What is the Church of Christ?
Lesson 1
Class Goals and Purpose

Introduction to the Study
Why have we scheduled this study? And why would we ask the question – what is the Church of Christ? These are two important questions worth addressing before we embark on a 13-lesson study focused on the church.

As to the first question, this class will address concerns of the elders here at Embry Hills. We have often observed - in comments and language - a lack of understanding regarding the church; how it should function, and the role it should have in an individual believer’s life. This misunderstanding takes on many forms and is found, not just among new converts, but also in those who have been Christians most of their lives. It is sincerely hoped that this concentrated study will provide deeper insight into the picture of the church that God has provided in the Scriptures. It is the church as presented in God’s word that we are endeavoring to study; that word (Old and New Testament) being the exclusive means by which God reveals his will to men and women. You may not share that belief. We will look at that question in Lesson 4 and urge you to consider it carefully.

The question – What is the Church of Christ? – is both a question of identity and a question of unity. If you walk outside the building where the Embry Hills church worships, you will see these words attached to the wall – Church of Christ. Why that name? What does that say about who we are? At the very least, it should convey the idea that the people who work together within the walls of that building belong to Christ. A statement that our identity is that of belonging to Christ. But that’s not the way all of us use the descriptor - Church of Christ. Does it mean more? What should it mean?

This question also speaks to our unity. A church is simply an assembly of people, a group of people united behind something. But what holds us together? We will teach that we should be united behind Christ, but how? How does that work? It’s an important question, and one that will cause us to examine how Christ leads a church in the 21st Century.

Class Goals
Once we begin our study, we may agree as an entire class to set some additional goals, but we will start with these in mind:

By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ

What is the Church of Christ?
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship.

Overview of the Study
Our overall approach in our study will be as follows. In the first seven lessons we will examine the nature of the church. How is the word used in the New Testament? What exactly is a church? BY whom is it owned and ruled? How is it organized? What is expected of the individual members and what are the roles of the leaders?

The second half of our study will focus on the purpose of a local church – what is its mission; what is it to accomplish? We will organize our look at the church’s purpose around the direction of that purpose – an inward purpose designed by God to strengthen and help members become like his Son. An outward purpose of declaring God’s glory, each of us being lights to the world; and of course, an upward purpose of praising and worshipping God who has saved us and added us to the church of his Son.

Each lesson is designed to teach something important about the church, but you can see how interrelated they are. Please give yourself fully to a careful consideration and study of each one.

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Preparation Questions
1. The English word “church” is used to translate the Greek word ἐκκλησία ekklesia. We associate the word church with religion, and exclusively use it in that context. But the Greek word simply meant a group of people or an assembly and was used in different contexts. Read the following passages:
   a. Read Acts 5:11. Ekklesia is translated church here. Does it refer to people? How do you know?
   b. Read Acts 19:23-41. The word ekklesia is used in vs. 32, 39 and 41. How is it translated? To whom does it refer? Is there anything religious about the use here?
   c. Read Hebrews 12:22-29. Ekklesia is used in vs. 23. How is it translated?
2. Given ekklesia (translated church) means a group of people, an assembly – it is not a very meaningful word unless ownership or a common link is described that ties the group together. Thus, statements like I will build my church (i.e. my group of people) said by Jesus in Matthew 16:18, or Paul’s description in I Corinthians 1:2 of the recipients of the I Corinthians letter the church of God that is in Corinth (a group of God’s people) are so helpful. They identify the ownership of the group. Paul also describes in that passage what they should have in common - to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.

3. The word church is also used in both a universal and a local sense. You can already see that in I Corinthians 1:2. There was a group of Christ’s people at Corinth, but there is also a reference to a larger group of people - all those who in every place. When Jesus said he would build his church, that was not a reference to a group of people in a specific place, but a statement of those who would belong to him anywhere and for all time. But believers would work together as a church (as an assembly or group) in specific locations like Corinth. Note the passages below.

   a. Universal church
      i. Read Acts 2:47 – when someone is saved, what does God do?
      ii. Read Hebrews 12:22-29. In the heart of the passage is a reference to all the saved (the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven and righteous made perfect - vs. 23). It speaks of the kingdom established now through the new covenant. As noted above, in vs. 23 the word ekklesia is used, usually translated assembly. This is a reference to the universal church – all saved individuals, living or dead, who are part of the kingdom established by Christ.
      iii. Read Ephesians 1:20-23. Is this describing Christ’s rule over the church at Ephesus or a larger group of people? Read Ephesus 5:25-27. Same question – is this just talking about members of the church at Ephesus or a larger group?

   b. Local church
      i. Read Galatians 1:2. Was there more than one group of believers in Galatia?
      ii. I Corinthians 1:2. How are these believers described in terms of geography and ownership?
      iii. Read Romans 16:16. Is more than one church referenced? If so, what would be true of each of these groups of people? Bonus question – look for other references to churches in this chapter.
      iv. Contrast the way the letters to the Corinthians and Thessalonians are addressed (using the word church) to Ephesians 1:1, Philippians 1:1 and Colossians 1:2 (where the word is not used). Do you think these are other ways of describing a local church?

Thought Questions
1. Why are you a member of the church to which you belong? How did you come to be a member of that church?
2. Can you give a scriptural reason or basis for each of the activities of the church to which you belong? Do you think that matters or not? Explain.
Lesson 2
What is a Church?

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objectives of Today’s Class
1. Examine and contrast the description of church in the Bible to the concept of church held by many today.
2. Recognize the distinction between membership in the universal church of all believers and being the member of a local church.

Introduction and Review
Let’s review for a moment. The Greek word translated in English as church is ekklesia. Ekklesia means a group or assembly of people and is used in the New Testament to not only to designate a group of Christians (e.g. Acts 5:11) but also assemblies of other people (Acts 19:32, 39). But the key thing to note is that is always used for people.

In Lesson 1, we noted that sometimes ekklesia is used to refer to the group of all Christians – all the saved – everywhere and all time. For example, Jesus spoke of building his church (Matthew 16:18) or the picture in Hebrews 12:23 of the assembly of all the saved, dead or alive. This is the universal church, the saved whom God knows as his people (II Timothy 2:19)

But more often, ekklesia (translated church) refers to groups of Christians in a specific location. For example, “the church of God that is in Corinth” (I Corinthians 1:2). In studying “What is the Church of Christ?” most of our attention will be on the nature and purpose of these assemblies/groups of people who work together in a given location.

In this lesson we will look at the many concepts held for what is a church and contrast those views to the way the New Testament writers spoke of church. In these early lessons, what we are not covering is why the local church is so important. Later we will look at the purpose of a local church in lessons 8 to 13.

Preparation Questions
1. Read Acts 2:41-47. Who was God adding to the number in Jerusalem (vs. 47)?

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2. Read Ephesians 1:1 and 1:22-23 (the whole chapter if you have time). Based on this chapter, who is in the church over which Christ is the head (vs. 22)?

3. Read the passages listed below and answer the questions about being part of a local church:
   a. Based on Acts 9:18 and 22:15-16 (which describes the same event as Acts 9:18), was Paul saved and added by God to the church? In Acts 9:26, what did Paul attempt to do? If he had been unsuccessful, would he have no longer been a member of God’s church?
   b. What kind of man was a member of the church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:1-2)?
   c. What was Diotrephes doing to faithful brothers according to 3 John 10?
   d. What was true of some of the members at Pergamum (Revelation 2:14-15)? What was true of only a few in the church in Sardis (Revelation 3:4)?

**Different Views of Church**

There are many competing – and not necessarily incompatible - ideas about what a church is. In other words, one may believe more than one of the following is a correct idea about church.

- For some church simply means a building where people come together
- For many the church is an institution. It is an entity that stands apart from its members, much as a business corporation is a separate legal entity. The institution of the church is ruled by a hierarchy of leaders (clergy), separate from the members (laity).
- Church may be viewed as a group of churches, i.e. all denominations – Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, etc. – make up God’s church.
- We speak today of different churches, meaning different denominations. A denomination would be a group of churches that are tied together in some manner. The idea, for example, would be that the Lutheran Church is comprised of all official Lutheran churches.
- Similarly, some would say the Church of Christ is simply the composite of all the local churches of Christ.
- For many, the church is a controlling entity through which a person comes to know Christ and have access to God. Here a church would have a special or exclusive role in teaching knowledge of God, allowing access to him or providing the essential sacraments needed to please God and be saved.

If we bear in mind that ekklesia always means people, it bears considerable light on the difference between the ideas above and the New Testament picture of the church. Church would not refer to the place where Christians meet, nor could it be a separate entity from its members, much less an institution through which someone has access to God. And while it may seem practical to think of the universal church or a specific denomination as being comprised of many churches, that is not the same idea as church simply being a group of people.

