

# LOCAL CHURCH

By Cliff Foster

## I. New Testament Examples of a Local Church:

1. **Acts 15:3-4** “*brought on their way by the church*” and “*they were received of the church*”
2. **Romans 16:1** “*of the church which is in Centria*”
3. **Romans 16:5** “*likewise greet the church that is in their house (Priscilla and Aquilla)*”
4. **1 Corinthians 1:2** “*unto the church which is at Corinth*”
5. **1 Corinthians 4:17** “*as I teach in every church*”
6. **Philippians 4:15** “*no church communicated with me concerning giving and receiving, but ye only*”
7. **Colossians 4:15** “*Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea and Nymphus, and the church which is in his house*”
8. **1 Thessalonians 1:1** “*unto the church of the Thessalonians*”
9. **2 Thessalonians 1:1** “*unto the church of the Thessalonians*”
10. **Revelations 2:1** “*unto the church of Ephesus*”
11. **Revelations 2:8** “*unto the church of Smyria*”
12. **Revelations 2:12** “*unto the church of Pergamos*”
13. **Revelations 2:18** “*unto the church of Thyatira*”
14. **Revelations 3:1** “*unto the church of Sardis*”
15. **Revelations 3:7** “*unto the church of Philadephia*”

## II. New Testament Examples of More Than One Church:

1. **Acts 15:41** “*went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches*”
2. **Acts 16:5** “*and so were the churches established in faith*”
3. **Romans 16:4** “*but also all the churches of the Gentiles*”
4. **Romans 16:16** “*the churches of Christ salute you*”
5. **1 Corinthians 11:16** “*neither the churches of God*”
6. **1 Corinthians 14:33** “*as in all the churches of the saints*”
7. **1 Corinthians 16:19** “*churches of Asia salute you*”
8. **2 Corinthians 8:1** “*the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macodonia*”
9. **2 Corinthians 8:18** “*throughout all the churches*”
10. **2 Corinthians 8:19** “*chosen of all the churches to travel with us*”
11. **2 Corinthians 8:23** “*messengers of the churches*”
12. **2 Corinthians 12:13** “*wherein ye were inferior to other churches*”
13. **2 Corinthians 11:28** “*care of all the churches*”
14. **Galatians 1:2** “*unto the churches of Galatia*”
15. **Galatians 1:22** “*churches of Judea, which were in Christ*”
16. **1 Thessalonians 2:14** “*for ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God*”
17. **2 Thessalonians 1:4** “*we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God*”
18. **Revelations 1:20** “*angels of the seven churches and the seven candlesticks*”
19. **Revelations 2:7 & 2:11 & 2:29 & 3:6 & 3:13 & 3:22** “*spirit saith unto the churches*”

## III. Passages that are used for Universal Church Theory:

1. **1 Corinthians 12:6-28** Passage speaks of diversity of spiritual gifts, then uses the metaphor that as a body has many members so does the church and that everyone cannot have the same spiritual gifts or how would the church carry out the ministry, then discusses how if one member suffers than all the members suffer.
  - a. Verse 27 “*now ye are the body of Christ*” ‘ye’ being who the letter was written to, the church at Corinth.
2. **Ephesians 2:16-22** This passage talks about how Christ through the death on the cross presents us as one body to God, and that we have access to God through the spirit, and that we are built together as a holy temple of God.
  - a. Verse 19 “*ye are no more strangers*” ‘ye’ being who the letter was written to, the saints at Ephesus.
  - b. Verse 22 “*ye are builded together*” ‘ye’ being who the letter was written to, the saints at Ephesus, are built together as a holy temple of God.

#### IV. Reasons for a Local Church:

1. To maintain the body of Christ pure (Church Discipline):
  - a. You cannot keep the body of Christ pure if it is universal for how will one brother know of another if he is in another state? Another country?
  - b. **1 Corinthians 5:3-6** “*to deliver such one unto Satan*” **1 Timothy 1:20** “*for I have delivered them unto Satan*” How will all the churches know that one has been put out of the body? What prevents one from being put out of one congregation and joining another?
  - c. **Matthew 18:15-20** “*tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church*” How shall all the church tell one? How does this congregation know the spiritual condition of a man in another congregation?
  - d. **1 Corinthians 11:22-34** “*if you eat and drink it unworthy than you eat and drink damnation.... Therefore brethren when you come together, tarry one for another.*” The body must be pure so that you do not bring sin into the body by taking the Lord’s Supper inappropriately.
  - e. **Revelation 2:1-7** “*therefore repent or else I will come unto thee quickly and remove thy candlestick*” **Revelations 3:13-22** “*because you were neither hot nor cold. I will spue thee out of my mouth*” The body must be pure so that the Spirit of God remains in it and the church continues to manifest God.
2. To manifest God:
  - a. **1 Corinthians 12:4-10** “*there are diversities of gifts...there are diversities of operations but the same God...*” **Ephesians 4:11** “*and he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelist and some preachers and teacher*” The Spirit of God is given to the church spiritual gifts to carry out God’s work.
  - b. **Matthew 28:19** “*... go ye unto all the world teaching all nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father...*” **Mark 16:15** “*... preach the gospel unto every creature...*” **Acts 1:8** “*... ye shall be my witnesses...*” The church has a clear and directed purpose to preach the gospel of God.
3. To edify the body:
  - a. **1 Corinthians 12:26** “*if one member suffers, all them members suffer*” How can all members suffer one for another if we are not together? How can we suffer for someone if we do not know about him or her?
  - b. **John 15:7-17** “*... and I command you, that ye love one for another...*” **1 Corinthians 13:2-3** “*... and though I have all faith... and have not charity, I am nothing.... Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor... and have not charity, it profits me nothing*” In all that the church does it must be done in love, or else it is worthless. **1 John 4:16** for “*God is love*”
  - c. **Ephesians 4:12** “*for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the saints*” How can we edify one another if we are not together? How can we edify some one we do not know?
  - d. **James 5:14-16** “*.... Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another...*” We are to share each other burdens and keep each other in our prayers.
4. To pass the Authority of the Church for Baptism (the sign of the New Covenant):
  - a. The Church is the covenanted people of God according to the New Covenant (the sign being baptism). The authority to baptize passes from one church to the next starting with God.
  - b. From God to John the Baptist **John 1:29-34** “*He who sent me to baptize...*”
  - c. From the John the Baptist to Jesus. **Matthew 3:13-17** “*thus it becometh to fulfill all righteousness.*”
  - d. Jesus to the Disciples (his Church) **John 4:1-2** “*Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples*”
  - e. Jesus to the Church **Matthew 28:19-20** “*go ye therefore unto all the world, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost...*”

#### V. The Church is the covenanted people of God:

1. **Jeremiah 31:31-34** “*I will establish a new covenant and they will be my people and I will write my law in their hearts.*”
2. **Ephesians 1:22-23** “*...over all things to the church, which is his body...*”
3. **Ephesians 5:12** “*a great mystery that I speak concerning Christ and the Church*”
4. **Colossian 1:18** “*he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church*”
5. **Colossian 1:24** “*for his (Christ) body’s sake, the church*”