

What is the Church Supposed to Look Like?

Intro: The structure of the church has shifted and changed dramatically over the past millennia. Once upon a time there were house churches. Then there were basilicas and chapels. Then cathedrals. Next came preaching halls and finally what we typically call church buildings. Today you can find churches meeting in homes, dedicated church buildings, rented schools, store fronts, malls, and even in pizza parlors! But what is the church *supposed* to look like? Is there a "biblical" structure? Or can we all just decide what works for us best? Or have we been traditional-ized into believing something about "church" that isn't really biblical? This week you'll take a look at what the Bible teaches about the New Testament Church. And as you do, take some time to compare what you read about that biblical model with the model of church you see today. When you're finished, you will be able to articulate what you believe the Scriptures teach about what the church is supposed to look like.

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.

What did the early Christians "do" at church?

Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Acts 6:1-4; Acts 13:1-3

Who was "in charge" of the early church's *worship* services?

1 Corinthians 14:26; 1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 4:11-13

Compare the Old Testament form of worship differ with the New Testament form of worship – what were the roles of the worship leaders and what were the roles of the participants?

2 Chronicles 29:20-35; Leviticus 8:1-5, 9:22-24

The previous answers beg the question, which form of worship is generally reflected in the North American church?

What I Believe: Take ten minutes for silent reflection and thought. Ask yourself what you believe about what the church is supposed to look like. Use the back of this page to formulate a response to the question:

“What is the Church Supposed to Look Like?”

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.