**Biblical View - Membership in the Universal Church**

When the New Testament speaks of church in a universal sense, it denotes all saved people of all time in every place. God is the one who added the saved to the number of his people in Acts 2:47. Only the Lord truly knows who are his (2 Timothy 2:19) and the universal church is composed of saved people who are ruled by Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). Membership in God’s church comes with one’s salvation.

Of course, the universal church does not function as we often think of churches functioning. It is merely the collection of all saints. Local churches are visible in their activities. The question then is how one becomes a member of a congregation, a local church.
**Biblical View - Membership in a Local Church**

So, every saved person is a member of God’s church, but how does one become a member of a local church? In Acts 9, after his conversion, Paul was with the disciples (saved men and women) in Damascus. When he comes to Jerusalem, he attempts to join the disciples there (vs. 26), but the members were afraid of him. The leaders of the church, at that time the Apostles, make the decision as to Paul’s membership.

Several important things to note. Paul recognized in both Damascus and Jerusalem, the value of being with other believers. In our study, we will have much to say about this in lessons 8-10. You see leaders making decisions about those who would be part of a church – and the possibility that they would make a poor decision (excluding someone who should be welcomed). Diotrephes, as a leader in a local church was guilty of purposefully excluding believers (III John 9-10). Of course, the opposite is possible. Those who are not saved, not recognized by God as ones belonging to him, could be active members of a local church. That’s the situation in I Corinthians 5.

Belonging to a church is not a sign that you are saved. Sometimes we are sure of our relationship with God, because we belong to a church that is practicing good things, Biblical things. This is a false reason for confidence. It should also be clear that the New Testament never speaks of someone being born into the church or being baptized into a church as an infant. Nor would it be accurate to speak of being raised in a church (though what is often meant is growing up among members of that church).

**Thought Questions**

1. Do you think there are some individuals who turn to Christ in faith and repentance, are baptized for the washing away of their sins, but who don’t know why they should participate with other Christians in a local church?
2. Who should decide whether someone can join a local church? On what basis should they make that decision?
Lesson 3
What's in a Name?

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Examine different names or titles given to local groups of Christians in the New Testament
2. Recognize some benefits and dangers using the name – Church of Christ
3. Examine different labels that used to describe churches today

Introduction and Review
On the outside of the building where the Embry Hills church gathers for worship and building up one another are the words – Church of Christ. Why that name? Could – perhaps should – other names be used along with that name or replacing that name? If we use the name Church of Christ, what are the advantages or disadvantages and are we pleasing God with this choice? These are a few questions we will examine in this lesson.

The name is a way of identifying the church. Remember, the Greek word translated church simply means a body of people, an assembly of people. It was often used in a non-religious manner, though for us, church always connotes a religious group. To give meaning to an ekklesia, a group of people, there must be something that ties them together. For the church (the ekklesia of the New Testament) what ties us all together is ownership. We belong to God and to his son, Jesus Christ. In the questions below, you will see passages that have numerous references to the church and its ownership.

Preparation Questions
1. For each of the following passages note what the local church (or churches) were called:
   a. Acts 11:22
   b. Acts 13:1
   c. Acts 20:28 (cf. vs. 17)
   d. Romans 16:16
   e. I Corinthians 1:2
   f. I Corinthians 16:1, Galatians 1:2
   g. II Corinthians 1:1
   h. I Thessalonians 1:1 and II Thessalonians 1:1
   i. I Timothy 3:15
   j. Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14
   What do many of these designations have in common?
2. In the passages below, what are groups of Christians called without using the word church?
   a. Acts 11:26
   b. Ephesians 1:1
   c. Philippians 4:21-22
   d. Colossians 1:2
   e. Colossians 4:15
   f. 1 Peter 5:2

How do these designations indicate a relationship with God or Christ?

A Good Name
The group of Christians at Embry Hills generally call ourselves the Embry Hills Church of Christ. There are some helpful aspects to this name. It’s a Biblical term, but also one that defines ownership and gives an expression of what holds the group of us together. We are not just a non-descript group of people; we are ones who belong to Christ. Church of Christ is meant to be an expression of our intent to follow and please Christ in all that we do. It is also a name that indicates our location – though it should be said, in our case, it means more about where we worship than where we are individually from, as we live throughout the Atlanta area. Among us you will hear other descriptions like those in the passages above: the Embry Hills church, the family at Embry Hills, the Christians here, or just Embry Hills.

There are other Biblical names for churches that would similarly describe our common ownership and purpose, but some of those names are already used by groups whose practices are not based on Biblical teachings. There may be a connotation to a name, that while Biblical, conveys a message we do not intend to send to the rest of the community.

An advantage of using the name, Church of Christ, is that many non-members (both Christians and non-Christians) who visit our assemblies of worship find practices and activities as that they already anticipate them to be. It should not be surprising that groups of Christians in different places who have a common view of how the rule of Christ operates (Lesson 4 of this study) would worship in a similar manner. The name Church of Christ has come to be associated with such groups of Christians. But we need to be careful. Too much emphasis could be placed on this name, as if it alone would satisfy God. To some extent, we use it as an accommodation to others to help set their expectations.

Our real emphasis should be on becoming in truth what this name means - a body of people willing to follow Christ, acknowledging his kingship in ruling us as a group and in our personal lives. Members who strive to please him and are willing to examine carefully what he desires, and then submit gladly to it whenever discovered. We should ask constantly whether this is an accurate picture of the Embry Hills Church of Christ.

Misconceptions of the Church of Christ
But while there are positive aspects to the use of the name Church of Christ, there can be negative ones as well. This can’t always be controlled. Peter spoke of being insulted for the name of Christ and suffering as a Christian (1 Peter 4:14,16). Even when bearing a good name, there will be those who see it as a derisive term. Sometimes we as members cause and perpetuate misconceptions, and lead to the name Church of Christ being denounced. For example:

- We might convey the message that we are the “best” church – that we are the church that understands the most truth, that follows the Bible better than all others. We need to keep in mind the Lord knows his own. The churches in Revelation 2 and 3 were chastised for doctrinal
and attitudinal errors. An attitude of pride will undo the good of sound doctrinal practices. It is not our goal to be better than other churches, but to follow Christ more sincerely day by day.

- We may become narrow-minded or Pharisaical in our language and conduct; more concerned with the “letter of the law” instead of the spirit.

We may be unfairly described in such terms despite our best efforts not to have pride or a narrow viewpoint. In lesson 5 we will discuss how the actions of every member matter in this regard. There are other misconceptions over which we have limited influence, because these are conclusions of others, drawn fairly or not, from sources that are often unreliable. For example:

- That calling ourselves a Church of Christ means that we are a continuation of the Restoration Movement. That our goal is to follow the practices and beliefs of men who were part of this movement that started in the 1820s and 1830s. These men may have had some admirable goals, but it is not in any way the goal of this church to look to them for guidance or try to perpetuate a particular practice they favored.
- That we have a unique and wrong way of “reading” the Bible. Here the charge is that the Bible is seen as a mere rule book, or that a hermeneutic (a method of interpreting and understanding the Bible) is being used which did not even exist in the First Century. We will challenge this idea more fully in lesson 4.

What’s in a Label?
A label is a short-hand way of defining something. Labels are placed on churches – by adherents or critics – to describe them beyond their chosen name. Here are some labels often placed on churches of Christ.

- Institutional vs. Non-Institutional
- Conservative vs. Liberal
- Cooperating churches
- Anti churches
- Mainstream or Mainline churches (and within these - traditional or innovative churches)

We could spend considerable time on these labels, but time will only permit a few comments. One mistaken conclusion from these labels might be that the Church has split into one or more components. The universal church cannot be split, since it is the body of all the saved known in its entirety only by God. Of course, local churches may be characterized through labels – whether accurate or not, helpful or not. Once more, we must be careful to not lose sight of the goal of simply being a church that follows Christ and pleases him. Our goal certainly is not to ensure that we “earn” some desired label or to avoid one that we disdain.

Thought Questions
1. If you have worshipped at another church of Christ, what are some of the differences between that church and Embry Hills?
2. What misleading ideas could be derived through the use of labels placed on individual churches?
Lesson 4
The Rule of Christ

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Examine how Jesus rules his church
2. Recognize the role Scriptures play in Christ’s rule
3. Discuss how the Scriptures communicate the will of Christ

Introduction and Review
Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, he would build his church and in Ephesians 1:20-23, God is said to have seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body. If there is one thing that all religious bodies that claim to be Christian should agree on it is this – that the church is Christ’s and he is its ruler. After his resurrection, Jesus told the eleven remaining apostles (Matthew 28:16) that all authority had been given to him in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). The question is how does he rule; how does he exercise his authority. That is the focus of this class.

