

The Church

The church (ecclesia) refers to the universal (total) body of believers whom God calls out from the world and into His eternal kingdom. Jesus is the head of the church, and all believers, from every church around the world, are part of His body. Without Him we just have a man-made religion.

Jesus said that He would build His church on the revelation of who He is – the promised Messiah. *Matthew 16:18 Now I say to you that you are Peter (petros, which means a piece of rock), and upon this rock (petra, a mass of rock, and therefore clearly not Peter) I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.* What Jesus was saying is that He would build His church on the revelation of who He is; the son of God who came to save us all (John 20:31).

His Body

The bible repeatedly refers to believers as being Jesus' body. A body has many different parts, each with its own function, all of which are essential and are designed to function together. *Romans 12:4-5 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.* *Ephesians 1:23-22 God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.* *Ephesians 4:15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.* *Ephesians 5:23 For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Saviour of His body, the church.* *1 Corinthians 12:27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.* *Colossians 1:18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.* *Colossians 2:19 and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.*

Everyone has a part to play

We are all part of God's plan, and each and every one of us has a different and special part to play in the church. *Acts 10:34-35 Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God shows no favouritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right.* *Romans 12:4-5 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.* *1 Corinthians 12:18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it.* *Ephesians 4:16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

The Dove

The Biblical concept of the church may be explained by comparing it to a dove – see the attached picture.

The Head is in charge

The head makes the decisions and governs all the parts. Jesus is the head of the body, the church. We always need to pray and to seek His direction. *Colossians 1:18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.*

His Body

Together we all make up the body of Christ. Jesus has shown us the way, and commissioned us to go and share the knowledge of Him. *1 Corinthians 12:14 Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part.*

1 Corinthians 12:18-20 *But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body.*

A heart of love

God loves each one of us, and His death on the cross was for each and every one of us. To grow into a loving and trusting relationship with Jesus we need to understand and to accept His great love for us all, even before we came to accept, to know and to love Him.

John 3:16 *For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.*

Matthew 22:37-40 *Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: "Love your neighbour as yourself." The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."*

John 13:34-35 *So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples."*

The dove stands on two legs – the Old and the New Testaments

The dove stands on two legs – it cannot balance on only one leg. God gave us the whole Bible; it was meant to be studied and applied – it is the 'user manual' for our lives. And He wants us to go and tell everyone the good news about Him too.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

2 Timothy 2:2 *You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.*

The dove has two wings - the Gifts and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit

The wings represent the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the fruits of the Spirit. The church needs both the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit to operate effectively.

Jesus instructed us to 'go and make disciples of all the nations' (Matthew 28:19). This means we are instructed to help new converts to both live like Jesus did, and to do the same works He did, i.e. to display the same fruits and the same gifts of the Holy Spirit. Note it is the Holy Spirit that assists us in both cases.

The Fruits

The fruits refer to the evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Jesus wants us to not only know more about Him, but also to become more like Him in our character - the way we think and behave. As we set our hearts to follow and to obey Him, the Holy Spirit helps us to increasingly reflect His character (image) in our lives.

Galatians 5:22-24 *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.*

2 Peter 3:18 *Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.*

Romans 8:29 *For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*

Romans 12:2 *Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 *So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord - who is the Spirit - makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*

The Gifts

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are spiritual gifts given to us, as God decides, to help each other, rather than for our ourselves and our own benefit. We are also told to earnestly desire those gifts that will be most helpful in serving others, and that we will each be rewarded for our own hard work.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 NLT *A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.*

Romans 12:6-8 *In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.*

1 Corinthians 14:1 *Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives - especially the ability to prophesy.*

1 Corinthians 14:12 *And the same is true for you. Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church.*

1 Peter 4:10-11 *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.*

1 Corinthians 3:8 *The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work.*

1 Corinthians 13. This chapter tell us that that even if we have all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but lack love, we have nothing.

“Speaking in tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit; controlling your tongue is a fruit of the Holy Spirit”.
Vlad Savchuk

The Five-fold Ministry

The dove has 5 tail feathers which together help to steer it. Each individual church, just like the body of a person, is meant to be made up of numerous parts, all functioning together in unity and harmony. We all need each-other, and no-one is superior to anyone else. Whereas each of us are given gifts to use for the benefit of others, the Bible tell us that those who are called to the five-fold ministry are themselves given as a gift to the church - and again for the primary benefit of those in the church – to help equip each person to do his or her work.

Ephesians 4:11-12 *Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.*

Ephesians 4:16 *He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

When we accept that everyone has a unique function, and we all use these to help each other in the church, then we will truly be able to ‘grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ’ (2 Peter 3:18) and to become mature disciples of Christ.

Dr Brian Drury

THE CHURCH

JESUS IS THE HEAD

Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23
1 Corinthians 12:27
Colossians 1:18; 2:19

GIFTS: Romans 12:6-8
1 Corinthians 12:7-11
1 Corinthians 14:1 & 12

FRUITS: Galatians 5:22-24

