

### **What is the Purpose of the Church?** *and its related question, "Why Should I Go to Church?"*

**Intro:** It wasn't so long ago that a survey was done across the North American church that asked church members, "What is the purpose of the church?" According to the survey, over 80% of those who responded said that the church existed to meet their spiritual needs and the needs of their family. On the other hand, G.K. Chesterton wrote the oft' quoted statement that "the church is the only organization in the world that exists for those who are not in it." Before Rick Warren became the best-selling author of *Purpose Driven Life*, he wrote *The Purpose Driven Church*. This book has become standard fare for virtually all pastors and church leaders. In it he identifies five purposes of the church: Worship, Evangelism, Fellowship, Discipleship, and Service. To discover the purpose of the church for ourselves, it is perhaps best to look at two things: What instructions did Jesus give to his disciples that were applicable to the church? and How did the early church put into practice those instructions? As you search the Scriptures this week you will have the opportunity to see whether or not you agree with Warren – and to discover how you can articulate an answer to the question that so often comes up, "Why bother going to church?"

**What the Bible Teaches:** Break into Groups of Four, read the following Bible verses, and discuss the questions. You may want to jot down notes and thoughts on the back of this page.

**Warren suggests that all of the five purposes that he identifies can be found in Acts 2:42-47. Read the passage and see if you agree.**

**It is clear that involvement in the church was more than a weekly worship service. Examine each Scripture to see how the church impacted participant's daily lives.**

Begin by reviewing Acts 2:42-47; Acts 4:32-34; 1 Timothy 5:16; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-5

**Examine each Scripture passage and consider what it teaches about the purposes of the church.**

Luke 10:1-9; Matthew 16:18-19; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Romans 15:25-26; Ephesians 4:11-12;  
Matthew 28:19-20

**What I Believe:** Take ten minutes for silent reflection and thought. Ask yourself what you believe about the purpose of the church and why a believer should be involved in a church. Use the back of this page to formulate a response to the question:

**“What is the purpose of the church and why be a part of a church?”**

Write your final response here: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Articulations:** Pair up with one other person and share your response with one another. Take five minutes each. Try to *not* look at your written statement; instead, try to tell your beliefs from your heart. This will prepare you to share whenever you are asked about what you believe.

**Therefore:** Jesus said His followers should Go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). One of the first steps in making disciples is being ready and able to share the reason for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15), in other words, knowing what we believe, why, and then being able to share it. Sharing your faith is important. This week, find someone—it can be *anyone*—and articulate your belief about this issue. If you have an unchurched/unreached friend whom you can share with, all the better (you can always say you have a homework assignment from church and you'd like to share it with them). Be ready to talk about your experience next week over the meal at your House Church.