

What Makes 'a church' **A CHURCH?**

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INTRODUCTION

- A. Is it the word 'church' in a name that makes 'a church' A CHURCH? NO!** (example: The LDS use the word 'church' in their name, but their doctrine and practice is far from the Biblical teaching with respect to A CHURCH).
- B. Is it the 'heritage' or 'denomination' of a church that makes it A CHURCH? Does the word 'Baptist' or 'Methodist' in a name make 'a church' A CHURCH? NO!** (example: The true Biblical teaching with respect to A CHURCH has nothing to do with denominational affiliation any more than putting a Ferrari emblem on the hood of my Pontiac will make my car a Ferrari).
- C. Is it longevity of 'a church' that makes it A CHURCH? Does the number of anniversaries that 'a church' celebrates make it A CHURCH? NO!** (example: The Roman Catholic Church has been around for centuries, but **doctrinally** it fails the **New Testament test** of being A CHURCH).
- D. Is correctness of doctrine alone enough to make 'a church' A CHURCH in the New Testament sense of the word? NO!** Although doctrine **must be Biblical** for 'a church' to be A CHURCH, doctrine alone without **Biblical function** is **insufficient** for 'a church' to be A CHURCH! (example: A recent study of evangelical churches in the USA revealed that over 80% are in a state of decline or plateau. Many SBC churches have not baptized anyone in years! Thom Rainer of LifeWay reported that 62% of SBC churches are in rapid decline. These disturbing facts reflect problems with **unbiblical Function** rather than false doctrine).
- E. In addition to correct Biblical doctrine the essential element in the DNA of 'a church' that makes it A CHURCH is found in the FUNCTION of A CHURCH! It is what 'a church' DOES that makes it A CHURCH according to the book of Acts!**

What are the Primary FUNCTIONS of 'A CHURCH' found in the early chapters of the book of Acts?

- 1. A CHURCH boldly proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ.** (Acts 2:14-36, Acts 3:11-26, Acts 5:42)
- 2. A CHURCH is continuously devoting itself to the teaching of God's Word.** (Acts 2:42a, 5:42)
- 3. A CHURCH is a community (fellowship) of like minded Believers in Jesus devoted to one another in Him.** (Acts 2:42b, 46)
- 4. A CHURCH regularly remembers the LORD through the breaking of bread.** (Acts 2:42c)
- 5. A CHURCH continually devotes itself to prayer.** (Acts 1:14, 2:42d, 3:1)
- 6. A CHURCH continues in joyful praise & worship of God.** (Acts 2:46 & 27)
- 7. A CHURCH consistently & boldly shares its faith.** (Acts 4:13, 29, 31 & 14:3)
- 8. A CHURCH obeys God rather than men.** (Acts 5:29)
- 9. A CHURCH is a partner in starting new churches.** (Acts 13:1-3, 14:19-23)

CONCLUSION: 'a church' is A CHURCH when it consistently functions as A CHURCH according to the New Testament! The essential element found in the DNA of A CHURCH is found in its FUNCTION! The crucial question is "Does 'a church' function as A CHURCH???"