

# Foundations of Faith

## Lesson Seven: The Church

Describe your past view of the church. What experiences led to that view? How has that view changed? How has it remained the same? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Created for Community

Read Romans 12:3-8. What does this passage teach us about the community we were created to exist in? \_\_\_\_\_

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*Read the story on our need for community and acceptance from Lesson 7.*

One of the greatest needs of the human heart is relationship. When you became a child of God, you became a member of God's family, the church. We were created for this kind of community. The church is not a place of worship or a meeting. The church is a gathered group of Christ-following believers. This community of Christians is God's ambassador of His love and His character to a watching world. Jesus and the church are absolutely inseparable.

Read Ephesians 1:22-23. What do these verses teach us about the church? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What do these verses state are God's intentions regarding being with other believers regularly? \_\_\_\_\_

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(Personal testimony from your leader on what the church has meant in their life)

### Church Life

The best description of church life in the New Testament is more a series of snapshots than a definition. Numerous passages help us to see what Jesus intended for His body, the church.

Read Acts 2:42-47 and circle the characteristics of the early church that stand out to you.

v.42 – And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

v.43 – And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

v.44 – And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

v.45 – And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

v.46 – And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

v.47 – praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

### Purpose of the Church

Read 1 Peter 2:9-11. What is God's purpose for the church? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Matthew 28:19-20. Describe the four things that Jesus commands His followers to do in these verses in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Acts of Obedience

Obedience is big deal both for the individual Christ-follower as well as the Church. Jesus has instructed us to obey all that He has commanded. Baptism, the observance of the Lord's Supper, and giving are three specific commands Jesus gave us that demonstrate our relationship and commitment not only to him, but also to other believers.

### ▪ Baptism

Water baptism is a public declaration that you believe in Jesus. Baptism is not optional, but the first command Jesus has given new believers (Acts 2:38). It is a symbolic act through immersion in water. It does not have the power to forgive sin, but baptism does signify to the world, "I am not ashamed to identify with Jesus Christ or His family. I am committed to following in His steps."

Read Romans 6:3-4. What does water baptism symbolize according to these verses? \_\_\_\_\_

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### ▪ The Lord's Supper

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. According to these verses, what has Jesus instructed his disciples to do? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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We call this ordinance from Jesus the Lord's Supper. It ought to be regularly observed wherever and whenever the people of God are gathered. When we receive the Lord's Supper, it is a time to examine our actions and faith (1 Corinthians 11:23-29), to remember what He has done for us on the cross and to renew our covenant of love together with Him.

### ▪ Giving

God also asks the church to be a giving community. Giving can be done through time, money and energy (sweat equity). Though monetary giving is often a test, the disciple's faith, love and obedience have an opportunity to become even more Christ-like. Why? Because everything we have is from God our provider. We can trust Him with both our money and our lives.

What do the following verses teach us about giving?

Malachi 3:6-12 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 20:35 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 \_\_\_\_\_

(Personal testimony from your leader on the joy of giving)

#### Your Response This Week:

- Commit to further discipleship and Sunday morning attendance.
- Begin this month giving of your income to a local church or group of Christ-following believers. Discuss with your leader how to make this a regular occurrence.
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share the gospel this week.