

Application

As you begin to think more deeply about the church, perhaps a good place to start is to identify both the positive and negative baggage you may have from past or present experiences in the church.

What are your general feelings about the church?

What would you say is God's purpose for the church?

What constitutes a Christian church?

What elements are important?

What elements are not important?

What are some of the ways that the body of Christ has not represented Jesus well and hurt you or someone you know?

How has the church blessed, nurtured and served you?

Some Practical Steps:

Think about starting the Book of Acts in your private time with the Lord. Purpose to read your Bible every day.

Plug in to the church somewhere else besides the corporate worship service. Try an Adult Community, small group, service group or join a church ministry and serve.

Church(ology)

Church(ology)
a biblical study of God's design for the body of Christ

January 16, 2011

Why Church?

Acts 10:34-48

For Further Study

As we can clearly see from **Ephesians 1:22-23**, the church was God's idea from the beginning even though Jesus used the word "church" only three times; **Matthew 16:18** and twice in **Matthew 18:17**. It is used over 110 times from Acts to Revelation as the apostles and Paul clarify God's design for His church.

The fuller story of **Acts 10 and 11** is essential to understanding the full weight and significance of this event. Take time to read it all. As you read **Acts 10** make a short list of comparisons and contrasts. This entire chapter is about WHO is the same and WHO is different. This chapter begins a saga that takes us all the way to **Acts 15** and the monumental Jerusalem Council.

10:34-35—As you read the account, it is easy to picture Peter almost speaking these opening words to himself, under his breath, likely referring the daytime vision of the sheet of unclean animals—**Acts 10:9-16**. The point: do not underestimate the borders of God's mercy and grace through Jesus Christ. God doesn't fix in a box very well. Do not miss the important phrase "but IN EVERY NATION..." In the original Greek, the word "but" is emphatic to stress this point.

10:36-43—This is a sermon. Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius and his household and when they believed (**v.43**) the message they were saved (see **Acts 11:14**).

10:44-46—Here is where the comparisons and contrasts peak. Peter and "the circumcised believers" with him are watching Gentiles experience the very same miraculous sign they experienced at Pentecost in **Acts 2**. Immediately Peter is moved to offer them baptism (**v.47-48**) which was a stupendous thing to offer a Gentile.

Notice the marks of a God-designed church that are included here:

- Making much of God as a central focus of worship and joy (**v.46; Eph 1:12; 3:21; 2 Cor 4:15; Col 3:16ff; etc.**)
- Belief in and preaching of the true gospel of Jesus (**v.36-43; Acts 4:29ff; 2 Cor 6:7; 1 Thess 1:8; etc.**)
- Presence and working of the Holy Spirit (**v.44; 1 Cor 2:12ff; Acts 2; Acts 11:15; etc.**)
- True administration of ordinances (**v.47; 1 Cor 11; etc.**)
- The beginnings of community (**v.48; Heb 10:23ff; to also include discipline—1 Thess 5:11ff; 2 Thess 3:6ff; etc.**)
- We may add to this list *Church Leadership*, the *Great Commandment* to love and the *Great Commission* to go.