Preparation Questions
1. Based on the following questions, how important were the scriptures to Jesus in terms of understanding God’s will (Matthew 12:3, 5; Matthew 19:4, Matthew 22:31)?

2. What were the Apostles promised the Holy Spirit would do for them (John 14:26, 16:13)?

3. Read Hebrews 8:6-13. Note the contrast between the first covenant and the second covenant.

4. Describe the word the Apostles would take into the world (Matthew 28:19-20):

Four Essential Truths
There are many ideas about the manner in which the church should be directed, but we will only examine what the Scriptures say about that rule. There are four important concepts discussed in the New Testament that provide vital insight to how Christ rules his people.

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1. **Christ promised his apostles they would receive a message from God through the Spirit**
   The follow-up to Jesus’ claim of having all authority is this message to the apostles –
   
   > Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
   
   Remember, disciples are the saved, the people Jesus adds to his church. The Apostles would carry the message into the world to save people and instruct them how to live.

   Jesus had already told them how they would receive this message. The night before he died, Jesus promised the apostles the Father would send them the Holy Spirit who will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (John 14:26).

   Not only would the Spirit give them a clear memory of what Jesus had taught them, he goes on to say (John 16:12-13) there were other things the Spirit would reveal:
   
   > I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.
   
   This revelation they received is the means by which Jesus rules his people.

2. **The apostles claimed to have authority through this revealed message**
   The writers of the New Testament acknowledged the message they received was one emanating from God. In I Corinthians 2, Paul spoke of the hidden wisdom of God fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ. He affirmed the need to have the Spirit of God to know God’s thoughts, then says this about God’s revelation to him and to other inspired men:

   > Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

   In Ephesians 3:3-5, Paul speaks of how the mystery was made known to him by revelation, as I have written briefly.

   > When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

   Peter likewise claimed this type of divine guidance along with other inspired men:

   > And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. II Peter 1:19-21

   Because their message came from God, they expected what they taught, and what they wrote, to be followed and obeyed by the Christians and the churches they addressed. For example:

   > I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. I Timothy 3:15
• Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. II Thessalonians 2:15

• And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. II Thessalonians 3:14

• If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. I Corinthians 14:37

3. The message to those inspired men was a covenant that made the previous one obsolete

Their message was a new covenant that replaced the old. The writer of Hebrews contrasts the two covenants in Hebrews 8:6-7. 

6 But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. He quotes Jeremiah in vs. 9-12 who foretold of this new covenant before going on to say in vs. 13 13 In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Similarly, he argues the first covenant has been done away in Hebrews 10:9 in order to establish the second.

This new covenant – the new testament – took force as the will of Christ over men and women upon Christ’s death (Hebrews 9:15-17). 15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. 16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. 17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.

Therefore, the rule of Christ is now carried out through the New Testament writings and his church looks to that covenant for its direction.

4. The message is sufficient for Christ to rule at all times in all places

A question could be raised about the consistency of the message the Apostles took to the world. Did it change from church to church, perhaps depending on the unique character or culture of each church’s location? What they claimed was the same message was taught in everywhere.

• I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. I Cor. 4:17

• Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also... I Cor. 16:1

• But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God. I Cor. 11:16

• For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. I Cor. 14:33b

Beyond teaching the same message everywhere, the writers of the New Testament also stressed the completeness and finality of what they taught. For example, the Hebrew writer (Hebrews 1:1-2) spoke of the message of Christ as being given in the last days - Long ago, at many times
and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, implying there would be no other revelation thereafter. This explains the tone and surprise of Paul’s statement in Galatians 1:6-9 which denied there could be any other message or teaching:

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

How Does the Bible Reveal God’s Will?
The real starting point is to have agreed on the four concepts above. If we acknowledge Christ is exercising his will over the church through the message of the New Testament, it will negate many other approaches that Christian religious bodies use to determine their practices and worship. It means we will not look to any person or council of men to establish rules or creeds as a guide to the church, but will look to the scriptures. It certainly means we will not accept a teaching that contradicts or supplants the message of the New Testament, even under the notion that the new teaching “fits” better our modern culture.

It is sometimes pointed out that the New Testament is more than a mere rulebook for the church, and that some churches of Christ apply to the New Testament a method of reading and interpreting it that did not even exist until the 16th century. It is beyond the scope of this class to examine this assertion fully. We have another class titled Understanding the Will of God which delves more fully into the question. I would ask you in this study, as we look to the New Testament for guidance to the church, to consider an overriding principle. We are, above all else, striving to please God and serve his son, Christ Jesus. If the New Testament has the thoughts of God revealed in its words, then it conveys his will. Following that will should be our paramount concern.

As we move forward, see if the approach we take to our study is different in any material regard from how we would understand anyone’s will. Generally speaking, we look to what they specifically tell us, what they show us or what we come to see through our familiarity with them that they expect us to do even if not said explicitly. We may not always agree on what a given scripture is teaching, but when we approach it with a humble desire to see and follow God’s will, we will be blessed and enlightened.

Thought Questions
1. How did your parents teach you what they expected of you?
2. What are some practices or activities of churches that are not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament?
Lesson 5
Members of the Church – Citizens of the Kingdom

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Examine the character expected of every member of the church
2. Look honestly at the damage our sin and neglect causes to the church and its mission

Introduction and Review
If the church is an assembly, a group of people, then the goals, the attitudes, and the conduct of its individual members will have a significant impact on how God views that congregation, and on the influence for good or harm it has in the community. This is a different concern than looking at whether the church as a body is sound in its doctrinal practices, it’s a recognition that each member has an important role in whether the church effectively carries out the purpose God has for it.

This lesson then, focuses on the individual members who make up a local church. If you are such a member, ask yourself these questions:

- Why am I here? Why this church?
- What am I committed to do as a member of this church?
- How do I expect this church to affect me?

There are some wrong, or incomplete, answers that may be given to these questions. For example –

- My parents raised me in the Church of Christ
- We have always been Church of Christ
- This church is part of the right church
- I know I need to worship like this church does in order to be saved
- This church has a good influence on my children
- This is the friendliest church I have ever been a part of

This lesson alone will not expose all of the deficiencies in the answers above, but I hope the study as a whole will give you a richer, deeper understanding of what it means to be a part of a faithful and edifying congregation.
Preparation Questions

1. Read I Peter 3:8. What is every Christian expected to possess?
2. Read Ephesians 4:1-3. How are we to walk?
3. Read I Corinthians 6:6-8. What problem existed among the Corinthians? What message would that have sent to those outside the body of Christ?

The Goal for Every Member

The composition of Christ’s Church is all the saved, everywhere, for all time. Ideally the local church is made up exclusively of those who are saved, but we have looked at passages (I Corinthians 5:1-2, Revelation 2:14) that indicate there is no assurance of this. The Lord knows those who are his (II Timothy 2:19), and we will not always have an accurate view of who they are. Nevertheless, the churches of the New Testament were addressed as being composed of those who were saints and faithful. That should be the desire of every member.

But the message to those Christians was always of the need to change, to mature, to put aside their sins and to become more and more like Christ. In the passage to Timothy regarding those the Lord knows as his, it says that they are ones who depart from iniquity. It’s a constant theme of the New Testament, but two additional examples will suffice:

1. Paul challenged the Ephesians to no longer walk as the Gentiles do, saying in Ephesians 4:22-24 - put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

2. Speaking to those who have “died to sin”, Paul urged them in Romans 6:12-13 - Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

Lessons 8 through 13 of this study and especially lessons 8-10 will concentrate on how the church assists this personal effort to mature and grow like Christ, in particular we will look at Ephesians 4:11-16 where each of us is striving to no longer be a child, but instead to grow with the assistance of what the leaders of the church and every member are providing. This goal of individual growth is emphasized well beyond doctrinal purity, though both are essential.

There is a godly character expected of each of us as we work together in a church. Note the importance of the character mentioned in each of these passages:

- Humility – I Peter 5:5
- Non-Judgmental Spirit – Romans 14:10-12
- Forbearance and Forgiveness – Colossians 3:13
- Self-sacrifice – I Corinthians 10:24
- Generosity – I John 3:16-18
- Compassion and Patience – Colossians 3:12
- Submissive Spirit – Ephesians 5:21
- Love – I John 4:7-8
I Peter 3:8 speaks to all members and repeats the necessary character of all – *Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.* This is the spirit and attitude that will allow a church to accomplish the task God has given it.

