

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

(Titoki Church – 16/12/86 – EKB - Revised 02/2002)

1. Jesus spoke of the **church** in *Mat 16:18*, *Mat 18:17*, and said it would be **His Church, and He would build it**. He also is the Foundation of the Church, *1Cor 3:10,11*, and the rock on which it is built, *Mat 16:18*.

Mat 16:18 is the universal Church.

Mat 18:17 is the local Church.

In both references the Greek word is **ekklesia**.

2. **Ekklesia is a Greek word meaning “that which is called out”**, (see Young’s Concordance), and it meant in Jesus’ day, and it means today, **an assembly, a congregation, a gathering of people called out, to perform a specific purpose**. (See Bible Dictionaries, Lexicons of Greek words, Bible Commentaries, and Bible concordances.)

Ac 7:38 “ekklesia” refers to the congregation of Israel in the wilderness, (“Church” in KJV) called out of Egypt, as the army of God. *Ex 12:51*.

Ac 19:32,39,41, “ekklesia” (“assembly” in KJV), refers to the called out assembly of free citizens, in Ephesus, gathered to govern the affairs of the city-state.

3. **Jesus’ “ekklesia”, or Church, is an assembly of believers, called out of the Kingdom of darkness and into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son, *Col 1:13*, to worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, *Jn 4:23*, *Mat 6:33*.**

4. Other scriptures that indicate **the assembly nature of the Church**. *Ac 14:27*, *Ac 15:4,22*, *Ac 11:25,26*, *1Cor 11:18,20,22,29,33,34*, *1Cor 14:23*, *Heb 10:25*.

5. **In each local Church** that was established, a group of men called **the elders were recognised**. In each group of elders, one of them was appointed as the leading elder, as was James in the Jerusalem Church, *Ac 15:13*, *Ac 12:17*, *Ac 21:18*, *Gal 1:19*, *Gal 2:9,12*. The Holy Spirit guided the Apostles and Saints, as to whom among them were to be the elders of the congregation. *Ac 20:17,28*, *Ac 14:23*, *Phil 1:1*, *1Tim 3:1-7*, *1Tim 5:17*, *1Pet 5:1-4*, *Tit 1:5-9*.

The elders are to oversee the flock of God, which he has purchased with His own Blood. *Ac 20:28*. They protect, feed, shepherd, guide, help, teach, lead, warn, exhort, visit, strengthen those committed to their care, and at the **last day** they will be judged by the Chief Shepherd, *1Pet 5:4*, for their labours, *Heb 13:17*.

6. **Churches or assemblies of believers may vary in size.**

- a. *Mat 18:19*. They may have two or three people as in Saudi Arabia today.

- b. *Rom 16:5*, *Phile 2*, *Col 4:15*, *1Cor 16:19*. They may fit into one house and have about fifty believers.

- c. Or they may be much larger, as in Jerusalem, which after the first day of its existence was 3,120 people. *Ac 1:15*, *Ac 2:41*. As the *Acts 15* Church council was,

about, 15 or 20 years, after Pentecost, the Church would have been much larger again. (The IVF Bible Dictionary says the *Ac 15* church council was in AD 48.)

7. **Functions of the local Church.**

- a. **Worship - Ministry to the Lord.** *Heb 13:15,16, Jn 4:23,24, Ps 100:4,5, Ps 22:3, Rev 5:12, Ps 8:2, Mat 21:16, Ac 16:25, Is 12:3, Ps 89:15-18.*

He is worthy of our praise, thanksgiving, worship, prayer, and fasting.

As we worship the Lord He reveals His Person, Presence, Power and Provision.

As we worship God we create a dwelling place for Him in our midst, *Ps 22:3.*

Worship is the gateway into His presence, *Ps 100:4.*

Praise gives the Victory, *Ac 16:25.*

- b. **Fellowship - Ministry to the Saints.**

Gal 5:13b, Jn 13:34,35, Jn 15:12, 1Pet 4:10, Eph 4:11-16, (especially v15,16), Rom 12:3-8. Jam 1:27, Mat 25:35,40, Gal 6:10. As members of Christ's Body we are responsible **to care** for one another, in practical and spiritual ways. To encourage, support, help, strengthen, teach, provide, visit, shepherd, protect, forgive, accept and love one another.

In caring and sharing fellowship, we are to assist one another to:

- i. Know **who we are** in Christ, individually.
- ii. Know **what gifts and abilities** we have been given, *1Pet 4:10.*
- iii. Know **how to use** the gifts and talents to edify the Church and minister life to others.

Read Jerry Cook's book "Acceptance, Love and Forgiveness."

Fellowship is to build up Christ's Body, the Church. All Christ can do on the earth, He has to do through the members of His Body, *Eph 1:22,23*, through those who believe in Him and follow Him.

- c. **Outreach Ministry to the World**

Ac 1:8, Mat 28:18-20, Is 58:6-12, Is 61:1-3, Lk 4:18,19, Mk 16:15,16,17,18.

Jesus said, he that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him, *Jn 3:36.* Also God sent **not** His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. *Jn 3:17.*

As we minister the love of God, from our hearts, to the needy unsaved around us, God will grant us opportunity to share the goodness and salvation of God with them.

This may involve us in laying hands on the sick and praying, if they are willing for that, or offering to assist in practical ways.

In the references above, in *Is 58, Is 61, Lk 4*, Jesus' ministry and our ministry, to the unsaved, is to the poor, needy, broken-hearted, the solos, sick and lonely, to the widows, orphans and hungry, those in need of clothing, the imprisoned, the bereaved and the elderly. As we extend the love of Christ to the needy of this world, God will

give us souls for His Kingdom. Souls who are eternally lost without Christ.
 Jesus said, I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, *Mat 9:13*.

Jesus said, “Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, and the maimed, and the lame, and the blind. Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled,” *Lk 14:21,23*.

8. **Finally the Church is people, not organisation.** The great enemy of God’s life in the Spirit is institutionalisation, where the organisation takes away the ministry and responsibility of the individual believer. **The saints are the ministers of the Gospel.** See *Eph 4:11,12* in a modern translation, not the King James Version.

Each believer is filled with the Spirit of God, and is a living member of Christ’s Body, equipped with spiritual gifts, *1Pet 4:10, 1Cor 12:11*, ready and able to minister the salvation of Christ to needy people.

All church leaders are required to:

- a. Show people **who** they are in Christ.
- b. To **mature** them in spiritual gifts and abilities.
- c. To **release** them to do the work of ministry