**ECCLESIOLOGY- Study of the Church**

**INTRODUCTION**  
**what is church?** Many people today understand the church to be a building. This is not the biblical understanding of the church. The root meaning of “church” is not that of a building, but of people, this includes everyone by faith and obedience to the message of Jesus.

“Church” is the translation of the Greek word “Ekklesia/ecclesia” is used in the New Testament to identify **the community** (assembly/congregation/meeting), **of believers in Christ Jesus.** Combination of this two words “ecclesia” and “logy” meaning - study, therefore refers to Ecclesiology (study of the church). Ecclesiology is crucial to understanding God's purpose for believers; it exposes us to God’s plan of salvation. Some important aspects of Ecclesiology will be considered.

**DEFINATION:** The word “Church” is an English word, and “Kuriakos” is a word in German and European Latin language meaning “Belonging to the Lord” or” The Lord’s “.

**TIME OF INCEPTION OF THE CHURCH**

It is believed that time of the inception of the Church can be traced to as far as the patriarchal period – (Mosiac period), a second view is that the Church had its beginning in the New Testament on the day of Pentecost (Mt. 16:17-18, Acts 2.)

In the New Testament context, the word is employed in four senses:

1. It represents the body of Christ worldwide, over which the Lord functions as head (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:15)
2. The expression can refer to God’s people in a given region (Acts 9:31, ASV, ESV).
3. Frequently, it depicted a local congregation of Christians (1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 1:11).
4. I could also signify a group of the Lord’s people assembled for worship (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

**Basically, there are two sides of a Church i.e.**

1. The visible church is the registered members that meet in worship (institutional body on earth which preaches the gospel and administer the sacraments).
2. The invisible Church is one that is divine (mysterious) in nature, of the saved (the elect who are known only to God in contrast to the visible Church, those who are saved).

**What is the plan and purpose of the church?** According to Scripture, the purposes / activities of the church should be:

1. Edification/teaching Biblical doctrine, equipping the saint-correcting, rebuking (Heb. 10:25)
2. Providing a place of fellowship for believers,
3. Observing the Lord’s Supper,
4. Praying,
5. Evangelism; (propagation of God’s kingdom; preaching) Mt 28:18-20.
6. Good works; that which glorify God (1Peter 2:12, 0Matthew 5:14-16)
7. Social concern (concern for one another)
8. Praising/worshipping God

**BAPTISM**

**What is the importance of Christian baptism?** According to the Bible, Christian baptism is simply a step of obedience, a public proclamation of one’s faith in Christ alone for salvation. It is an act of obedience and faith—evidence that salvation is a reality in a person’s life.

**There are different types of baptism;** infant baptism, water baptism: sprinkling and immersion.

**What is the importance of the Lord's Supper / Christian Communion?** A study of the Lord’s Supper is a soul-stirring experience because of the depth of meaning that it portrays. It is an “acted out sermon,” remembering our Lord’s death and resurrection, and looking to the future for His return in glory.

**Three views of communion**

1. The Symbolic view (this view is held mostly by Evangelicals which includes; Baptists, Reformed, Presbyterians, and other independent churches). It is a view that the elements, bread and wine presented in communion are symbolic of the body and blood of Jesus- Jn. 19:30, Lk. 22:19.
2. Consubstantiation (mostly held by Lutherans). It is a view proposed by Marthin Lurther. This view states that the bread and wine do not change into actual body of Christ as Catholics held, rather, Christ body and blood are present “in, with, and under” the elements.
3. Transubstantiation view- (held mostly by the Catholics Church, some Orthodox and Anglicans). This view is seriously taken by the Catholics, that the bread and the wine presented at communion become the literal body and blood of Jesus after a priest pray/consecrates them.

**MARKS/IMAGES OF THE CHURCH**

This entails what the life of the body of Christ (believers) ought to portray, being salt of the earth, light of the world, branches of the vine, the elect, the bride of Christ, the ambassadors, the chosen race, the holy temple, the royal priesthood, new creation, fighters of Satan, sanctified and saved, friends of God, household of God, members of Christ etc.

**CHRIST CHURCH**

The following are proves authenticating Christ church:

1. Christ holds the key to the church (Mt. 16:18-19)
2. Christ is the head of the church (Eph.3:6, 5:23, Col.1:18)
3. Christ sacrifice for the church’s sake (precious blood) Mt. 16:18, 18:17, Acts 20:28, Eph. 5:24, Col. 1:24.

**CONCLUSION**

The Church is the community of all true believers for all time. The Church is to be made of all those who are truly saved. Paul says, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 2:25). Here the term "the church" is used to apply to all those whom Christ died to redeem, all those who are saved by the death of Christ. But that must include all true believers for all time, both believers in the New Testament age and believers in the Old Testament age as well.

**Reference**

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