

**Key Point:** God has made His Church the pillar and support of truth (1 Timothy 3:15). When we look at the Church we should see the character of God in the Church. If a person does not understand God's purpose for the Church, they may misunderstand their role in the Church. Therefore, we must learn these things so that we may honor God in our church.

### I. What is the Church?

- A. **Universal** – the sum total of all who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior which is also called the Body of Christ; men and women who are called out of the world and united with God to be a part of His family and be with Him forever (1 Corinthians 12:27, 1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 4:4-6).
- B. **Local** – a Body of Believers in Jesus Christ who form an organized assembly with a governing authority to oversee and facilitate their collective action of demonstrating and carrying out God's will accordingly (1 Timothy 3:14-16, Colossians 1:2, Ephesians 1:1).

### II. What is the function of the local Church?

- A. The church is to facilitate **Membership** – to organize and develop fellowship with fellow Christians within the local assembly for nurture, support, connection, care and inspiration to serve others accordingly (Acts 2:42-43, Hebrews 10:23-25).
- B. The church is to facilitate **Maturity** – to instruct believers in the Scripture within the local assembly so that they may function as God intended, resulting in being mature Christians in all aspects of life (Colossians 1:28-29, Ephesians 4:11-17).
- C. The church is to facilitate **Magnification** – to promote an atmosphere for and guide individuals within the assembly into the practice of worshiping God in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24, Philippians 3:1-3).
- D. The church is to facilitate **Ministry** – to guide individuals within the assembly into bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2) and meeting one another's needs within the local assembly (Titus 3:14).

- E. The church is to facilitate **Missions** – to guide individuals within the assembly into evangelizing those who need to be saved within the local assembly and abroad (2 Corinthians 5:20, Matthew 28:18-20).

**III. What should the Church display which demonstrates the church is functioning properly?**

- A. The Church should display **unity** – functioning in harmony with one another according to each one's God-given roles and responsibilities according to God's order within the local assembly (1 Corinthians 1:9-10, Philippians 1:27-2:11).
- B. The Church should display **love** – seeking the highest good of one another unconditionally within the local assembly (John 13:33-34, 1 Corinthians 13:1-7).
- C. The Church should display **holiness** – separation from the practice and promotion of evil to be devoted to the lifestyle commanded by God and to service for God within the local assembly (1 Peter 1:14-16).
- D. The Church should display **truth** – to demonstrate and promote what is morally and ethically sound according to the character of God and His Word within the local assembly (1 Timothy 3:14-16).
- E. The Church should display **spiritually mature people** – people who reflect the character of Jesus Christ and faith in Jesus Christ. This should result in believers connecting with each other through relationships to help each other grow up and function as commanded by God in all aspects of life as they reach out to unbelievers to guide them into salvation and the local church assembly accordingly (Ephesians 4:11-16, Matthew 28:18-20).