**Damage Caused by Members**

Unfortunately, the New Testament is full of situations where members of a church were not what they were supposed to be. A partial list includes:

- Sexual Immorality – I Corinthians 5:1-2
- Disputes – I Corinthians 6:5-8
- Uncooperative/burdensome members – II Thessalonians 3:6-10
- Bias/Prejudice – Galatians 2:11-14, James 2:1-4
- Divisions/parties – I Corinthians 1:11-13
- Pride/Argumentative Spirit – I Timothy 6:3-5
- Love of the World – II Timothy 4:10

Think of the damage done within a church, and the harm to its influence without, when these kinds of sins and issues characterize the members of that church. It is discouraging to those who genuinely want to follow Christ. Such behavior is seen as the hypocrisy that it is, and often pushes away those who are weak or who might come to know Christ. It causes dissension and disunity that distracts the congregation from its mission. Nevertheless, those engaged in such sins are often still comfortable with the knowledge that they belong to a church that is sound in its worship and organization or wears the “right” name. Such a spirit only reinforces some of the worst stereotypes held by the lost against Christians or the Church.

We should recognize the danger and look honestly at our own spirit and conduct. When we fail to be what Christ asks of us it affects others. Being part of a sound, active and faithful church will not save us if we are unwilling to submit our own lives to Christ.

**Great Good Done by Members**

On the other hand, great good that can be accomplished when every member is committed to presenting their bodies as a sacrifice to God, avoiding conformity with the world and being transformed (Romans 12:1-2). How much more is accomplished in a place of peace and unity. How much more we are capable of being the lights of the world (Matthew 5:14-16). It’s not enough to be a church that maintains doctrinal purity, we must truly be citizens of Christ’s kingdom who live out the precepts of Christ.

**Thought Questions**

1. What message does your attendance and participation in the activities of the church send to the other members?
2. Is your conduct in the “world” consistent with your reputation within a local congregation? If not, what damage may you cause in the future?
Lesson 6
Role of Leaders – What are Elders for?

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Examine the important responsibilities given to elders
2. Note the value to a local church as a whole and to each member of having faithful and capable elders who are serious about discharging their duties.

Introduction and Review
A study of elders usually begins with, and often ends, with a review of the qualifications listed for them in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. While a worthy study, these two passages mostly explain who should serve as an elder, and don’t provide much insight to the essential work God has given to elders. In this lesson, we will note some of the qualifications, but spend most of our time examining two aspects of an elder’s work.

The first is that of leading a church as a whole; making decisions with the other elders that direct and affect an entire local church. Because shepherd or pastor is one of the names used for an elder (Ephesians 4:11), we will refer to this as Flock Shepherding. The second aspect of an elder’s work is the effort made to encourage and build-up every soul over whom they have responsibility. We can think of this as Sheep Shepherding. Both are important, but we will stress the greater importance of looking after individual souls.

Preparation Questions
1. Read Acts 11:29, Acts 20:17, 28, Ephesians 4:11, Philippians 1:1, I Timothy 3:1 List the words you see used for the leaders of the church. Are there leaders other than elders in any of these verses? Note the translation you are using.

2. Read Acts 20:35. Who did Paul stress should especially be remembered by the elders?

3. Read Hebrews 13:17. What responsibility is given to the elders? To those they watch over?

One Office – One Role
There are three words or word groups in the New Testament that are used for the position God has designed for leadership in local churches. Each group has multiple English words depending upon the translation you are using. Here’s a Bible reference to each with a reference to different translations:

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Embry Hills – Winter 2018
404-580-1266
• I Timothy 4:14 – Elders or Eldership (NKJV, ESV)/Presbytery (KJV)
• Ephesians 4:11 – Shepherd (ESV)/Pastor (NKJV, NASB)
• I Timothy 3:1 – Bishop (NKJV, RSV)/Overseer (ESV, NASB)

These terms all refer to the same office. It is not until well after the First Century that bishop and elder and pastor come to mean different positions. Note in the following passages where the terms are used interchangeably:

1. In Titus 1:5, Titus is charged with appointing elders, who are referred to in Titus 1:7 as overseers.
2. In I Peter 5:1 Peter speaks to elders whom he commands to shepherd (Gr. poimanate) the flock (I Peter 5:2). The Greek word for a pastor or shepherd is poimena.
3. In Acts 20:17 Paul calls for the elders of Ephesus to meet him. During that meeting, he says they have been made overseers (Acts 20:28).

Why Elders?
Elders served an important and active role in the churches of the New Testament. Look at this list and note how many different books and writers make references to elders and their work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Information Regarding Elders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acts 11:29-30</td>
<td>Elders distributed relief in Judea (first time they are mentioned – though the Apostles serve as a precursor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 14:23</td>
<td>“when they had appointed elders for them in every church”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 15:2-6, 22-23, 16:1-4</td>
<td>Elders in Jerusalem, deciding and communicating doctrinal matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 20:17</td>
<td>There were elders in Ephesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 20:28</td>
<td>They were made overseers to care for the church of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 21:18-25</td>
<td>They guarded the church’s unity – advice to Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephesians 4:11</td>
<td>They are a gift from God (shepherds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippians 1:1</td>
<td>Overseers and deacons in Philippi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Thess. 5:12-13</td>
<td>They were to be esteemed highly because of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus 1:5</td>
<td>Instruction to Titus - “so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus 1, I Tim. 3</td>
<td>Their Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Timothy 5:17</td>
<td>Elders were teaching and being supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Peter 5:1-5</td>
<td>Instructions to elders and congregations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 13:7, 17</td>
<td>Instructions to obey leaders (elders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James 5:14</td>
<td>Elders were praying for the sick</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elders are said to be a gift of God to the church, as are apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers – Ephesians 4:11-12: 

\[11 \text{And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,}\]

But how are they a gift to the church? How do they serve the church?
**Flock Shepherding**

Serving as shepherds to the flock of God (Acts 20:28 and I Peter 5:2), elders serve by leading the entire local church or flock. Guided by the rule of Christ as revealed through his Apostles in the New Testament, there are still many decisions that elders must make on behalf of a church that are not specifically spelled out in the Scriptures. Those Scriptures are to serve as a guide in all cases, but consider the following sample of decisions or actions affecting the whole church that require the discernment and judgement of elders:

1. Make immediate and reactive responses to events as they arise (for example: congregational discipline, resolving squabbles and issues, requests for support from members and preachers, unexpected “events” in the assemblies)
2. Constantly spend time to understand (“take heed to”) the flock—in order to set strategic directions (collect facts, seek and accept suggestions or criticism, sense the “mood,” predict events, preempt difficulties, communicate a vision, set priorities)
3. Make/explain/implement plans (direct resources, set guidelines for the work of deacons and others, encourage giving, prevent/remedy divisive behavior).
4. Provide spiritual food (select and guide teachers, preachers, special events and speakers)
5. Exhort and motivate (set expectations, correct, encourage, praise)
6. Provide for an edifying and orderly worship – I Corinthians 14:26 (set the order, guidelines, select leaders, remedy problems)
7. Watch for and correct doctrinal error – Titus 1:9 (see trends, teach preemptively and preventively, address specific errors)

If just this list were handled well, imagine how much more equipped a church would be to carry out its responsibilities (Ephesians 4:12).

**Sheep Shepherding**

But elders are also meant to be a gift to the church because of the care they take to shepherd every individual member (Sheep Shepherding). I would argue this is the far more important (though often overlooked) aspect of an elder’s work. Even the work focused on leading the church as a whole is intended to strengthen every member (Ephesians 4:12-16. Vs. 13-14 especially, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children.)

This responsibility for each soul and especially for those who are weak in their faith is highlighted in several passages. Look at Hebrews 13:17

\[17\text{Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.}\]

Elders must give an account to God for every soul in the church they are leading. When Paul addressed the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20, he used himself as an example of the diligence they were to employ in their work. Several statements are especially important to shepherds of sheep:

- for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. – Acts 20:31
- I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house – Acts 20:20
In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” – Acts 20:35

In the qualifications for elders in I Timothy 3, we see an emphasis placed on the man’s role with his family:

4He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?

Obviously, a good father is the man who has an influential and positive relationship with each of his children – not the man who just runs a household efficiently. An elder who takes this responsibility seriously will be well served to study the level of care revealed in the Bible that good shepherds are to give to their sheep, especially the weak ones, and the disasters that result when they fail in this task (Ezekiel 34:1-6, 12-16; Luke 15:1-7).

When a congregation recognizes the valuable work of elders there will be a deepened sense of urgency to develop and appoint men elders.

**Thought Questions**

1. Note the chart. Did the Apostles early on carry out some responsibilities that were later placed on Elders?

2. What can an entire church do to help men be prepared to serve as elders?
What is the Church of Christ?

Lesson 7
Role of Leaders – What about Evangelists and Deacons?

