

THE ESSENCE OF THE WORD "CHURCH"

PRECEPT

Matthew 16:16-18

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

PROMISE

The church is not a building, nor a place we go to every Sunday. The church is not a refuge where we go when we separate ourselves from the world, praying and expecting that God will cleanse us from our sins, guilt, and shame, to at least compensate our bad works with some good works. The truth is that we are the church. You are the church. If Jesus is the Lord and Saviour of your life, you are part of the church. It's not a religion, a denomination, not a place, not a building, but the people who put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ekklesia (The community of Jesus followers). Means "an assembly," "a gathering" or "congregation." At the launching of the church (gathering of Jesus' followers), more than 3,000 people were committed. As the church progressed, persecution arose, but that did not shatter the assembly of God's people. The church continues to grow and is making an impact on families and communities. The word "church" appeared for 1st time in the Bible when Jesus told Peter, I will build My church. Jesus said, in Matthew 16:18, "I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church (ekklesia), and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." Ekklesia refers to the gathering of people but not a place, so they began to use another Greek word - Kuriakon (The Lord's house or temple). Means "the Lord's house"— a place of worship or a building dedicated to God. It emphasizes a physical structure or a sacred space. As Christianity spread outside the Greek-speaking countries, there was another change of the name. During the Middle Ages, there was a strong Germanic Influence and in Germany, they used the word Kirche (The Lord's house or temple), still means "the Lord's house" - a place of worship or a building dedicated to God. English speakers chose the word "Kirche" and eventually adopted that word which became the word "Church."

Church (A building used for Christian worship) So the word church we are using today is not the actual translation from the original Greek word Ekklesia, but a derivative from the German word Kirche, which means the Lord's house or temple. The word "Church" today often conveys a building-centric view, whereas the biblical concept of Ekklesia is people-centric. The original intent of Jesus was to establish a community of believers, not just a place to gather. The Ekklesia of Jesus, the community of Jesus' followers, the church of Jesus, is not a building. It's not a place, it's not a location, it is the people. The people of God who are called for a specific purpose. The people of God who are working together, accomplishing together for a greater cause; that is the church.

PRACTICE

1. **Church.** How is your commitment to the Church? Are you giving? Caring? Serving?

2. **Our commitment.** Is there anything that's hindering/ stopping you from committing? And how can we encourage and pray for you regarding this?

PRAYER

I. Life Worship

- May their talents glorify God and inspire others to draw near to Him.

II. Life Link

- Pray that our ushers will serve our brethren filled with the Holy Spirit.

III. Life Kids

- Pray for more dedicated volunteers and for our children to encounter God.

IV. Life Sports

- Thank God for a healthy body, abilities, and the gift of sports.

V. Community

- Pray for safety and may His presence and love be felt in our families & communities.

VI. Disciples

- Pray that God may give courage to churches to fulfil the Great Commission.

VII. Church

- May each of us extend His love to our family & communities.