

# THE LOCAL CHURCH, BAPTISM & MEMBERSHIP


## Introduction

? What is a local church and how does it relate to the church universal?

A local church is a gathering of baptised believers under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ who organise along New Testament lines, to worship, fellowship and make disciples.

The universal church is the Body of Christ made up of believers worldwide. However, as far as practices go, God's instructions to you as a believer mainly have to do with the local church.


Identify the each of the characteristics of a local church as found in these passages of Scripture.

 Acts 2:47; 1 Cor 12:27

A church is not a building or a denomination. A

 Acts 2:46, 20:7; Hebrews 10:26


A church gathers regularly.

 Eph 1:22, 5:23, Col 1:18

A church is under the headship of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Head of the Church.

## Application

? How is His authority seen and submitted to in the local church?

 1 Tim 4:13-16, 2 Tim 4:2  
The Word of God. The Word of God declares the will of Christ. Therefore, a church is under the headship of Christ when His Word is faithfully declared.

?

How is this 'Rod' wielded in the local church?



Eph 4:11-13

The pastoral ministry of declaring, teaching and instructing is the means by which His 'Rod' is wielded. Clearly, this is the responsibility of elders/pastor-teachers.

These pastors/elders are to meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. If the proclamation of God's Word is missing, and there are no qualified leaders, the gathering is as yet not a local church in the true sense.

A local church comes to hear God's Word and carry it out. Thus, the church will be obedient in areas of evangelism, discipleship, holiness, baptism, the Lord's Supper and reverent worship.

## Progress assessment and planning for change

Does your attitude and behaviour show submission to the headship of our Lord Jesus Christ?



## Helpful resources

9 Marks of a Healthy Church - Mark Dever