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Examine the role of deacons in the church
2. Examine the role of evangelists or preachers of the word
3. Note who would fill these roles

Introduction and Review
We looked at the role of elders in Lesson 6; this lesson focuses on two other leadership roles – that of deacons and of evangelists. Like elders, evangelists are said to be a gift of God to the church (Ephesians 4:11). There is a great deal said in the New Testament about the work of evangelists or preachers such as Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and Barnabas among others. Even more, if we include the work of the Apostles as they taught the word. There is not nearly as much said about deacons, though their role is critical to the work of a church.

Preparation Questions
1. Read I Timothy 3:8-13
   a. Which of the qualifications here would you list as descriptive of character? How do these compare to the qualities of those sought out to serve in Acts 6:3, 5?
   b. Which ones speak to the abilities of the man?
   c. What is said of a deacon’s wife?
2. Read II Timothy 4:1-5
   a. What is Timothy demanded to do in vs. 5?
   b. What is he specifically charged to do in vs. 1-4?

Deacons
The qualifications for a man who would serve as a deacon are found in I Timothy 3:8-13. It appears to be an appointed role or office, just as the role of an elder is described as an office in vs. 1. While it is a designated role, the word Greek word translated deacon is a rather simple and common word. In fact,
it’s not much of a translation, as the Greek word is diakonous. The word refers to one who carries out the commands of another, and is more often translated servant or minister.

It is used of Christ in Romans 15:8 a servant to the uncircumcised to show God’s truthfulness, of Paul and Apollos in I Corinthians 3:5 as the servants through whom the Corinthians believed. In II Corinthians 6:4 to describe Paul and others who are engaged in the same ministry. In both Colossians 1:7 and 4:7 it is rendered minister along with another word for servant in describing Epaphras and Tychicus. All of these passages place great value on the work being done by the one called “diakonous”.

Other than I Timothy 3:8, the English word deacon is only found in Philippians 1:1 where Paul addressed all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons. The men selected in Acts 6 may or may not be deacons, but observed that they would take over the serving of tables in the daily distribution to the needy widows of the church. The Greek word for serve tables in vs. 2 is diakonein, the verb form of the noun deacon. Regardless, Acts 6 serves well as a template related to those who would serve the church in a specific assignment:

- The character of the men was emphasized in their selection (vs. 3)
- Put over a work on an ongoing basis (vs. 3)
- Addressed a need – not an honorary role (vs. 1)
- Selection involved the whole church (vs. 2, 5)
- Work freed up the Apostles for some essential work (vs. 2)

Similarly, I Timothy 3 is more about the character of the man who would be a deacon (dignified, not double-tongued, not greedy), but it also says he would have been tested and have demonstrated his ability to manage his family and household well. This implies he will be given a duty or task that requires a previous proving of his ability to handle it faithfully. His reputation and that of his wife (cf. her qualifications in vs. 11-12) along with the way he carries out his responsibility will have a profound effect on the church and the man.

I have attached an Appendix to the lessons (Appendix A - Deacon Duties at Embry Hills Church of Christ) that lists 33 categories of tasks or duties given to the deacons at Embry Hills. As an elder, I can confidently say the elders’ work of helping the spiritually weak and leading the church would be seriously damaged, but for the faithful work of the deacons in carrying out these responsibilities.

**Evangelists**

If you look carefully at the word – evangelist – you can see the word angel. An angel is a messenger and those that are evangelists are messengers of the gospel, the good news of God. The word is only used three times in the New Testament (Acts 21:8, Ephesians 4:11 and II Timothy 4:5), but the verb form of the Greek word is translated in English as preach. Starting with the Apostles, there are abundant examples of those went out to proclaim or preach the word of God. Paul spoke of himself as being appointed a preacher and a teacher in addition to being an Apostle (II Timothy 1:11). Philip is called an evangelist in Acts 21:8 and is said to have preached the good news about the Kingdom (Acts 8:12, 40). There were men from Cyprus and Cyrene who preached the Lord Jesus to the lost Gentiles of Antioch (Acts 11:20).

In Paul’s instruction to Timothy, he commanded him to do the work of an evangelist and fulfill his ministry (II Timothy 4:5), which he seems to have defined in vs. 2 preach the word; be ready in season
and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. Paul also instructed Timothy to command and teach (I Timothy 4:11) and to teach and urge (I Timothy 6:2b).

In addition to going to new places where the word of Christ had not been taught, preachers or evangelists stayed for extended periods with a given church. Paul spent a year and a half at Corinth (Acts 18:11), three years at Ephesus (Acts 20:31). Timothy was told to stay at Ephesus (I Timothy 1:3). Such preachers of the word were financially supported by churches (I Corinthians 9:8-14, Philippians 4:15-19).

Perhaps because of their teaching and exhorting skills, evangelists are also named as a gift from God to the church—Ephesians 4:11. We are blessed at Embry Hills to have three men who serve as evangelists—each with different skills and experience. One is also an elder and more than worthy of the kind of financial support described in I Timothy 5:17. They strive to equip and build up the members of this body, but they also proclaim the word to the lost of Atlanta.

**Male Leadership**

Now that we have examined three different leadership roles in the church, it’s worth noting that all three positions are exclusively male. Note the qualifications for both elders (I Timothy 3:2) and deacons (I Timothy 3:12) require them to be the husbands of one wife. Those who were addressed as evangelists were all men, and public preaching was specifically designated to men alone (I Corinthians 14:34).

There’s nothing wrong in acknowledging puzzlement as to why this is God’s plan. And it may not be an easy thing to accept when it is clear there are often women who fully possess teaching or leadership attributes vital to these roles. However, we need to remember our commitment to submit to the rule of Christ. If his word – his will – reveals no indication of women serving as leaders in the church, then we are showing honor to our Lord, to simply follow his plan with a desire to please him rather than ourselves.

**Thought Questions**

1. Does the role of an evangelist or teacher have a measure of positional authority? (See James 3:1; Acts 13:1; Eph 4:11; II Tim 1:11; Titus 1:5). How is this positional authority established? How is it used?

2. Would it be appropriate to appoint a man (or several men) as a deacon for a limited period of time to address a temporary need of the church (for example overseeing an expansion of meeting space)? Why or why not?
What is the Church of Christ?

Lesson 8
Inward Purpose of the Church – Building Up One Another

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Begin to examine God’s purpose for the church
2. Identify and recognize the responsibility members have to one another
3. Recognize the role played by specific practices of the church in accomplishing God’s purpose

Introduction and Review
We have spent seven lessons looking at the nature of the church. We paid special attention to the Greek word ekklesia which is translated church, noting an ekklesia is simply a group of people usually called together for a special purpose (Lessons 1-2). The church is the people of God, those who belong to Christ. So we spent time examining how Christ rules his church (Lesson 4). Local groups of Christians functioned as units, local churches, all through the New Testament, and we examined who is a member of Christ’s church and what character is expected of those members (Lesson 5). We also looked at how local churches were organized in the New Testament, who were their leaders and what were those leaders expected to do (Lessons 6 and 7).

It’s now time to take a closer look at the purpose of the church. What did God have in mind in establishing churches, what are the members to jointly accomplish, and what is to be the value to each member of these bodies? What is expected of the leaders of these groups of Christians in fulfilling God’s plan for his church? We will begin with a look at the Inward Purpose of the Church (Lessons 8-10). By inward purpose we mean what the church as a community is intended to accomplish for its own members. In the last three lessons of this 13-part study we will examine the outward and upward purposes of the church.

Preparation Questions
1. Read Ephesians 4:11-16
   a. Who are said to be given by God (vs. 11)? What is their purpose (Vs. 12)?
   b. What should be the goal for every member of the body?
   c. How is the body able to grow (vs. 16)?
2. Read I Corinthians 12:12-31
   a. How do we all come to be a part of the body of Christ (vs. 13)?
   b. How are the members of a body to look upon one another (vs. 21-26)?
c. What roles are listed in vs. 27-30?

Primary Goal of a Local Church
Perhaps the clearest picture of the purpose of the church is found in Ephesians 4:11-16:

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

This passage provides a great deal of insight to how God wants the church to function. Here we see:

• The role and importance of leaders – vs. 11. They are a gift of God, but they are a gift with a role – to equip the members, to prepare them for the work that they need to do.
• The purpose for the whole body – to be built up and to grow (vs. 12 and vs. 16). But even with this purpose, it’s not what happens to the body as a whole, as much as what happens to every single member.
• The goal for each member – to no longer be children (vs. 14), to grow up into Christ (vs. 15), to attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (vs. 13). This passage stresses the intent is for us all to accomplish this goal (vs. 13).
• How it will be accomplished – through the effort of every single member (when each part is working properly) vs. 16. Church is not something you simply attend, it is an active, vibrant body of people in which you are expected to do your part as you benefit from the association with others.

