionaries are brothers and sisters in Christ who go out from a church family to another place in the world to share the gospel. The church family that sends them out has the privilege of supporting those missionaries in a number of ways, including financially.

They have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

3 John 1v7-8