

Session 2: Who is the Church?

Ways We Often Cheapen The Church...

In our independence, we ignore the church.

In our pragmatism, we pollute the church.

In our missions, we minimize the church.

We elevate our traditions over God's truth.

We value our preferences over God's priorities.

We practically define the church according to our personal comforts.

(David Platt, Secret Church)

Definition of the Church:

The church is the body of people called by God's grace through faith in Christ to glorify him by serving him in this world.

The body of people...

- The church is a gathering.

Ekklesia: Mentioned 114 times in the New Testament.

Twice it refers to an Old Testament assembly.

This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us.

(Acts 7:38 ESV)

*"I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."*

(Hebrews 2:12 ESV)

Three times it refers to a secular assembly.

Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together.

(Acts 19:32 ESV)

But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly.

(Acts 19:39 ESV)

*And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.
(Acts 19:41 ESV)*

109 times it refers to a Christian assembly.

*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, both their Lord and ours:
(1 Corinthians 1:2 ESV)*

*Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your
steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you
are enduring.
(2 Thessalonians 1:4 ESV)*

▪ **Those whom God has called out.**

*...including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,
To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
(Romans 1:6-7 ESV)*

▪ **Those whom God has called together.**

*...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one
of another.
(Romans 12:5 ESV)*

*If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all
rejoice together.
(1 Corinthians 12:26 ESV)*

▪ **The church is an earthly assembly with a heavenly destiny.**

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the
heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to
the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the
judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus,
the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a
better word than the blood of Abel.
(Hebrews 12:22-24 ESV)*

- **The church is people.**

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

(1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV)

As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

(Romans 9:25-26 ESV)

- **The church is a family.**

We are sons and daughters.

...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

(Galatians 3:26 ESV)

"Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

(2 Corinthians 6:17-18 ESV)

We are brothers and sisters.

Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

(1 Timothy 5:1-2 ESV)

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

(1 John 3:14-18 ESV)

- **The church is a bride.**

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

(Ephesians 5:25-27 ESV)

For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present

you as a pure virgin to Christ.

(2 Corinthians 11:2 ESV)

- **The church is a building.**

For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

(1 Corinthians 3:9 ESV)

- **The church is a house.**

For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)

Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

(Hebrews 3:3-6 ESV)

- **The church is a temple.**

If I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

(1 Timothy 3:15 ESV)

God's Spirit dwells within the church.

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
(Ephesians 2:19-22 ESV)*

God's glory is displayed through the church.

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
(1 Peter 2:4-5 ES V)*

- **The church is a field.**

*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers.
You are God's field, God's building.
(1 Corinthians 3:6-9 ESV)*

- **The church is a tree.**

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural

*branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.
(Romans 11:17-24 ESV)*

*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he
it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.
(John 15:5 ESV)*

■ **The church is a priesthood.**

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God
chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a
spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I
am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever
believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who
believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders
rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a
rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were
destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of
him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
(1 Peter 2:4-9 ESV)*

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made
us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion
forever and ever. Amen.
(Revelation 1:5-6 ESV)*

*...and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth."
(Revelation 5:10 ESV)*

■ **The church is a body.**

*Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all
partake of the one bread.
(1 Corinthians 10:17 ESV)*

*And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to
the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

(Ephesians 1:22-23 ESV)

We are a unified body.

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

(Ephesians 4:4-6 ESV)

We are a diverse body.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

(1 Corinthians 12:14 ESV)

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

(Romans 12:4-5 ESV)

Description of the Church...

- The church is universal and local.
The church in a house...

Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.

(Romans 16:5 ESV)

The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.

(1 Corinthians 16:19 ESV)

The church in a city...

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, both their Lord and ours. . .

(1 Corinthians 1:2 ESV)

The church in a region...

*So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.
(Acts 9:31 ESV)*

The church in the world...

*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...
(Ephesians 5:25 ESV)*

*And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.
(1 Corinthians 12:28 ESV)*

The dominant emphasis in the New Testament is on the local church.

Out of the 114 times *ekklesia* is mentioned in the NT , at least 90 of them refer to specific local gatherings of believers.

- The local church is a clear expression of the universal body of Christ. The church is both visible and invisible.

The invisible church: The church as God sees it from heaven.

*But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."
(2 Timothy 2:19 ESV)*

- Includes all true believers.

The visible church: The church as we see it on earth.

*Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. . .
(2 Thessalonians 1:1 ESV)*

- Includes some false believers.

Their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some.

(2 Timothy 2:17-18 ESV)

I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

(Acts 20:29-30 ESV)

“Many sheep are without and many wolves are within.”

Augustine

The church includes both New Testament believers and Old Testament believers.

Old Testament gatherings...

On the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.’

(Deuteronomy 4:10 ESV)

This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us.

