

The Doctrine of the Church

1. Who is the Church?

- **God's people** (Eph 1:22; cf. Ac 7:38; 15:30):
who He has called-out & gathered together (assembled)
- the universal church: on earth/in heaven (Eph 1:22; 2:5-6; Col 1:18)
- the local church: in a city, house, etc. (1Co 1:2; Rev 2-3; Ro 16:5)
- **Some descriptions of the church**
- we are saints: a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (Eph 1:1; 1Pe 2:9; cf. Ex 19:1ff)
- we are God's family: adopted as sons, brothers/sisters with each other, & heirs of eternal life (Eph 1:5; Ro 4:16; 8:23ff; Heb 2:11ff)
- we are believers in Christ: saved by God's grace thru faith in Christ alone (Eph 1:13; 2:8)
- we are the body of Christ: baptized & united into one body by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:23; 1Co 12:12f, 27; Ro 15:5f)
- we are God's temple: fellow citizens & members of His household (Eph 2:19ff; 1Co 3:16; 2Co 6:16ff; 1Pe 2:5; Heb 11:13ff; Rev 21-22)
- we are the bride of Christ: who will be ready when Jesus returns (Eph 5:21ff; 2Co 11:2; Isa 54:5; 62:5; Mt 16:18; Rev 19:7)

2. What is the Purpose of the Church?

- **to make disciples**: baptizing, teaching, equipping, & sending (Mt 28:16ff; Eph 4:11ff; Ro 1:16; 1Co 15:1-3; Ac 1:8; 13:1ff; 15:1ff)
- **to shepherd believers in worship/service**: leading & protecting with godly authority & sound doctrine (1Pe 5; Jn 21:15ff; Col 3:16f; Ps 33; Rev 4-5; Mt 26:17ff; 18:17; 1Co 11:23ff; Ac 20:17ff; 2Ti 3-4)

- **to love our brothers & sisters**: caring for each other & building up our families (Eph 4:2; 5:2; 5:21-6:4; 1Ti 5; 1Jn 4:7ff; 2Ti 3:15)
- **to glorify God in the heavenly realms**: (Eph 3:1-11)
as Christ's unified-multicultural bride (Eph 2:11ff; Ro 15:5-7)

3. A Summary Statement (EFCA Statement of Faith #7): The Doctrine of the Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

4. How then shall "We" live?

- **Believe & Grow in Christ**: (Eph 1:13; 4:11ff; Ac 2:37ff; 1Co 11:23ff)
be baptized & worship (serve) Him in the fellowship of His church
- **Preach/teach the word**: establishing godly leadership & sending out missionaries (2Ti 3-4; Ti 1:5; 1Pe 5; Mt 18:17; Ac 13; 15)
- **Be a loving-family to each other**: & build up the families in our church (Eph 4:2; 5:2; Jm 2:15; 1Jn 3:16f; 1Ti 5; Eph 5:21-6:4)
- **Build up cross-cultural unity in the church**:
for the glory of God (Eph 2:11ff; 3:1-11; Ro 15:5-7, 22ff; Rev 7:9ff)