

## 2 The Purpose of the Local Church

Today we will talk about the purpose of the local church.

We will return to this subject when we look at the 10 images of the local church in Scripture.

These images give us a clear idea of what the church is and what it is called to do:

Its mission, its message, its methods.

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### Mission of the Church

Before returning to the Father, Jesus told His disciples what they should do to continue His work:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:18–20)

In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed His disciples to:

- Make disciples of all nations
- Teach them to observe all that He had commanded

But the disciples were to wait in Jerusalem, because Jesus told them that in order to accomplish this mission they would be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, before sending us, makes us capable of undertaking the mission.

“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.”

(Acts 1:4)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

(Acts 1:8–9)

From the Ascension of Jesus to Pentecost, 10 days passed. The Ascension took place 40 days after Passover, and Pentecost 50 days after Passover. This period was a time of preparation for the apostles before their mission and encounter with the Holy Spirit.

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### Disciples

To make disciples means to teach and exhort others to follow a master and his teachings, as commanded by Jesus Christ. He asked His followers to baptize and to teach obedience to His commandments, spreading the Gospel to all people.

The word *disciple* comes from the Latin *discipulus* (“student, follower”), from *discere* (“to learn”).

How do we make disciples? By baptizing and teaching them all that Jesus commanded.

Jesus did not give them a fixed method, only the command:

- Go and make disciples
- Communicate the Gospel through testimony and preaching
- Teach others to pray, study, and understand God’s will

This is done both through words and through the example of one’s life.

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Looking at the book of Acts, we see God’s strategy unfold:

- Through preaching and testimony, people came to faith in Christ.
- Communities of believers (churches) were established to consolidate, teach, disciple, and multiply.

Thus, the Great Commission is carried out through the establishment of local churches.

The local church is God's strategy to evangelize and disciple the world.

The church is a people called out of the world to worship God (holiness) and sent back into the world to witness and serve (apostolic).

Jesus Himself came into our world, became one of us, lived among ordinary people, welcomed everyone, identified with our problems, sufferings, and sins—yet without compromising His holiness or identity.

Now He sends us into the world as He was sent.

“As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.”

(John 17:18)

“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

(John 20:21)

The local church must enter the world of others as Jesus entered ours—understanding their thoughts, feelings, and sufferings—yet without compromising Christian integrity.

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### Message of the Church

The Gospel.

The Gospel (“good news”) is the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

At its center is the message of the cross: salvation, healing, deliverance, and redemption through Christ's work.

Paul wrote:

“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

(1 Corinthians 1:17–18)

The essence of the Gospel is Jesus—His death and resurrection. Without proclaiming this, we are not truly sharing the Gospel.

The Gospel is the good news of God's love revealed in Christ crucified and risen, so that all may repent, believe, and receive Him as Savior and Lord.

But the credibility of the message depends on the integrity of the messenger. The greatest obstacle to the Gospel is not lack of programs or resources, but lack of integrity in those who proclaim it.

“No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”

(1 John 4:12)

The invisible God is revealed today through His people when they love one another.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

(John 13:35)

Without love, the mission of the church is hypocrisy.

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### The Whole Counsel of God

The church must teach the whole counsel of God, what Paul calls “sound doctrine.” This includes teaching people how to live practically in a way worthy of Christ.

“I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.”

(Acts 20:27)

Sound doctrine protects believers from false teachings. We overcome error not by focusing on error, but by amplifying the truth.

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

(John 8:32)

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## Methods of the Church

- Mission: Make disciples
- Message: The Gospel
- Methods: Must align with God's Word

The methods must be pure, sincere, transparent, and guided by the Holy Spirit. They must not rely on manipulation, pride, or human cleverness.

Paul emphasized honesty even in financial matters, ensuring accountability before both God and people (2 Corinthians 8:16–21).

The church's methods must not intentionally offend, but neither should they compromise truth. The truth must be spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15).

The ministry of the church is ultimately supernatural—the work of the Holy Spirit through God's people. Organization and strategies are useful, but they must never replace the power of God.

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.”

(1 Corinthians 2:4–5)

The local church must remain guided by the Holy Spirit, just as in the book of Acts, where the Spirit directed the apostles' steps and decisions.