

# The Disciple's Church



"Those who believed what Peter said, were baptized and added to the church that day about three thousand in all".

Acts 2:41 (NLT)

THE CHURCH: FOUNDATION STONE FOR  
GROWTH, MINISTRY AND OUTREACH

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## PREFACE

Welcome to the discipleship / leadership series. These little booklets were designed to give basic information concerning various topics about our Christian faith in Christ Jesus.

The purpose of this series is to stimulate thought and to foster a clearer understanding of discipleship and servant leadership. These booklets can be used as a discussion tool for personal study, family devotion, youth meetings or in cell groups. Our hope is that this information will stir the readers and encourage them to go deeper into personal research and study.

Our desire is that these booklets will be a blessing to the reader and a tool that can be shared with others as a gift of encouragement.

Please feel free to mail or e-mail us for more copies or to just write to us with any feedback concerning the content of these studies. We hope you enjoy this offering of knowledge and experience. We pray that Christ will draw you into an ever deeper personal relationship with Himself as you study.

Your servants in Christ,

Rev. Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

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*Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the **church** that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching**, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the **Lord's Supper**), and to **prayer**. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met **together** in one place and **shared** everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and **shared** the money with those in need. They **worshiped** together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the **Lord's Supper**, and **shared** their meals with great joy and generosity all the while **praising** God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their **fellowship** those who were being saved.*

*Acts 2:41-47 (NLT)*

## **Introduction:**

The first day we became a disciple of Christ was also the first day we became part of His body the church. The two go hand in hand. He is the head and we are His body. We become connected as brothers and sisters in the Lord. We are a family that has one common goal and that is to proclaim and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ in all that we say and do. We are His children and through the ministry of the church which was birthed by the Holy Spirit He cares for us and meets the needs that we face each day. His church is our place of sanctuary and peace. It is a place where we can be built up and encouraged. It is the place that God has created for us to grow and mature in so that we can produce fruit

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that will last. It is a place where we should be able to experience a little bit of God's heaven here on earth. This is what we have been called to be part of Christ's body His church.

## FOCUS AND TARGET FOR TEACHER & STUDENTS

**TEACHER:** The hope of this step is to help the disciples see the uniqueness and importance of the church in his life and to show that the church is a many faceted living organism with a specific purpose for its existence. To equip and produce fruit that will last.

**STUDENT:** That the student may understand the importance of the local church for their growth and maturity. Also, to show that the church is made up of a variety of people and gifts and that it is a living organism with a clear goal for its existence. It is local in meeting the needs but is also connected together internationally by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel to a lost world.

## DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:

Understanding the meaning of words is the heart to understanding Scripture. Words are the bridge that can help us to understand more about ourselves and about God and His Word the Bible. Please take time to meditate and reflect on the broad and narrow view of each word as defined, along with its synonyms.

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**Church:** called out ones; belonging to the Lord; the Body of Christ. *Synonyms:* assembly, gathering.

**Body:** the main part of something; the trunk or main mass of an organism. *Synonyms:* figure, form, shape, association, collection, company, corporation.

## SCRIPTURE:

For this chapter, study this portion of Scripture. It is the key to a good biblical foundation and it is the next step to help you as a disciple to mature in Christ. Please look up and read it in its entirety. Take into account the author who wrote it, who it was written to and the context in which it relates to the other verses and chapters around it.

**Acts 2:41-47** (NLT) Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the **church** that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching**, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the **Lord's Supper**), and to **prayer**. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met **together** in one place and **shared** everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and **shared** the money with those in need. They **worshiped** together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the **Lord's Supper**, and **shared** their meals with great joy and generosity all the while **praising** God and enjoying the

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goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their **fellowship** those who were being saved.

## STUDY:

Christ breathed forth the church as His body so that it may minister to its members and to reach out and give hope and encouragement to a lost world. Christ describes the church as a body, bride and building. The reason for these word pictures is to help the disciple to understand how we are all connected together as a unit. There are individual pieces but all the pieces have a relationship to each other. Christ is the head of the body and the body shows us the difference and the uniqueness of how we all come together and minister to each other. Plus we also have a purpose to fulfill as a group of believers also. This discipleship step is to get us clearly connected to who Christ is and how with our gifts can minister and build up each other. When Christ ascended on high the church came alive and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to anoint and empower the disciples for service.

