

What is the church of Christ?

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The world has much to say about the church, which belongs to Jesus. The world has called her by many names, such as a cult or a denomination. What is a brief but thorough answer to someone who genuinely asks, “What is the church of Christ?”

First, it is a group of people who hold Jesus Christ as the author and finisher of their faith (Heb 12:2). Their religion belongs to Jesus Christ (Matt 16:18), and He has been given all authority in this group (Matt 28:18). This group of people is called the church (Acts 8:1). The Greek term for church, ἐκκλησία means “assembly” and or “a calling out” so these people are a group of called out people that belong to Jesus Christ. This is why the name of His church is a possessive term giving possession to Jesus, who is God: “church of God” (1 Cor 1:2), “churches of Christ” (Rom 16:16), “The body of Christ” (Eph 4:12), “the church of the living God” (1 Tim 3:15). All of these are Scriptural names for His church.

Second, because all authority is with the Lord Jesus, the church operates off of His authority alone (Col 3:17). The church practices Scriptural worship given to us in the New Covenant, which the Lord seeks (John 4:23-24), the church is organized according to the Bible with qualified leaders (1 Tim 3; Titus 1; 1 Pet 5), and the church teaches the one doctrine given to us in His word (Gal 1:6-7; Phil 3:16). This doctrine teaches us the correct way to be saved after someone hears the gospel (Rom 10:17), believes in Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16), repents of their sins (Luke 13:3), confesses their faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 10:9-10), and is baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). This one truth in God’s word is the message of His church (Matt 28:19-20).

Third, this body (Eph 1:22-23), which is located all over the world, is Christ’s one church (Eph 4:4). Everyone is welcome to be added into this body (Acts 2:47, 11:18) of believers through the baptism into Jesus Christ (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27-29). Being that there is only one church that belongs to Jesus Christ, this is also why the church is not a denomination.

Denominationalism represents a move away from the church/sect model which promoted the view that one movement contained the doctrinal truth and others were merely breakaway heresies. Christian denominations accept their differences and acknowledge their unity, striving towards an ecumenical relationship with each other.¹

This is not the way of the Lord’s church being we hold to the fact there is only one doctrinal truth (Gal 1:6-9; Eph 4:4) and that the church does not accept or have fellowship with other doctrines (Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 6:14-15; Eph 5:11; 2 John 9-11).

I encourage everyone as they read this article they do so with an open Bible and look to each reference given within this article. We are to speak with the word God has given us (1 Pet 4:11). Jesus Christ invested His blood into His church (Acts 20:28), and those who are being saved are those in His church. “... And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47 NKJV). Study to show yourself approved (2 Tim 2:15).

¹ Ron Geaves, “Denominations,” in *Continuum Glossary of Religious Terms* (London; New York: Continuum, 2002), 94–95.