

BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF A CHURCH

The word Church, is derived from the Greek word "*ekklesia*" which is defined as a calling out of citizens to discuss and participate in the affairs of the state. The Bible says that this gathering is more than just the gathering of fellow citizens; it is the gathering of God's family. Ephesians 2:19 proclaims, "You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household...."

How does one become a member of this prestigious household? Ephesians 2:13 says "You are brought near by the blood of Christ" and Ephesians 2:3 & 16 makes clear that though we once were "children of God's wrath," we can be reconciled as one body to God through the cross!

We at Family Bible believe that "church" is far more than a building or even a gathering of people on Sunday or Wednesday night. It is a people called out through the cross of Christ to enter into God's rule, His domain and His magnificent household. Colossians 1:13 states for He (Christ) "delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His Beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin."

This is a citizenship of the "beloved." This is, as Galatians 6:10 states, the "household of faith." For "whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him" (1 John 5:1)

Those who believe become a part of God's unique family united by Christ. How do the believers of this household act? Why has He called them out? Titus 2:14 says "we were redeemed from every lawless deed to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." To clarify, Scripture explains it this way: we have been called together to comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18); to build up one another (Ephesians 4:16); to equip one another (Ephesians 4:12); to show kindness to one another (Ephesians 4:32); to be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10); to give preference to one another (Romans 12:10); to pray for one another (James 5:16); to confess sins to one another (James 5:16); to rescue one another (James 5:19,20); to be hospitable to one another without complaint (1 Peter 4:9); to reprove, rebuke, exhort one another (2 Timothy 4:2); or to summarize and simplify to "love one another sincerely and fervently from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22) so we might "stand firm in one spirit, with one mind as we strive together for the faith of the gospel." (Philippians 2:27)

Church is far more than a group of people who meet together on a given day. It is far superior to any social club and far greater than any institution. God's church is God's household united by and through the sacrificial love of His beloved Son. It is the household of God's beloved including all those who by faith have united with Him for the purpose of being like Him.