

DAVID'S MEN

SEEKING THE HEART OF GOD



The Local Church

Church. Just reading this word usually produces an emotional, intellectual, and/or physical response. For some, this word brings warm memories of fellowship and spiritual growth. For others, it brings feelings of anger and pain. Regardless of our past, we must understand the local church is God's Plan A for spiritual community, fellowship, evangelism, and worship. The word *church* is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia* which is defined as "an assembly" or "called out ones" and focuses on the people gathering, not the physical space where they gather.

As believers, we are all part of the universal Church Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12:13 - "*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.*" As a member of this body, each of us is called to be part of a *local* church. Many of Paul's New Testament letters were written to members of *local* churches in Galatia, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and Rome. John mentions local congregations in the first few chapters of Revelation as he calls out churches in Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. In each case the author references specific bodies of believers confined to a single geographical area; ie., local churches.

While church attendance does not make you a Christian, choosing to not be involved is not an acceptable option for those who belong to the Body of Christ. In recent decades the church has seemingly lost some of its importance in our culture—even with professing Christians. This comes as little surprise in a society busier than ever and less reliant on community. After all, it is much easier to stream church from home or listen to a biblical podcast in the car than attend church each week. However, as members of a local church, it is important we utilize our spiritual gifts to support the body of believers. God has gifted us for the "common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

So, what does it mean to be involved with a local body of believers? In Acts 2:42 - 47, Luke describes the early local church and their activities: "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers....And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*" Find a local body of believers who are actively pursuing God in this way and join with them. Fellowship together. Serve together. Meet together. Eat together. Worship together. Do life together while ultimately expanding the Kingdom of God.

When we join a local church, we must remember it is under Jesus' authority (Ephesians 1:22 - 23). We are often quick to criticize the Bride of Christ due to our personal preferences (e.g., worship style, bible translation, children's programming), but we must not let our opinions on such issues hinder the primary message of the Gospel. As we focus this month on our individual roles within the local church it is important that we first understand God created the church so that He may be glorified and we may be sanctified. With this purpose in mind, let us be contributors and not just consumers of the local church...an army, not just an audience!

Imagine a local church whose men are fired up about what God is actively doing in their lives. Where the men come early to serve and volunteer, teach adults and children, generously give their money and time, worship passionately and authentically, and are eager to tell others about the Gospel. These thoughts should excite us, as we have an opportunity to be part of and contribute to such a local gathering of Christ-followers. Such a church is a movement impacting families, communities, and the world!

Current Month Assignments

- Read [Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream](#) by David Platt, and prepare a book summary to share with the group.
- Complete the [PLACE](#) assessment included in this month's materials. If you've previously done this, compare these results with past results to check for alignment. At this month's DM meeting, be prepared to:
 - Share your results from this assessment.
 - Share how you are using your gift(s) to serve in your church. If you currently aren't using your gift(s), schedule an appointment with a church staff member to discuss opportunities to use them. Ask a DM in your group to hold you accountable for scheduling and following through.
- Memorize this month's verses. Review verses from previous months to ensure they are deeply rooted.
- Man-date: As usual, this would be a great opportunity to practice saying your verses.

Resources:

- [Why Every Christian Should Belong to a Local Church \(a 3-minute video from Pastor Matt Chandler of The Village Church\)](#)
- [What is the Church? \(an article by Robert Velarde\)](#)
- [What is the "Church?" \(a brief primer on the universal church and local churches by Justin Taylor\)](#)
- [Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts assessment \(follows this month's memory verses\)](#)

Memory Verses

Christian Community

Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Bear Fruit

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 6:9-10 - And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Matthew 5:16 - In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.