Similar is the exhortation of Hebrews 10:24-25. The writer speaks of assembling together, but note what that time together should accomplish:

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

We are expected to encourage each other and provoke good works and love. It’s not easy living in a world that rejects Christ and living as a sojourner and exile (I Peter 2:11), but our brothers and sisters in Christ, our fellow members of his body, provide us a source of strength in times of weakness, and comfort and solace in times of struggle.

If only everyone could see this as the proper role of church, and the benefit of belonging to a local body of Christians! Of course, churches must embrace this purpose as well, but where they do, such fellowship should be highly desired by individual Christians.
Value of Every Member
This view of church is different from the notion that you are a member of a church or attend a church only for what it provides to you. Instead, this inward purpose of the church obligates each one of us to find our personal role. A common image used to describe the church is a body (Ephesians 1:22-23). A physical body has members, just as a church has individual members. In I Corinthians 12, Paul uses this image to stress the importance and involvement of every member of the church. He first stresses the common path everyone has taken to enter this body:

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

But then Paul makes it clear that the members are not alike in their talents or skills. He stresses the diversity of members in a physical body, where each has its own special purpose and essential function (vs. 19-24). Similarly, in the church he says there are first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Of course, some of the roles he mentions are no longer applicable, but his point is easy to see. We all have abilities and gifts, and we must identify and use them to the benefit of our fellow members in the body.

Activities to Achieve the Purpose
Consider how a church actually carries out this task of building up one another. In lesson 6, we referred to the special role of elders and evangelists. Both should have the ability to teach, and edification—being built up spiritually—is linked to the power of the word (Acts 20:32, I Timothy 3:14-17). But they are also to equip the saints, i.e. to prepare them for using their special skills. Not surprisingly, much of the activity of the church centers around teaching and learning God’s message. For example:

- Bible Classes – where teachers and evangelists give instruction and training in God’s message
- Special Services, Devotions or Weekend Studies – that are focused on the spiritual needs of specific groups of members or on specific applications of God’s word
- Gospel Meetings – where a study of the word can be conducted over a series of days

Besides the focus on teaching and the power of the word, there are other joint activities that draw us closer together and work to build us up:

- Worship (more in lessons 12 and 13) – all activities in such assemblies are commanded to be done so as to edify or build up (I Corinthians 14:26).
- Congregational Meetings – a devoted period of communication and information so that we can work together more effectively toward our common goals.

Thought Questions
1. Can our assembly for worship be intended to both honor and praise God as well as to edify the members who are there? How would singing or prayer accomplish both?
2. What are reasons Christians give for not being an active part of a church? In what ways might those answers reveal a misunderstanding of the purpose of the church?
Lesson 9
Inward Purpose of the Church – Relationships and Needs

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Examine the importance of building strong relationships among the members of a church
2. Recognize the responsibility the church has in providing for the physical needs of its members
3. Provide practical advice for strengthening the ties between members

Introduction and Review
We began a look at the inward purpose of the church in the last lesson – to spiritually build up one another. In that lesson, we noted the church is able to build itself up when “each part is working properly” (Ephesians 4:16), that is, when every member is fully participating – striving to grow personally and using their God-given abilities to encourage and stir up their fellow brothers and sisters (I Cor. 12:21-30, Hebrews 10:24-25).

A passage we did not look at was Romans 12, which emphasizes both our unity in one body (vs. 5 we, though many, are one body in Christ) and the diversity of our individual gifts (vs. 6 having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them). In this lesson, we will look at vs. 9-18 of that chapter and what they say about the relationships we should have with one another in the church. What will become clear is we need to know each other, and we must be active in helping one another.

We will be looking at the ideal picture of how we should be engaged with our fellow brothers and sisters. The real experience for many is far from the ideal, and we should be open to a careful examination as to why this is true. Do we fail as individuals or as a church? Are elders doing their work? What can we all do to improve?

Preparation Questions
1. Read Romans 12:9-18
   a. List the exhortations made to the Romans that they could apply personally.
   b. List the exhortations made here that involve how they were to interact with one another.
   c. What should be the result of their obedience (vs. 16 and vs. 18)?
2. Read I Corinthians 16:1-4, II Corinthians 8:2-5 and 9:6-8
a. All of these verses deal with the need to relief Christians in Jerusalem. The need was met by churches in Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia. When did they collect the funds?
b. What was the attitude of the givers?
c. Read more of II Corinthians 8 and 9 and note other positive results of the response to needy Christians.

Building Relationships
The closeness of the early church in Jerusalem was apparent from the beginning. Look at what was said of them in Acts 2:44-46: 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

Below, we will look at the way they shared their possessions, but notice they were frequently attending together in the Temple, and they were opening their homes to each other sharing meals and genuinely rejoicing in their fellowship. A richer picture of this fellowship is found in Romans 12:9-18. Paul exhorted the Christians in Rome to have the true character of a follower of Christ, but does so in the context of their association with each other. So, he commands them to abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good and to be fervent in spirit, to serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. But notice how frequently he speaks to their common relationship:

- Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor – vs. 10
- Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality – vs. 13
- Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another – vs. 15-16
- Associate with the lowly – vs. 16 So far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all – vs. 18

This godly character of Christians as expressed in their relationship with each other is the key to unity and harmony. A similar thought is expressed by Paul in I Corinthians 12:25-26: 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Remember from Lesson 5, how important this peace and unity is for the church to accomplish its God-given purposes. It flows from the humility and love that we express to one another, but how do we strengthen the ties that should bind us? Some practical advice would include: extend the time of your stay at every assembly – arrive earlier and leave later. Open your home to others or offer to meet members for coffee or lunch – those occasions give us an opportunity to know each other’s “story”. Participate in the extra studies, devotions and meetings offered by the church. Listen for and remember the struggles and triumphs of your brothers and sisters; and acknowledge them. In a larger church, move to other areas of the place of worship in order to be near Christians you don’t know as well.

Providing for the Needs of One Another
Look back at two of the passages we examined above. In Acts 2:44, the members in Jerusalem had all things in common, and Paul commanded the Romans to contribute to the needs of the saints This implies they were aware of the needs of their brothers and sisters. It also says they were willing to make sacrifices to assist each other – extraordinary sacrifices as we will see. This was the natural reaction of the love they felt. John pointed out the connection between sharing our goods and brotherly love (I
John 3:16-17: we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

We see frequent examples of the extent to which they provided for the physical needs of one another. It should be noted that their gifts were made in every case for fellow Christians, sometimes for the members in the church that was providing the help, but there were two examples in Acts where several churches sent for the relief of Christians suffering elsewhere. Here is a list of the sacrifices and needs:

- Acts 4:34 – There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.
- Acts 6:1 – a daily distribution to the widows
- Acts 11:29-30 – So the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.
- Trip to Jerusalem (I Cor. 16:3) to relieve needy saints – (cf. I Corinthians 16:1-4, Romans 15:31, II Corinthians 8:1 – 9:15)

In lessons 12 and 13, we will have more to say about how the church gave, but a clear purpose in the offerings above was to help fellow members. II Corinthians 8 and 9 are especially useful in challenging every member to consider their own personal sacrifice in giving. Note also the role of the Apostles, and later the elders, in being given responsibility for decisions in how to distribute the funds that were provided by the members. The gathered funds were placed in their hands. When the funds were sent elsewhere each church made its own decision regarding their gift – how much, who carried it, etc. (cf. I Cor. 16:3, Acts 20:4), and the elders would have made such decisions. But the actual good that was being done was a product of the combined efforts of all, and each member was able to participate.

Decisions about using the funds of a church to address members’ physical needs are not always easy. I Timothy 5:3-11 offers some principles that may be helpful, suggesting there is a difference between temporary or one-time help and permanent support (enrollment vs. 9), that families should help first (vs. 8), and the importance of the character and actions of the brother or sister in need. Nevertheless, as with many decisions, these principles serve only as a guidepost. An advantage of having elders should be the wisdom they bring to decisions of when and how to address the physical needs of a fellow member.

Activities to Achieve the Purpose

These two aspects of the church’s inward purpose – building relationships and providing for the needs of one another – explain much of what you observe in the activities of a church. Announcements regarding member difficulties, special offerings to address extraordinary needs of Christians elsewhere such as due to Hurricane Harvey in 2017, emails informing us of sicknesses and deaths, group meetings to focus on how to address specific members’ needs. They also explain much of the work of deacons. In Exhibit A that follows these lessons are the deacon duties as assigned at the Embry Hills Church of Christ. At a minimum, duties 13, 14, 16a, 16b, 17a, 17b, 21 and 32 are all related to this purpose.

