

Church and Ministry

Week 1: Foundations



Warm up question

What do you hope to learn in this study of church and ministry?



Ecclesiology

“Ecclesiology” is the big “church word” for what we will be studying for the next few weeks. It is the study of the “ekklesia,” the Greek word that is often translated “church” in the New Testament.

The word “ekklesia” had been in wide use before the New Testament and meant “a gathering of people summoned.” This could have meant being summoned for a legal proceeding (e.g. our juries) or it could have meant a much less formal gathering to hear a message (e.g. an audience).

Matthew records Jesus using the word ekklesia, so it appears that Jesus used it as a Christian variation on the idea of a “Synagogue” (meaning “together-bringing”).

- What does the word “ekklesia” tell us about what the church should be?



A fellowship

Ekklesia is not the only word that is used to describe church. The word “koinonia” is often used to describe the gathering of Christians. This word often is translated into English as “fellowship”.

The word has its roots in the the word for “common” and often elicited the idea of holding something in common. In Romans 15, Paul uses the word for a monetary offering. In Acts 2, the early Christians use it to describe the church which was comprised of people giving up their possessions and pooling their resources.

How does this “koinonia” sense of church add to the “ekklesia” sense?



What about pastors?

We are going to be getting into the office of public ministry (that is, pastors). However, it is important to remember that there is no (Lutheran) sense in which pastors are separated from the Church proper.

Next week we will begin to talk more some more about the specifics about the office of the public ministry. Before then, we are going to get clear on what the Church is and consider how the office of the public ministry fits into that understanding.



The Church's Foundation

The song goes, “The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord...” and this is most certainly true. However, that foundation is broad enough for us to look into it deeply. We will look at a few New Testament explanations of this foundation of the Church.

- Read Ephesians 1:22-23
- What does this passage tell us about the nature of the Church?



The Rock

Jesus also weighs in on the matter of the foundation of the Church in His famous discussion with Peter. Notably, this passage is at the heart of one of the disagreements about the nature of the church. The question comes up with what the “rock” is that Jesus is building on.

- Read Matthew 16:13-20
- What does this passage tell us about the nature of the Church?



The Bride

The Church is also talked about in Scripture in a relational sense as “the Bride of Christ.” We see that at work when Paul describes human marriage as a “type” or foreshadowing of what Christ’s relationship with the Church is to look like.

- Read Ephesians 5:22-32
- What does this passage tell us about the nature of the Church?



The Household of God

At various points in Scripture, we see the church being talked about as the family or the “household” of God. This sense of a “household” would have included not only a nuclear family, but also servants and extended relations.

- Read Ephesians 2:11-22
- What does this passage tell us about the nature of the Church?



The Building of God

This very powerpoint slide reveals how we think of “church” in terms of building, but this was likely a more abstract metaphor for early Christians in understanding the nature of the church since “church buildings” did not come into popularity until late in the Church’s existence.

- Read 1 Peter 2:4-5
- What does this passage tell us about the nature of the Church?



Next Time

Next week we will look into the other side of the “Church and Ministry” equation and look at the foundations for the office of the public ministry.

