

Life Shines at Church Devotion

“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9).

What is a *church*? What is *the Church*? *Who* is the church? If we are to understand being hopeful in the Lord while *shining life* at church, it is important to define the word “church,” don’t you think?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary’s prime definition of the word church is “a *building* for public, and especially Christian, worship.” So, is it the building that matters most? Hmmm. That doesn’t sound like a complete definition. Since a church is affiliated with *Christian* worship, let’s look for more information in the Bible, which is the very foundation of Christian worship. What does the Bible have to say about the church?

As we search through the New Testament, we rarely read about *a* church. What we do read about is *the* church. The English word “church” originates from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means “called-out ones” or “assembly.” “Called out ones” sounds like people like you and me, doesn’t it?

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus says to Peter, **“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church [ekklesia], and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”**

Paul writes to the saints in Rome that they should **“Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus ... Greet also the church in their house”** (Romans 16:3, 5).

And to the believers in Corinth, Paul writes, **“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (1 Corinthians 1:2). Here Paul clearly indicates that the church in Corinth is made up of those who are sanctified in Jesus and called to be saints. The Church is people. People who have been called out of the world to be a part of the church of God.

And again, Paul writes to the Corinthians, **“But God has so composed the body ... that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it”** (1 Corinthians 12:24-27). Thus, another definition of the church of God is the Body of Christ!

This is the place where we are **to shine life**, here among our own brothers and sisters in Christ. Here is where we are to be hopeful knowing the sure and certain truth that God is in control. Yes, we are most likely meeting regularly inside a church *building*, but the real church is those of us in this “called out assembly” of saints who give support, comfort, care, love, forgiveness,

strength, and encouragement to each other and those around us. It is we who are to personally shine life at church.

The most efficient way to accomplish God's plans for *His church* is to work together as one body, whether it is in our own "church building" or joined with other saints. Let us diligently pray and seek ways to serve our Lord that will allow all of us to shine life at our church, wherever we may be.