Thought Questions
1. Are you doing all that you can to know your brothers and sisters and to help them as you can?
2. What wrongful attitude(s) might cause a Christian to pull away from participating in this work?
Lesson 10
Inward Purpose of the Church – When Things Go Wrong

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. See the purpose God has in his discipline
2. Acknowledge our personal responsibility in restoring unfaithful members
3. Recognize there are many different forms of discipline or correction that a church may use

Introduction and Review
We have been examining what the New Testament says about the inward purpose of the church – to spiritually build up one another – and how the fulfillment of that purpose implies strong and personal relationships among Christians. Also, how those relationships obligate us to be aware of and active in addressing the physical needs of members, sometimes as an entire church. We can see how blessed we are personally by God’s plan for the church; how it provides us with a source of spiritual nourishment and encouragement.

But we should also see the responsibility it places on each of us to be accountable for our fellow members (Galatians 6:2). What are we to do when a brother or sister begins to drift away from God or perhaps begins to live a life in open rebellion to the will of God? In this lesson we will look at how we should respond as a church and as individuals to the sins of our brothers and sisters. We should not be surprised by their sins - remember lesson 5 where we listed examples of Christians in sin:

- Sexual Immorality – I Corinthians 5:1-2
- Disputes – I Corinthians 6:5-8
- Uncooperative/burdensome members – II Thessalonians 3:6-10
- Bias/Prejudice – Galatians 2:11-14, James 2:1-4
- Divisions/parties – I Corinthians 1:11-13, Jude 19
- Pride/Argumentative Spirit – I Timothy 6:3-5
- Love of the World – II Timothy 4:10, Jude 18

There we considered the damage such members do; here we consider our responsibility to draw them back to the Lord.
Preparation Questions

1. Read Hebrews 12:7-11. Why does God discipline us? What is his goal (vs. 10-11)?

2. Read Galatians 6:1-2 and James 5:19-20. Who is take action when a Christian drifts away from God?

3. Read II Thessalonians 3:6-15. What kinds of sinners are described here and what actions does Paul propose?

4. Describe the steps to be taken in Matthew 18:15-17:

Unfaithful and Divisive Members

Some of the sins we listed were of Christians who were turning back to the world or who perhaps had already abandoned the cause of Christ. Such are a source of discouragement to fellow members, and by their action and words may be a source of temptation to weaker members even if that’s not their intent. Other sins were those of Christians who simply were not living with their fellow brothers and sisters in a proper manner. They were divisive and unruly; argumentative and selfish.

Both kinds of wrongful behavior must be addressed with actions taken by the church designed to have a positive impact in convincing the wayward member to repent. The goal the church has in mind is the same as God’s when he disciplines us. Hebrews 12:7-9 affirms God disciplines us because we are his children; the discipline is based on our relationship with him. The goal of God’s discipline is stated in vs. 10,11 - he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Our goal then in dealing with wayward brothers and sisters must be to produce God’s holiness and righteousness within them.

Elders have a special responsibility toward lost souls (Hebrews 13:17), and as leaders of a local church, they often must make tough decisions considering what actions would be most effective in appealing to the conscience of a struggling or unfaithful member.

Responsibility of All

But when we say this discipline is an action of the church, we must recognize it is the responsibility of each member. From lesson 9, two things should be clear – if we are part of the church (a member of the body) we must contribute and do our part; and we are accountable to one another. When a fellow brother or sister begins to drift away from the Lord, it is everyone’s duty to strive to win them back. This personal responsibility is seen in Galatians 6:1-2. Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Every spiritually minded Christian can play a role in restoring a brother. If we have any influence with the one caught in transgression, it’s our duty to use it for good.

A similar message is found in James 5:19-20 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. It’s not simply the role of elders or evangelists to bring back someone who wanders from the truth, but that of whoever has an opportunity.
Activities to Achieve the Purpose
While the goal is the same (the sharing of God’s holiness), the means to achieve that goal will vary depending on the situation of the drifting soul. Discipline is not a one size plan fits all, but rather Jude 22-23 says have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. And Paul says in I Thess. 5:14 we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. Some members need to be admonished, some encouraged or helped. Some need mercy and others require immediate, swift action; and everyone needs patience. It takes a measure of wisdom to determine what is best in each situation. Consider this partial list of Biblical actions:

- Speaking the truth in love – Ephesians 4:15. Sin should be called out, but with a spirit of love. Look also at Ephesians 4:25.
- Following a progression from a personal appeal to the admonishment of a small group to a situation calling upon the entire church – Matthew 18:15-17
- Exercising gentle restoration – Galatians 6:1
- Marking or noting the unruly or disorderly – II Thessalonians 3:6-15. Paul says there are some with whom we should have nothing to do, hoping it would shame them into obedience. But he cautions, they must be treated as brothers not enemies.
- Withdrawing our fellowship – I Cor. 5:1-8. Here this drastic action is not only designed to help the sinner (vs. 5), but also to protect the entire group from his influence (vs. 6-7).
- Dealing with the domineering or divisive– III John 9-10, Titus 3:9-11.
- Watching out for false teachers – Romans 16:17-18. Elders especially are to be capable of dealing with such teachers (Titus 1:9).

Prayerful care must be given in deciding what steps should be taken; and to be effective the whole church must be of the same mind and united in its action.

Repenting Members
It’s a joyful occasion when an unfaithful brother or sister repents and comes back to the Lord (Luke 15:7, 10), but that repentance can bring its own challenges. For those who may have been hurt or deeply disappointed by the sin of a brother, forgiveness may be difficult. That seems to have been an issue in Corinth where there was a repenting brother (perhaps the man of I Corinthians 5 from whom the church had withdrawn its fellowship). Paul pleads with them in II Corinthians 2:6-8:

6 For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, 7 so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.

We must consider the mercy and grace the Lord has shown us and remember the Lord’s warning about not forgiving the trespasses of others (Matthew 6:15). There is also the challenge of restoring our trust in a repentant member. While difficult, it is all made easier when we have set our hearts on putting the interests of others above ourselves.

Thought Question
1. What is the importance of strong relationships in preventing a member from turning away from God? Why are such relationships essential in draw them back?
Lesson 11
Outward Purpose of the Church

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Recognize the outward purpose of the church to bring the word of Christ to the lost.
2. Explain the church’s role in equipping members to be lights in the world.
3. Explain the relationship of local churches and evangelists who spread the gospel.

Introduction and Review
The church is a blessing from God intended to benefit its members. As members of a local church we are meant to build up one another spiritually, to be a source of encouragement and strength. Previously, we discussed the importance of forming deep relationships within the body and putting our personal skills and talents to use. This inward purpose of the church – the focus on the members for the sake of the members – includes the responsibility of taking actions to win back our wayward brothers and sisters.

But there are other purposes of the church, and in this lesson, we will look at the plan God has for the church to participate in spreading the gospel – the message of God’s plan of redemption in Christ to a lost world. There are two ways the church participates in this – one it helps prepare us as individual members to be lights in the world, and churches provide support to evangelists to allow them to focus on the work of teaching the lost.

Preparation Questions
1. Read Matthew 5:14-16. What are we all supposed to be? What should the result of our actions be?
2. Read Acts 8:1-4. Why did the disciples leave Jerusalem? Who was left behind? What did they do wherever they went?
3. Read Philippians 4:14-18. Describe Phillip’s support of Paul. Why did he rejoice in this support?
4. Read Acts 13:1-4 and 14:24-28. Where were Saul (Paul) and Barnabas at the beginning of chapter 13? How did that church show support in their future journey and work? Where did they return after this missionary journey? What did they do there?
Personal Lights

The church belongs to Jesus (Matthew 16:18), and he is its head (Ephesians 1:21-24). Another image used of those who follow Christ is a kingdom, where Christ is the king. When Jesus came proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:24), he demanded this of its citizens (Matthew 5:14-16):

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Those who belong to Christ, the Christians who are the members of churches, are to live lives that serve as examples to draw the lost to Christ. The goal is to have such an effect on them that they eventually would give glory to God. Peter describes such a process in I Peter 2:11-12:

11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

This is yet another reminder of Lesson 5 where we stressed the need for every member of the church to fully dedicate their life to following Christ in all that he asks. When that doesn’t happen, it damages the opportunity to influence those who are not following Christ, who see hypocrisy instead of faith or genuine love.