(Acts 7:38 ESV)

“I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”

(Psalm 22:22 ESV; Quoted in Hebrews 2:12 ESV)

Old Testament faith...

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch

them.
(Hebrews 11:24-28 ESV)

And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.
(Hebrews 11:39-40 ESV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. . .
(Hebrews 12:1 ESV)

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
(Hebrews 12:22-24 ESV)

Key differences...

Old Testament believers trusted in the coming Christ.

New Testament believers trust in the crucified Christ.

Old Testament believers are ethnically distinct.

New Testament believers are ethnically diverse.

Old Testament believers lived under their own government with God-given laws.

New Testament believers live among the rulers of the nations.

Old Testament believers are required to circumcise their male offspring.

New Testament believers are required to baptize all believers.

- The church includes both Jews and Gentiles.

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken

down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone...

(Ephesians 2:14-20 ESV)

- The church is unified and diversified.

...that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

(John 17:21-23 ESV)

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, both their Lord and ours...

(1 Corinthians 1:2 ESV)

We work for unity in the local church.

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

(1 Corinthians 1:10 ESV)

...complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

(Philippians 2:2 ESV)

Division is dangerous.

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

(Romans 16:17-18 ESV)

It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.
(Jude 1:19 ESV)

Division is deadly.

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)

We work for unity in the universal church.

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

(Ephesians 4:4-6 ESV)

- The church and the Israel of God...

And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

(Galatians 6:16 ESV)

For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.

His praise is not from man but from God.

(Romans 2:28-29 ESV)

- **We are descendants of Israel's father.**

He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he

had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.
(Romans 4:11-12 ESV)

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.
(Romans 9:6-8 ESV)

As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"
(Romans 9:25 ESV)

■ **We are heirs of Israel's promise.**

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.
(Galatians 3:29 ESV)

For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the

*promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
(Romans 4:13-25 ESV)*

■ **We are recipients of Israel's blessings.**

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
(1 Peter 2:4-10 ESV)*

The church and the kingdom of God...

■ **The church is not the kingdom.**

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.
(Acts 8:12 ESV)

And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.
(Acts 19:8 ESV)

And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.
(Acts 20:25 ESV)

...proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.
(Acts 28:31 ESV)

- **The kingdom creates the church.**

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
(Matthew 5:3 ESV)*

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven,
but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."
(Matthew 7:21 ESV)*

*Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.
(Matthew 13:40-43 ESV)*

- **The church proclaims the kingdom.**

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
(Matthew 24:14 ESV)*

- **The church is the instrument of the kingdom.**

*Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.
You received without paying; give without pay.
(Matthew 10:8 ESV)*

*The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"
(Luke 10:17 ESV)*

- **The church is the guardian of the kingdom.**

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind

on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
(Matthew 16:19 ESV)

▪ **Jesus will return for his church.**

*Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds,
from one end of heaven to the other.*
(Matthew 24:30-31 ESV)

Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.
(1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 ESV)

▪ **Jesus will consummate his kingdom.**

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.
(1 Corinthians 15:24 ESV)

History of the Church:

1. The Established Church (1st Century)
2. The Persecuted Church (1st-3rd Century)
3. The Universal Church (4th-16th Century)
4. The Reformed Church (16th-17th Century)
 - Reformers
 - Radical Reformers
 - Anabaptists
 - Puritans

5. The Baptist Church (17th Century)
 - The Baptist Church (1612)
 - The Southern Baptist Church (1845)

Function of the Church:

1. Worship – exalt the name of the Lord
2. Edification – build up other believers (One Another passages)

*"So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church."
(1 Corinthians 14:12 ESV)*

*"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."
(1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV)*

3. Accountability – bear one another burdens, confess our sins one to another, confront one another in sin.

*"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load."
(Galatians 6:1–5 ESV)*

*"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."
(James 5:16 ESV)*

4. Proclamation – spread the word of God

Offices of the Church:

1. Elders/Bishops/Overseers/Pastors

"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil."
(1 Timothy 3:1–7 ESV)

"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.""
(1 Peter 5:1–5 ESV)

2. Deacons

"Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."
(1 Timothy 3:8–13 ESV)

Ordinances of the Church:

Those things that are both demonstrated and commanded in the New Testament.

1. Baptism

2. The Lord's Supper

Doctrine of the Church (Creeds):

1. First London Confession of Faith (Particular Baptist 1644)
2. The Standard Confession (General Baptist 1660)
3. Second London Confession of Faith (Particular Baptist 1689)
4. Philadelphia Baptist Confession (Baptist 1742)
5. New Hampshire Baptist Confession (Baptist 1833)
6. Baptist Faith & Message (Southern Baptist 1925, 1963, 2000)

Future of the Church:

Christ will one day return for his bride, the Church and renew all things. The Church is described as the New Jerusalem and a holy city in the book of Revelation.

"Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

(Revelation 21:9–14 ESV)