

The Anatomy of a Church (39)

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[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 11/30/14)

Fundamental Priorities of a Good Church

A. The Description of the Church, [1 Timothy 3:14-16](#)

[1 Timothy 3:14-16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴ I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;

¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

¹⁶ By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

2. [\(1 Timothy 3:15\) Church](#): this verse gives a great description of the church, a description that spells out three great pictures of the church.

[1 Timothy 3:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

1. The church is “the household [*oikō*] of God.” This does not refer to the building of the church, but to the household of the church, to the people of the church. The church is a body of people who have committed themselves to form a family of people, a family centered around God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church is a *family of people*...

- who believe in God and in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- who have committed their lives to live for Christ.
- who have based their lives upon the promise of eternal salvation promised by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- who have committed themselves to live as a family with all other believers.

Simply stated, the church is a body of people who have committed their lives to live as the family of God. God is the Father; Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father; but we, the followers of God, are the adopted children of God. Every person who truly follows God is a true member of the church, that is, of the family of God ([John 1:12](#); [2 Cor. 6:17-18](#); [Galatians 4:4-6](#)).

John 1:12 (NASB)

¹²“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name.”

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷“Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.”

¹⁸“And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty.”

Galatians 4:4-6 (NASB)

⁴“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

⁶Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

The point is this:

⇒ How should we behave toward our Father?

⇒ How should we behave toward our brothers and sisters?

The answer is found within the family relationship.

- a. The children of a family are to love, obey, and learn from the Father.

Matthew 12:50 (NASB)

⁵⁰“For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

Matthew 22:37-39 (NASB)

³⁷And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’

³⁸“This is the great and foremost commandment.

³⁹The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”

John 7:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself.”

John 14:21 (NASB)

²¹“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

John 14:23 (NASB)

²³“Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”

2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

1 Samuel 15:22 (NASB)

²² “Samuel said, “Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams.”

b. The children of a family are to love and help each other.

Matthew 22:39 (NASB)

³⁹ “The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”

John 13:34-35 (NASB)

³⁴ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

³⁵ By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 15:12 (NASB)

¹² “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”

1 Peter 1:22 (NASB)

²² “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.”

Acts 20:35 (NASB)

³⁵ “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Romans 15:1 (NASB)

¹ “Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.”

Galatians 6:2 (NASB)

² Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Hebrews 10:24 (NASB)

²⁴ “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.”

Hebrews 13:3 (NASB)

³ “Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, *and* those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.”

2. The church is “the church of the living God.” The word “church” (*ekklēsia*) means “an assembly, a gathering, a company of people who have been called out by God.” But **note:** God is the living God; He is not some dead god. He is not some idol or figment of

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man's imagination. He is the living God who is actually alive and is vitally concerned with how men behave and conduct themselves. This means a most significant thing.

God calls people to His church. He calls them to join His assembly, His gathering, His Company of people. But it is up to people whether or not they come to His church. He is the living God; therefore, He actually speaks to the human heart and calls people to follow Him and to live for Him. There are times when every person feels and senses the call of God within his heart to come and join His Company of people. But the decision is up to the person. God loves the person; therefore, He will not force the person to come to Him.

[1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹“For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

¹⁰and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.*”

[Hebrews 10:30-31 \(NASB\)](#)

³⁰“For we know Him who said, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.” And again, “THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.”

³¹It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

3. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. The church *supports* the truth just as pillars and ground support a building. The church props and supports the truth, holds together and binds the truth. **William Barclay** points out that Paul could also be thinking of the meaning of *display* ([The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, p.102](#)). Pillars, whether short and small or towering and large, always appear to have an air of stateliness that attracts attention. Therefore, the church is the pillar, the display, the demonstration of the truth that attracts people to Jesus Christ.

The church holds the truth up before a world that misbehaves and dies, yet does not have to die. The church—the family and company of God—is God's instrument upon earth to proclaim the truth to the world. What truth? The glorious truth of the Incarnation—that God has loved the world and has demonstrated His love by sending His Son to save the world ([cp. 1 Timothy 3:16](#)). This is the glorious truth that the church supports and holds ever so highly before the world.

Thought 1. A piercing question is this: How many within the church are really supporting the truth before the world? How many are really holding up the truth by behaving and conducting themselves as they should? How many are holding up the truth by proclaiming it as they should?

[Matthew 7:24-27 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the

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rock.

²⁶ Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

²⁷ The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

1 Corinthians 3:11 (NASB)

¹¹ “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Ephesians 1:20-22 (NASB)

²⁰ “Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church.”

1 Timothy 6:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ “Storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed [eternal life].”

2 Timothy 2:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ “Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.”

1 Peter 2:4-5 (NASB)

⁴ “And coming to Him [Christ] as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,

⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”