

There is One Body of Christ, the Church, in Each Locality

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I beseech you that you walk worthy of the calling wherewith you are called, with humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another in love; **making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** Ephesians 4:2, 3.

God has given us this unity and it is our responsibility to make every effort to keep it.

There is one Body, and one Spirit,.....one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Ephesians 4:4, 5, 6.

The New Testament teaches that in each city there is one Body of Christ: one Church.

“To the Church of God which is at Corinth.” 1Corinthians 1:2, 2Corinthians 1:1. There is one Church of God in Corinth.

“To the saints which are at Ephesus.” Ephesians 1:1. All the believers make up the Church or the Body of Christ at Ephesus.

“To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi.” Philippians 1:1. One Body of Christ at Philippi.

“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.” Colossians 1:2. One Body of Christ at Colosse.

“To the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1Thessalonians 1:1. 2Thessalonians 1:1. One Body of Christ at Thessalonica.

“The Church of Ephesus, the Church in Smyrna, the Church in Pergamos, the Church in Thyatira, the Church in Sardis, the Church in Philadelphia, the Church in Laodicea. Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18, 3:1, 7, 14. One Church in each city.

“He, (Paul), sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.” Acts 20:17. Paul said to them , “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock,to shepherd the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.”

“I left you in Crete.....that you should.....ordain elders in every city.” Titus 1:5.

“There were in the Church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers....as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Acts 13:1, 2.

The New Testament is consistent in its teaching that there is one Body of Christ, one Church, in each locality, city, town, or village.

Where a larger region is referred to, such as Galatia, which was like a province, the word “churches” is used. Galatians 1:2.

The “elders” referred to in the New Testament, were city-wide elders.

They were mature “five-fold”, (Ephesians 4:11), gifted men : apostles, prophets, teachers and pastors, (Acts 13:1, 2, 1Corinthians 12:28). These men are gifts of Christ to the Church. Ephesians 4:11.

An apostle is one who is sent by the Lord, to support and encourage the planting and growth and development and teaching of local church congregations.

A prophet perceives what the Lord is saying and proclaims this to the church.

The evangelist is busy at work winning the lost.

The pastor-teacher , or pastor and teacher, are busy caring for the flock and teaching them the good Word of God. Ephesians 4:11.

These elders related to each other in humility, servanthood, honour of one another, openness, truthfulness, righteousness, mercy, justice, self-control, meekness and longsuffering. And they shepherded the Church with the same godly attitudes.

(They were not congregational “elders”, such as we have today.)