

# Understanding The Church | Discussion Guide - Acts 2:42-47

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Adapted from PursueGod.org and PursueGodKids.org

## [Video](#)

The church is a group of people called out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, in Christ. There is a communal identity all Christians share in this new, counter-cultural community. Thus the church has an important role to play in our growing relationship with Christ.

## We Need the Church

Many Christians minimize the importance of the church. But as you read the New Testament, it is impossible to separate our vertical commitment to God from a horizontal commitment to body of Christ ([Acts 2:42](#)). We cannot succeed in the Christian life without the help, encouragement, and support of God's people. In the Lord's Prayer ([Matthew 6:9-13](#)) Jesus taught us to pray "OUR Father" and "forgive us OUR sins". It's not just an individual prayer, because as followers of Jesus we are part of a community.

In fact, if we really love God it will be reflected in love for church, because we will love what he loves ([1 John 4:20-21](#)). [Revelation 19:7](#) pictures the church as Jesus' bride. How can we love Jesus but not like his wife?

[\[Related: I'm a Christian... But Do I Need Church?\]](#)

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## The Main Ingredient Is Love

Love is essential in any kind of community, but especially so in the church. The church is a diverse body ([1 Corinthians 12:12-27](#)) encompassing people with many different gifts and personalities. While we strive for unity in Christ, unity is not uniformity. All the various parts of this body are important. We need people who aren't just like us. The diversity of the church helps us grow mature, because we all benefit from the gifts and input of people who have different aptitudes, perspectives, and personalities than we have ([Galatians 6:1-2](#); [Ecclesiastes 4:9-10](#)).

It takes intentional love to dwell together in community with others who may be so different from us ([Romans 12:9-18](#)).

**Ephesians 4:2-3** Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

## The Church's Goal

Ultimately the unity of the church is toward a common goal. The harmony of God's people is motivated by our calling to advance the good news of salvation. Jesus called us to make disciples ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)), and this requires us to work together. Too often the church is fighting among itself instead of mobilizing to reach people far from God ([1 Corinthians 1:10-12](#)). People can see our disunity and will disregard our message. It takes the church working together to achieve this divine purpose.

[\[Related: How to Win at Church\]](#)

[\[Related: How Do I Choose a Church?\]](#)

As you grow in your Christian faith, don't write off the church. Don't assume that you can have the vertical – a relationship with God – without the horizontal – a relationship with other Christians. That's not what God designed as his best for you. You will benefit from being connected with Jesus' church.

### Discussion:

- Did anything stand out in your reading today that you could share with someone else?
- What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you?
- How has your understanding of the church changed over time?
- What are some reasons Christians distance themselves from the church? Are these reasons valid? Why or why not?
- Read [1 Corinthians 12:12-13](#). How is the church like a living body? How do people become members of that body?
- Read [1 Corinthians 12:14-21](#). How does this passage describe the relationship between the parts of the body? How does this affect your attitude toward others in the church?
- Read [Philippians 2:1-5](#). How does unity happen? Give some examples of when you have seen the qualities in this passage put into practice.
- Read [Titus 3:10](#). What does it mean for people to cause divisions in the church? Can you give an example? Why is the warning against this so strong?
- Read [Acts 2:42](#) and discuss the different things the early church did when they met together. How much does your church reflect that picture? Explain.
- Write a personal action step based on this conversation. (*What will you do about it?*)