

How can I find my fit, function, and place in Christ's body?

1. Repent, believe, and be baptized into Christ Jesus

(Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

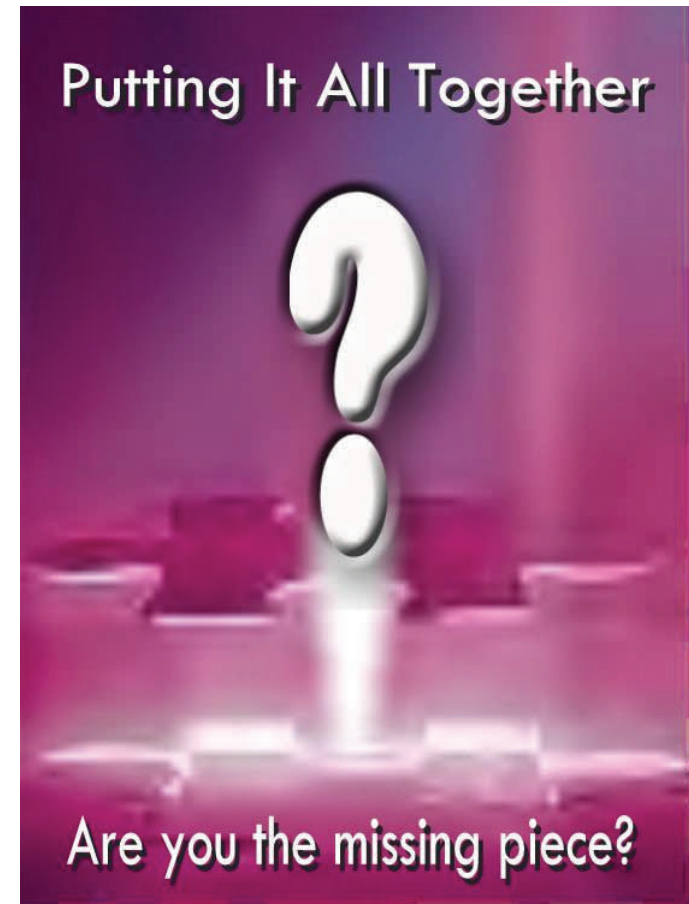
2. Commit yourself to a local expression of his body (church)

- By embracing the vision and purpose of the church
(Proverbs 29:18; Isaiah 46:10-11; Ephesians 3:11)
- By receiving the leadership of the church
(1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24)
- By being a faithful attendee and participant
(Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 14:26-33; Ephesians 4:16)
- By discovering and developing your spiritual gifts
(Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14)
- By practically serving with your gifts
(Romans 12:11; 1 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 5:13)
- By faithfully supporting with your tithes and offerings
(Deuteronomy 12:5-7, 11-14; Malachi 3:6-12; Matthew 23:23; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9)
- By always speaking well of the church
(Ephesians 5:28-32; James 3:2, 9-10)



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WHY CHURCH?



Destiny is a matter of choice—not chance. It is something to be achieved—not something to be waited for.

Why Church?

Many people today say they don't have trouble with God, it's the church they have trouble with. When people think of church, they normally think of an organization, building, denomination, a pastor, or ministry. That is why we need to focus on "church" through God's design and perspective versus our own. The Scriptures teach us that the church is Jesus' body and that he (Jesus) is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23). The word church is used 116 times in the New Testament. It is mentioned twice in the Gospel of Matthew giving us a different revelation with each mention. The first mention is in Matthew 16:18 where Jesus said he would build his church. This is in reference to his *universal church*. This speaks of the entire church—all those throughout the world, in the past, present, and future who have chosen to follow him. In Matthew 18:17, Jesus' reference to the church here speaks of a *local, tangible, "where you attend, participate, and are connected" church*. This is a local body or community of believers (see also James 5:14). We will look at the church in light of the local, tangible, gathering community of believers. It is in this context that we begin to see a tangible and incarnate expression of Jesus Christ. Wherever there is a community of believers (local church), we see an image of Jesus. You see, the church is his body (Ephesians 1:22). It is also referred to as God's household (Ephesians 2:19). **Why church?** Because the church is the visible expression and image of Jesus Christ.

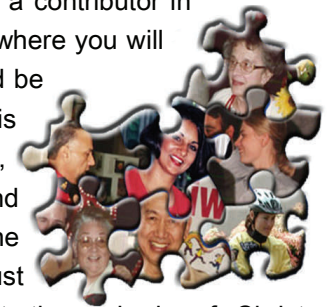
Why do I need to be joined to a church?

The church is likened to a body and we as individual believers are members of that body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Imagine our hand not wanting to be joined to our body. Unthinkable isn't it? It should be equally unthinkable as a believer (member) not be joined to the literal, tangible body of Christ (church). All of the members of a body give life to each other and help each other grow (Ephesians 4:16). Some will say; "I'm part of his universal body so I don't need to be joined to his local body." But the Scriptures say something different. They demonstrate for us and command us to be joined to a local church (Hebrews 10:25; Romans 12:3-5; Matthew 18:15-20). Not being joined to a local church is contrary to God's will and common sense. Don't let anyone convince you contrary to His Word.

You have a God-designed fit, function, and place in His body.

The Scriptures teach us that God has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). None of us were an after-thought in the mind, plan, and destiny of God. God has even chosen the times and places where we would live so that we would seek him (Acts 17:24-28). It's amazing isn't it? God is more personally involved in our lives than we ever thought or imagined. This is personally comforting to know. God is doing more behind our backs (behind the scenes) than in front of our faces. He never sleeps, never tires, and never gives up. He is always there and he is always working on our behalf to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-31).

The Devil tries to tell us that we "don't fit in or that we don't belong." But this is contrary to God's Word and will (1 Corinthians 12:11; Romans 12:5). We are set free by receiving the truth of God — his revelation and report about us. This will destroy the lie of the Devil. This will keep us from thinking or feeling—"Well I don't feel I really fit in." But God says he has put you in where it pleased him. You see, the Devil wants you to be **THE MISSING PIECE** in the local church. Many times the "loss of feeling" comes from trying to fit in our-way instead of his-way. God assembles us into his body (church) in the way he has designed and destined for us (1 Corinthians 12:18). You are an important part of God's plan and purpose. He has designed you to be both a receiver and a contributor in his local church. It is in the midst of that church where you will grow in grace, discover your gift or function, and be trained and operate in that gifting. The church is the backdrop for connecting with God (exalting), connecting with one another (edifying), and connecting with the world (evangelizing). It is the environment for making disciples. Though we must go out into all the world, we are to build people into the body of Christ. Authentic conversion and discipleship demands being joined to his body. It is his church that will fulfill his eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:10).



If you are not joined to a local church, you are **THE MISSING PIECE**.