

***Gathering in***

# Church = People of God

**1. Eternal purpose of God**

**2. Work of God**

- Deliverance
- Relationship
- Inheritance
- Together

**3. Glory of God**

# Working it out!

- So how does this work out?
- In the local company of God's people
- The great expanse of believers we have thought of in the presence of God is earthed in this world
- Of 115 references to "church" in NT 110 are to a local gathering of people

# Working it out!

- Greatest number are in the letters of Paul – 62
- Singular when one church is in view
- Plural when more than one church in view
- Also uses the phrase “every church” when referring to more than one – 1 Corinthians 4:17

# Local Church = People of God

- Make up is “regenerate” – those who have believed in Jesus
- Those who believe local church is a mixed company of believers and unbelievers
- Parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13

# Local Church = People of God

## Explanation

- The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. **The field is the world**, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

# Local Church = People of God

- The letters are directed to the church in... – the people of God in...

“To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

- They are not small bits of the church each is a fully functioning church

# Local Church = People of God

- The issue of mobility in today's world
- People can move to something more attractive
- The effect of losing local witness



**What does it mean...**

to live in this world as his people?

# The world we live in

## Individualistic Society

- Free agents who's one purpose in life is to maximise happiness
- Every attachment is negotiable
- To maximise my life, liberty and pursuit of happiness
- Personal advantage – power of veto
- Life style enclaves

# The world we live in

- **Consumerism**
- Negotiating the best choice
- So with church
  - Come see what they like – music, preaching, other people, what has it to offer
- Move on when a better choice comes up

# The world we live in

## Fear of commitment

- No commitment must be too binding
- Church merry go round

# The world we live in

## Scepticism

- People are wary of doctrine or dogmatism
- To allow the choice we crave – the destiny we seek
- we need to hold loose to dogma
- if it works fine, if not – we do not want to be burdened

# Being part of a local church

...the local company of believers

# Family – we belong together

**The household of God – Hebrews 2:11 Ephesians 2:19; 3:15**

**Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters**

- These are not strangers around me they are my brothers and sisters

**Identification with the people of God -- membership**

# Family – we belong together

- The NT knows of no unattached believers
- No room for groups and cliques
- All stand on the same ground



# Commitment

## 1. To Christ

### 1.1. Path of self sacrifice – denying my choices for him

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

Matthew 16:24

# Commitment

## 1. To Christ

### 1.2. Follow me

“...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many...”

Matthew 20:28

# Commitment

## 1. To Christ

### Example

“And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will.” 2 Corinthians 8:5

# Commitment

## 2. To the Scriptures

- The scriptures are to be central in all we believe and all we do

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching...” –  
Acts 2:42

- “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.” – 1 Timothy 4:14

# Commitment

## 2. To the Scriptures

- In our gatherings
  - How we organise
  - What activities we engage in
  - How we conduct services
  - What we sing

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.1. Command of Christ to love – John 13:34

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.1. Command of Christ to love

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” -- 1 John 3:16

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.1. Command of Christ to love

“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” -- John 3:17ff



# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.1. Command of Christ to love -- example

Acts of the Apostles:

- the care of widows, all things common, the collection for the saints in Jerusalem...

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.2. The body of Christ – 1 Corinthians 12-14

- This refers to the local church in Corinth -- use of the word “you” in 12:27

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.2. The body of Christ – 1 Corinthians 12-14

- **Chosen – verse 18**

*“But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.”*

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.2. The body of Christ – 1 Corinthians 12-14

- **Unity – verse 12-13**

*“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; **and though all its parts are many, they form one body.** So it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”*

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.2. The body of Christ – 1 Corinthians 12-14

- **Diversity – verse 14-20**

*“If they were all one part, where would the body be?  
As it is, there are many parts, but one body.”*

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.2. The body of Christ – 1 Corinthians 12-14

- Dependence – verse 21ff

*“The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!”  
And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need  
you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that  
seem to be weaker are indispensable...”*

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.2. The body of Christ – 1 Corinthians 12-14

- **Chosen** – the issue of walking away when things do not suit/like/fed up
- **Unity** – the need to see that unity is maintained
- **Diversity** – the end of competition
- **Dependence** – we need on another

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.3. Our view of position

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

“...whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”



# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.3. Our view of position

“Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”

“... whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

### 3.3. Our speech

There is nothing more destructive of good relations in the church than the tongue

“The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.” James 3:6

- Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold
- Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
- Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God

# Commitment

## 3. To one another

- help one another
- Encourage one another
- Serve one another
- Teach one another
- Admonish one another
- Bear with one another in love
- Be kind and compassionate to one another

- Forgive one another
- Submit to one another
- Speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs
- Love one another deeply
- Live in harmony with one another

and together share in the glory of the new heavens and new earth!

# Local Church

## Commitment to:

- **Christ**
- **Scriptures**
- **One another**