

The Church

Church is a Group

OF PEOPLE WHO



- love Jesus • love each other • worship together • belong to each other • study the Bible and pray together • live in different places all over the world • believe Jesus is the One who will save them from sin and death • spread the word about Jesus and salvation to people who don't know about it yet • organize into groups to work effectively • disagree sometimes • sing praises to God • believe the Bible is God's perfect truth • have potlucks • fight against Satan's lies • live like Jesus • learn new things about God

MEET YOUR RELATIVES

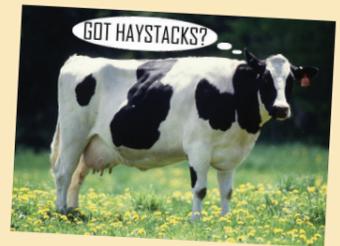
The church is God's family. That means you have a lot of relatives!

GOD = FATHER

JESUS = OLDER BROTHER

CHURCH MEMBERS = BROTHERS AND SISTERS

God wants church members to care for and help each other like a loving family. That can lead to some great potluck dinners! It also means you might have to wash the dishes and take out the trash afterward.



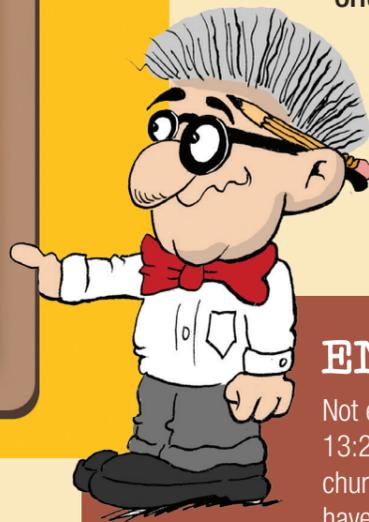
ENEMY SPIES INFILTRATE!

Not everyone in the church is truly following God (Matthew 13:24–30). Satan tries to get his followers into the church to discourage and tempt others. That's why we have to keep focused on following Jesus and His Word, not other people.



TRUE OR FALSE

- *Church is a building.*
False: We call the place where people meet to worship God a church building. But the church is God's people.
- *Church is a program.*
False: We call the program on Sabbath "church." But the church is God's people.
- *Church is one small group of people who are right about everything.*
False: The church is God's people all over the world who accept Jesus to save them from sin.
- *Church is a group of perfect people.*
False: Jesus treats us as if we're sinless when we believe in Him. But no one in the church is free from the effects of sin until the Second Coming (see FUN-da-Mental #25).
- *You join the church by signing up online and paying a yearly membership fee.*
False: When you are baptized, you become a member of the church (God's people) (Acts 2:41–47).
- *Jesus started the church.*
True: After the Israelite nation rejected Jesus as the Savior, Jesus started a group of believers who became known as the church. You and I are in that church.



YOU NEED THE CHURCH . . .

The church represents God to other people. "All nations on earth will be blessed because of you" (Genesis 12:3). The church serves the rest of the world, giving help and hope. One Christian on their own might not make much impact, but together, with God's help, we can do a lot!



. . . AND THE CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

Paul says the church is Jesus' body (1 Corinthians 11). Every part has its own special job to do. Just as you need your nose, your pancreas, and your toenails, Jesus needs every person in His church to use their different gifts and abilities in His work (see FUN-da-Mental #17).

The only job you can't have? The head! Jesus is the brains of the outfit. He calls the shots in the church.

THE NON-FAIRYTALE PRINCESS

Jesus loves His church so much that He died to save it (Ephesians 5:25). When Jesus comes back to earth, He'll take His church to be with Him forever. It's a bit like a wedding! And they'll live happily ever after.

TIME FOR A LITTLE RESPECT

When the Christian church first started, a few trusted church members were chosen as "overseers" (elders) to teach, encourage, and guide the other members (Titus 1:5–7). Some members were "servants" (deacons) who took care of the daily needs of the church (1 Timothy 3:13). Today we also choose people to be leaders in the church, and we should respect them (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13).



41,000 DIFFERENT CHRISTIAN GROUPS IN THE WORLD

Why so many? Christian denominations such as Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, and Presbyterian have different sets of beliefs. Each group emphasizes certain parts of the Bible and certain ideas about God.

But don't get confused! God still has a true church. "They obey God's commands and hold firmly to what Jesus has said" (Revelation 12:17) (see FUN-da-Mental #13).

41,000 Fact source (for reference only): <http://christianity.about.com/od/denominations/p/christiantoday.htm>
Bible texts from NIRV



MEET REGULARLY WITH YOUR LOCAL CHURCH TO

- Get encouragement
- Stay faithful
- Give and get help
- Get a feel for heaven
- Worship God with your peeps
- Learn about the Bible
- Serve your community



THE INVISIBLE CHURCH

Some of God's family members never show up at family reunions. These "invisible" church members may have never heard of Jesus, but they follow what they know about God (Romans 2:14, 15). God is bringing these people to join His organized group of believers so "there will be one flock [the church] and one shepherd [Jesus]" (John 10:16).