## BIBLICAL EXAMPLE:

The Bible is full of illustrations showing what God wants us to understand about the importance of Scripture for the disciple. Take time to look up in the Scripture these biographies and reflect on how God called these people to be His vessels for service. Notice how God calls everyday people to Himself and others in His Kingdom.

**Peter:** His heart and desire was to ground the church in truth and doctrine. He knew that the church can only be as

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strong as what they believed in and what they understood about who Christ is. He knew that we as individual and we as a church were on a journey of growing and learning. There would be a maturing process that would have to take place. In his later life he wanted people to know the true of the grace of God. (I Peter 5:12). He used a lot of word pictures to show that we are a spiritual house and are a chosen generation of Christ. He also warns the church of coming challenges and problems both from within and without.

**James:** His words to the church were ones of humility and prayer. James knew that the disciple and the church would undergo hardships and trials but he wanted his readers to remain true to Christ. To serve with all their hearts and have faith that God knows all their needs. He taught the disciple and the church about being listeners and doers, not to show favouritism, that we need to control the use of our tongue, and that we watch out concerning worldliness. All important truths that if heeded will make the church strong and a powerful testimony for Christ Jesus.

**John:** His heart was one of love. To get the church to know Christ's love but also to flow and walk in the love of Christ each day. He knew that the disciple was to be an extension of Christ's love to a lost world and that the only way that people would see and understand who Christ is would be through the disciple and the church. He wanted the disciple to be complete and whole in Christ's love because when we live in His love there is much joy. Christ was total love and

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John wanted the light of that love of Christ to shine out through every disciple. The church was to be a lighthouse of faith, hope and love.

**Paul:** His burden for the church was to see it established in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The disciple would understand grace righteousness and that they would to be clothed in Christ in all that they say and do. He knew that the church would only be strong if it would remain and walk in the power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He also taught that it must work together in unity and harmony through the gifts that God would give to the disciples. His hope was that we would understand that Christ is the head and we are His body. We are to be His ambassadors to a lost world and to be Christ's ministers of reconciliation.

All these people had a big heart for the church and clearly understood how Christ through the Holy Spirit, would spread the Gospel throughout the world. The church is the channel that God has chosen to limit Himself to work and walk through. This is His Way, this is His Truth and this is how He extends Life to us and to others (John 14:6).

## **OBJECT LESSON:**

**Body:** the body is the best picture of how the disciples of Christ works and grows in Christ. It is made up of many members and each member large or small has a valuable part and function to play. Unity and harmony between the parts gives it strength and stability to exist and work. If we try to live outside of the body we

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will find ourselves lifeless and without power. All the parts working together are what gives the body life.

## TRANSITION:

**The next part will focus on seven key points that the disciple of Christ needs to know if he or she hopes to grow and mature in Christ. The end goal is that they will produce fruit that will last.**

## *POINT ONE: FOCUSES ON TEACHING*

**LEAD-IN:** The church, as it comes together in a place does so for the purpose of training, nurturing and equipping of the various members. The book of Acts gives us numerous accounts of how the apostles would see a church birth forth in a place and then would stay six months to a year or more grounding it, equipping it and establishing it as a functioning body of believers.

## DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:

**Teaching:** a system or thing used as an example to follow or imitate; ***Synonyms:*** type, version, style, mould, template, framework, pattern, design, guide, blueprint, paradigm, sample, example.

**Instruction:** a direction or order; detailed information telling how something should be done, operated, or assembled. ***Synonyms:*** teaching, coaching, tutoring, education, schooling, tutelage, lessons, classes, lectures,

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training, drill, drilling, discipline, preparation, grounding, priming, direction, guidance, information, enlightenment, edification, educator, tutor, instructor.

**Understanding:** the ability to understand or think; intelligence, the power of apprehension; the power of abstract thought. *Synonyms:* intelligence, comprehension, conclusion, perception, to apprehend, grasp, figure out, identify, follow, master, learn, discern, be instructed in, see the light.

**Training:** to coach in or accustom to some mode of behaviour or performance; to make proficient with specialized instruction or practice; to focus or direct. *Synonyms:* to teach, coach, tutor, school, educate, practice, prepare.

**Equipping:** to supply with resources, fit out, to provide for; to provide with what is necessary, useful or appropriate. *Synonyms:* provide, furnish, supply, issue, arm, endow.

## KEY SCRIPTURE:

**Acts 11:25-26** Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the **church** and **taught** a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians.”