

# Church

## **Big Question:** What actually is Church?

### **INTRO**

In 2020, the Covid pandemic forced many church buildings to close. This caused people all over the world to rethink what church is all about. In this guide we'll be exploring what the church looked like in the years immediately following the resurrection of Jesus. Of course, the world we now live in is different to what it was two thousand years ago. But this early example of church continues to teach us so much about what it means to follow Jesus together.

Question: What comes to mind when you hear the word "church"?

### **EXPLORING THE SCRIPTURES**

Acts 8:3, 12:5, 14:27-28 | The word "church" is often used today to describe a building where people gather to worship. Is this how the book of Acts used this word?

In the Bible, a "church" was simply a group of disciples who were following Jesus together.

Acts 2:41-47 | Here is one of the earliest descriptions of what "church" can look like. What stands out to you about this community? How does this compare with your experience of church?

Hebrews 10:24-25 (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12) | Why might it be better to follow Jesus as a community rather than doing it alone?

Matthew 9:9-13 | What can we learn from the example of Jesus about what a church community might look like? Why is it important to realise and remember this?

A church is a hospital for sinners not a museum of perfect people.

Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 | Why might it be helpful to live out this mission together rather than as individuals? Why does God's church need you?

1 Corinthians 9:13-14; Numbers 18:21 | Tithes are one example of how church community can work together to accomplish God's mission.

Ephesians 4:11-13; Acts 20:28 | What responsibility has God given to church leaders?

### **THE GIFT OF JESUS**

So, what actually is church? As we have seen, it's not a building, it's people! People with messy lives, journeying together in following Jesus. It's individuals who love their God and love their neighbourhood. It's those who care for others and, at times, need care themselves. It's a community that has embraced God's mission of bringing the gift of Jesus to the world!

### **LIVING IT**

Discuss: What would you say are the most important reasons for being part of a church?

Challenge: What is something you can do to be more fully engaged in church community and mission?



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