

*The Assembly of the Saints*  
*Lesson 2 – What is a Local church?*  
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**Introduction:** God has made us with social needs.

- A. The foundation of the home is found in the truth: “It is not good that man should be alone.” **(Gen 2:18)**
  - 1. Even outside the home we need the companionship and help of others.
  - 2. God has always sought to teach His people wisdom in choosing their companions. **(Prov 13:19-20)**
- B. God has always provided times of assembly and collective assemblies for His people.
  - 1. Under the Old Covenant there was an exclusive nation (Israel in contrast with the Gentiles or nations), a common place of worship (the temple), and various collective events (feast days and called assemblies).
  - 2. There were priests and elders who were to instruct the people. Staying true to the covenant was imperative. **(Deut 27:9-10)**
  - 3. These provisions provided needed teaching and association for God’s people.
  - 4. What provisions does God give His people in the new covenant?

**I. God makes provisions for His people, the church**

- A. The people of God are called the body of Christ which is also called the church. **(Eph 1:22-23)**
  - 1. Those who have been born again have entered into a relationship with Christ. He is the Lord, the head and is the “all in all” for the people of God.
  - 2. The submission to the direction (authority) of the Lord is so complete that the relationship is likened to the head of a man that controls every part.
- B. What is the meaning of the word “church” in the New Testament?
  - 1. **ἐκκλησία**, ας, ἡ (1) in a general sense, as a gathering of citizens *assembly, meeting* (AC 19.32); ....(3) as the assembled Christian community *church, congregation, meeting* (RO 16.5); (4) as the totality of Christians living in one place *church* (AC 8.1); (5) as the universal body of believers *church* (EP 1.22)
  - 2. It is important to let the context of a passage determine the meaning of the word in that passage! When you hear the word “church” you should think of people. It can mean a gathering of unbelievers! **(Acts 19:32)**
  - 3. There are three primary meanings of “church” when speaking of God’s people.
    - a. The relationship of every Christian to the Lord. **(Mt 16:18; Eph 4:4)**
    - b. Christians in a specific location that are described as an identifiable flock under identifiable shepherds. We commonly call this a “local church.” **(1 Pt 5:1-3; Phil 1:1; Acts 14:23)**
    - c. It can mean an assembly of the local church. **(1 Cor 14:23, 34-35)**

### Questions

1. Why do we need to have relationships with other Christians?
2. What is the root meaning of the word “church”?
3. Should local churches exist? Prove it from scripture.
4. What are the three primary meanings of the word “church” in the N.T.?
5. May a Christian chose not to be a part of a local church and still please God? Explain your answer!

### *II. What does a local church do?*

- A. What did God provide for the 1<sup>st</sup> Christians in Jerusalem? (**Acts 2:42**)
  1. From the very beginning God had a plan to build His people up.
  2. The zeal and faith of men converted to the Lord made it natural that they seek one another’s company in their everyday lives. (**Acts 2:44-47**)
  3. There is a collective work and responsibility in a local church and an individual responsibility. (**1 Tim 5:16**)
- B. What instructions did God give the elders of local churches? (**Acts 20:28-32**)
  1. The elders were to be careful to feed the flock the pure word of God.
  2. They were also to “watch” for dangers that would come!
  3. Elders were to ultimately submit to the Chief Shepherd. They were to do this through teaching the apostles doctrine! (**1 Cor 14:37; 11:2; Jn 16:13**)
- C. The elders taught the members in various ways.
  1. The elders did call some members together to give instruction. (**Acts 21:18-19**)
  2. The general instruction to teach could include various arrangements such as Bible classes.
  3. There was a required assembly where the whole church was to assemble. (**1 Cor 11:17-18, 33; 14:23; 16:1-2**)

### Questions

1. What did the Apostles instill in every Christian after their baptism in Acts 2:42? What do each of these things mean?
2. What things did the Lord command that require the participation of other Christians?
3. Is the work of the Lord exclusively accomplished through the collective actions of Christians? What responsibilities does a Christian have that a local church does not?
4. What is the primary function of a local church? How do we know this?
5. How is a local church to carry out the work of building up its members? What things fall under general authority (expediency) and what things are specified?
6. May a church arrange Bible classes for its members in addition to the single assembly of the whole church?