

## **What Is a Church? Church of the Open Bible 01.08.17**

These concepts are discussed more fully in Michael Svigel's book *RetroChristianity*.

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### **We have four points about the people of the church.**

1. The church is the spiritual-physical \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ, not just a human organization. See Ephesians 1.22-23. We each submit to Christ's leadership and do his work, so the church can represent Christ and do Christ's will in the world.
2. The church is a \_\_\_\_\_ with covenant commitments, not a supermarket for spiritual groceries. See 1 Corinthians 12.27. Each "member" of the body is an integral, essential part, all of which are committed to work together to achieve their purpose.
3. The church is \_\_\_\_\_ for spiritual growth, not optional for believers. See Hebrews 10.24-25. All the New Testament instructions are in the context of being members of a local church, and they show us we need to be in a church fellowship to be healthy and growing spiritually.
4. The church is \_\_\_\_\_, which means pure and separated out for God's purposes. See Ephesians 2.19-22. We should shine for Christ with his character and his purpose.

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### **We have four points about the beliefs of the church.**

1. The church is one body in \_\_\_\_\_. See Ephesians 4.4-6. All believers are together in Christ, we in the local church are part of something larger.
2. The church is \_\_\_\_\_. See Ephesians 2.19-20. Everything we believe and do is based on the teachings of the Old Testament which the apostles accepted as holy scripture and the teachings of the apostles themselves gathered into the New Testament.
3. The church is \_\_\_\_\_. See Titus 1.7-9. We have a confession and a commission that transcend time, place, culture and language, so we protect our doctrinal purity and our missional sense of purpose, which are consistent with the believing church everywhere and always since the church began.
4. The church is \_\_\_\_\_. There are only a few doctrines which define what is orthodox and what is heretical. We must hold these up as essential marks of the believing church: the triune God as eternal Creator and Redeemer; the historical fall into sin and resulting corruption or depravity of all people; the identity and saving work of Christ; salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone; inspiration and authority of Scripture; redeemed humanity being incorporated into Christ; the restoration of humanity and creation in the end.

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**We have five points about the church's purpose.**

1. The church has \_\_\_\_\_. See Acts 20.28. God established a system for governance in the local church to protect sound doctrine, develop believers for service, and coordinate the ministries of the church. A team of pastor-elders leads the church, with other spiritual leaders rising up to help them. This results in a cycle of multiplication, as people come to Christ, grow, serve, and help others do the same under the authority and guidance of the pastor-elders.

2. The church has \_\_\_\_\_. See Matthew 28.18-20; Luke 22.19-20. Baptism is how new believers are welcomed into the church and the Lord's Supper is how believers in the church commune with Christ together. Both symbolize what Christ has done for us.

3. The church pursues \_\_\_\_\_. See Acts 1.8. In the church age, we all are given the Holy Spirit to indwell us and empower us to be witnesses for Christ. So we should work together to witness to those outside the church.

4. The church pursues \_\_\_\_\_. See Matthew 28.18-20. We need to help each other leave behind the ways of the flesh and the world to live out the ways of Christ, so we teach and encourage each other about biblical truth. We need sound biblical teaching in the context of fellowship to spiritually grow.

5. The church pursues \_\_\_\_\_. See Colossians 3.16-17. Our church and our lives should be about exalting, glorifying, worshipping God. So we gather weekly to worship together and we seek to bring God glory with our witness and good works.