

THE ANATOMY OF THE CHURCH  
The Master's Plan For His Church  
Matthew 16:18

*"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell will not overpower it."*

~Matthew 16:18

**CHURCH**...literally means *"the called out ones"*. It's the *Bride of Christ*...the *Body of Christ*...the *Family of God*. It's a *spiritual organism*...not an *organization*...of which Christ is the **Head**...and it's *composed* of all *regenerated people* from Pentecost to the **return of Christ**.

Jesus wants all His *disciples* to be *"one"*...to function in *oneness*...so that the world may *believe* in Him and *experience* His glory. I am convinced if *believers* today...the *church* today...*understood* Christ's *purpose* for the *corporate life* of the church *working together*, we would see one of the greatest *spiritual awakenings* of God in *history*.

God's plan is for the *body of Christ* to *function* as a *unit*...in *unity*...to take the Gospel to the world. If God makes you an *eye*...your *primary function isn't just for you to see* but for you to help the *whole body to see*. If He makes you a *hand*...it isn't for you to only *serve by yourself*, but to help the *body serve others*. If you're a *foot*...you're not designed just to *walk by yourself* but to help the *body walk* to where God wants it to be.

If you get *frustrated* and *remove* yourself *from the body*, you *deny the body* the use of your *gifts*...and you end up *without a body*! This brings about a *two-fold result*:

- First, the *body will be missing* a vital part of itself without you...and anytime the body is *missing a part*, it's *handicapped*.

- Secondly, no part of a body can *live independently* and *function* outside the body.

If you go on mission as a *lone ranger* and the whole body *doesn't get involved*, you *isolate* yourself and end up going without the *strength* and *protection* that the body gives. If the whole body is to *function* for God's glory, you must *personally adjust* to God, and *patiently help* your church adjust to God! Then...*you* go on mission with God, and *they* go with you.

Just as God has used His people in previous generations to go on great expeditions *with* Him to *proclaim* and *spread* His *glory*...His *plan* and His *calling* is just as relevant today. We need to have a fresh *wake-up call* from God to go on mission *with* Him.

## I. THE PICTURE OF THE CHURCH:

- The **Bride of Christ**...our *relationship to* Christ...the *object of His affection*. It refers to Christ and His *relationship* to the Church (**Ephesians 5:25-32**). Paul talks about the Church being  *betrothed*  to Christ in **II Corinthians 11:2**. The *future bride* will be *presented to* Christ *when He returns*. It's God's intention to provide for His Son a *perfect companion* for all eternity.
- The **Body of Christ**...how the Church *functions*...as a *living organism*...not an *organization*. This *metaphor* is used in *two different ways*...to stress the *interdependence of the different members of the body*...and to stress Christ's *headship of the Church* (**Colossians 1:18, 24**).
- The **Family of God**...that's what makes us *brothers* and *sisters* in Christ.

## II. THE PATTERN OF THE CHURCH: *It's design or plan.*

- It's **Skeletal Structure**...it's *framework*. It's *Theology, Doctrine, and Spiritual/Scriptural Authority* (**Ephesians 4:14-15; II Timothy 3:16; I Timothy 6:3-5**).
- It's **Internal Structure**...it's *organs*. The *heart, nourishment, nutrition, faith, hope, love...fruit of the Spirit*...It's *Spiritual life* (**Colossians 3:12-17**).
- It's **Muscles**...how everything is *connected*...how everything *comes together* and *works together* (**Romans 12**).
- The **Head**...Jesus' role as *head of His Church* (**Colossians 1:15-23**).

## III. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH:

All *six purposes of the Church* can be seen in the *first church* in Acts 2:1-47.

**WORSHIP**...Our *ultimate purpose*...that which is *preeminent*.

*“O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.”*

~Psalm 34:3

*“The twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.’”*

~Revelation 4:10-11

**DISCIPLESHIP**...The *equipping ministry* that produces *growth* and *reproduction*...*spiritual maturity*. *Reproducing* ourselves in others. Growing *deep roots of faith*, both *individually* and *corporately*.

*“Equip the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”*

~Ephesians 4:12-13

**EVANGELISM/MISSIONS**...The *outward mission* and *focus* of the Church.

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

~Matthew 28:19-20

Three key verbs...

- **Going**...not a *command* but an *assumption* that we will go...“*as you are going*.”
- **Make Disciples**...“*baptize them*”...
- **Teaching**...

*“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

~Acts 1:8

*“Always be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”*

~I Peter 3:15

**MINISTRY/SERVICE**...The *inward ministry* to the body of Christ. This shows that our *focus* must be *on others* before *ourselves*.

*“...Through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

~Galatians 5:13b-14

**FELLOWSHIP**...*Edifying* the Saints. This is the *reward* for the *corporate body*.

*“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”*

~Acts 2:42

**PRAYER**...God’s *priority* and *design*. This shows the *passion* and *pattern* of our heart.

*“Even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer...For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the people.”*

~Isaiah 56:7

*“And He said to them, ‘It is written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer”, but you are making it a robbers den’.”*

~Matthew 21:13

*“And He began to teach and say to them, ‘Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?” But you have made it a robbers den’.”*

~Mark 11:17

*“Saying to them, ‘It is written, “And My house shall be a house of prayer”, but you have made it a robbers den’.”*

~Luke 19:46

Most churches only want to *focus* on *one* or *two* of these *areas* or *purposes*!

Don’t worry about the *numerical growth* of our church... we just need to be *faithful* and focus on the *purpose* of our church! God said ...*“I will grow My church.”*

**The Church will...**

- **Grow Stronger** (and *more passionate*) through **Worship**.
- **Experience God’s Power** through **Prayer**.
- **Grow** through **Evangelism**.
- **Go Deeper** (*deeper roots of faith*) through **Discipleship**.
- Become more **Engaging** through **Ministry** and **Service**.
- Become more **Intimate** through **Fellowship**.