While this work of being spiritual examples to the world may seem to be merely an individual responsibility, consider how essential the inward purpose of the church – to encourage and build up each member, to promote the maturity of all – is in helping us maintain our steadfastness and ability to be the lights we should be. But there’s another role the church plays in assisting us in being lights to the world. Beyond being examples, we are also told to be ready to teach (I Peter 3:15) in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

In Acts 8, we see Christians ready to do this very thing. Following the death of Stephen, we read in vs. 1 And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. In vs. 4, we are told what they did when they were driven out - 4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

These Christians were not sent out, but instead were unexpectedly forced out; yet they were ready to preach. How did that happen? Remember Acts 2:42 and they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. The church has a significant role in preparing Christians for this great work. Surely, Acts 8:1-4 is an example of the church and its leaders having equipped the saints for their work (Eph. 4:12). The disciples in Jerusalem were no longer children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14), but men and women who knew the truth and were ready to proclaim it.

Fellowship with Evangelists

A second way a church participates in the message of Christ going into the world is through its relationship with evangelists or preachers of the word. Remember what we learned of such men in Lesson 7:

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• Men such as Paul, Philip, Apollos, Barnabas, and Timothy were preachers or proclaimers of the word.
• They often went where there were no churches and no previous knowledge of Christ.
• They also stayed for extended periods in certain places and worked with churches – for example, Paul at Corinth and Ephesus, and Timothy at Ephesus.
• They were frequently financially supported by churches.

Note how two New Testament churches had fellowship with evangelists in their teaching and converting the lost:

• Philippi – Paul wrote from prison to commend the church in Philippi for their gifts to him (Philippians 4:15-18) And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. 18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. Paul barely spent any time in Philippi, but over the years they had repeatedly helped him. He described this as a partnership; one that produced fruit to their credit.

• Antioch – this was a church where Paul had worked alongside Barnabas and other teachers for over a year (Acts 11:25-26; 13:1), but the Holy Spirit called for Paul and Barnabas to leave on what we sometimes call Paul’s First Missionary Journey. The church in Antioch showed their support of this work (Acts 13:3) sending them off with fasting and prayers. When they completed this trip, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, sharing with the church there the news of what God had done through them. Afterwards, they once more stayed in Antioch for an extended period (Acts 14:26-28).

In lesson 9, we mentioned the physical needs of fellow Christians as a reason we give on the first day of the week. Another reason is to share in the work of the evangelists we support.

This Work at Embry Hills
Both of these examples inform how the church at Embry Hills has fellowship with preachers of the gospel.

• Like Philippi – we provide financial support to men who are laboring elsewhere. See Appendix B for a list of those men and where they preach. We want to have a long and deep relationship with each of them, and prefer to support fewer men more extensively, rather than a large number with small gifts.

• Like Antioch – we send off our own preachers to other places to teach both Christians and unbelievers. Over the years, the men supported as evangelists here have been encouraged to accept opportunities to teach throughout this country and many parts of the world. They have been sent specifically to countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Romania and Sierra Leone to preach the word of Christ.
Both of these Biblical approaches reflect a shared work of all members as we have contributed in our offerings on the Lord’s Day to the funds used to support these men. But there are other ways that the church has shared in the work of the gospel being taught. Members of this church who are not supported financially by it, are called upon to teach or preach elsewhere, often where there are no preachers. This may seem to be the work only of those individuals, but once more consider the effort that has been made to prepare them, to equip them for this good work. Elders and evangelists have taught and trained; members have encouraged and stirred them up.

There have also been the efforts made by many members over the years to seek out and visit with the men supported elsewhere whenever they had an opportunity. Many have used vacation time and personal funds to meet and encourage the evangelists with whom we have partnership around the world.

One other indication of the attention given by the Embry Hills church to the outward purpose of spreading the gospel is the work assigned to deacons. Examine Appendix A and note the duties listed under 5A, 10, 11, 18, 25 and 32 would all contribute to teaching Christ to the world.

**Thought Questions**

1. Should every member feel a responsibility to tell others of Christ? Why or why not?

2. What would be advantages to an evangelist who is sent by a church to a foreign field, but knows he will return to that church when the foreign work is completed?
Lesson 12
Upward Purpose of the Church

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Introduce the upward purpose of the church.
2. Explain how the church is to glorify God.
3. Review the purpose and meaning of the Lord’s Supper.

Introduction and Review
Over the last four lessons we have examined two reasons for a church’s existence – an inward purpose intended by God to strengthen those who already belong to him, and an outward purpose meant to have an effect on an unbelieving world. They are highly complementary aims. As we strengthen one another, we are more prepared to be examples and teachers to the lost. The same evangelists who edify the church and are supported by it, spread the word to the unconverted.

God had yet another intention in forming his son’s church. The church – the saved people who belong to Christ – are to glorify and worship God. The existence of such a body stands as a testimony to the power and wisdom of God; and in turn the members of that body gather in assemblies of the local churches to worship the God and the Savior to whom they owe everything.

This lesson and the one to follow will examine this third purpose of the church – its upward purpose. This will include a look at the most public and visible aspect of a church’s purpose – to worship God as an assembly, and we will spend time on each element of that worship.

Preparation Questions
1. Read John 4:19-26. What was the woman’s question? What was Jesus’ answer? What does he say about worship?

   a. List the activities of worship mentioned.
   b. Note what should be true of “all things”.
   c. Describe how visitors may be affected by what they see.


**Glorifying God**

The letter to the Ephesians begins with a reminder that God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3). Those who are in Christ are, of course, those who are members of his body the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Paul enumerates many of the blessings shared by those who belong to Christ, but he also states what they are obligated to be:

- **To the praise of his glorious grace** – vs. 6
- **To the praise of his glory** – vs. 12, 14

The church is a reflection of the glory of God. It benefits from God’s glory and the glory he has shed on its members, and in turn, by its very existence, stands as proof of God’s glory. Consider these two passages:

> that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might – Ephesians 1:18-19

> so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord – Ephesians 3:10-11

Even to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places, God’s greatness, his power and wisdom, can all be seen in what he has accomplished in the church. Surely, a high purpose and calling! Naturally, we will desire to fall prostrate before this glorious God and worship and honor him.

**What Should a Visitor Observe?**

If the church is to demonstrate the glory of God, and if an assembly of a church in worship is its most public and visible action, then it would be worthwhile to consider what a visitor to such an assembly would see, assuming that church were truly following Christ. Paul had such an idea in mind when he noted in I Corinthians 14 there might be a positive outcome to what an unbelieving visitor would see (vs. 24-25) - an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you, or a negative result (vs. 16) how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? Ideally, if a church is devoted to Christ, the visitor would observe:

- **The entire church coming together** – I Corinthians 11:18, 20, 33 and I Corinthians 14:23 and 26. These two passages speak of the church coming together to worship, the whole church. How is a church fulfilling its upward purpose if most of its members are not gathering together?

- **Acts centered on God** – John 4:21-24, Hebrews 12:28. The passage in John contains Jesus’ statements regarding true worship to the woman at the well in Samaria - true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. It should be clear that the church has its attention focused on the Father.

- **Attention to God’s word** – Why attention to the scriptures when we are to worship God? Because it’s his message; we are listening to him. Colossians 3:16 speaks of an occasion of
worship as we jointly sing to God, but it also says to *let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.* You would expect to hear that word, to have it read and expressed.

- **Worshippers full of the Spirit** – By this we mean the worshippers are worshipping in spirit and in truth (John 4: 23), they are overflowing with the thoughts and things that matter to God. Their minds are already prepared to engage in the activities of God. Remember what is said of the followers of Christ - *those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit* (Romans 8:5). Ephesians 5:18 is a parallel passage to Colossians 3:16. Here also in anticipation of worship, we are commanded to *be filled with the Spirit.*

- **Order** – I Corinthians 14:40. Not the idea of a rigid, never to change formula, but rather the opposite of disorder. This chapter even suggests there would be a variety of prayers and songs, but it should be decent and in order. Why? Because the order is intended both to edify (I Cor. 14:26) and to send a message to the unbelievers who may attend that genuine worship is happening.

- **A welcome to all** – James 2:1-9. Visitors are to be welcomed without regard to their appearance. It should be apparent to the one who visits an assembly of worship that there is joy in their presence.

- **Diversity in Believers** – Galatians 3:28, Acts 17:1-4. The mutual fellowship and work of Jews and Gentiles in the early church was the plan of the mystery hidden by God for ages (Ephesians 3:9). Paul simply says *this mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel* (Ephesians 3:6). The members of a church should ideally be a cross section of the community where that church is located.

- **Members being edified** – I Corinthians 14:26. Yes, God is the one to be glorified, and true worship centers on him, but it should have the effect of building up spiritually those who attend and participate (see also Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16).

- **A spirit of oneness and peace** – Ephesians 4:2-3. Such a spirit cannot be faked, but will be obvious to all.

**Worship – Eating the Lord’s Supper**
The early Christians broke bread (ate the Lord’s Supper) when the church came together (I Corinthians 11:18, 20, 33). They partook on Sunday, the first day of the week as seen at Troas in Acts 20:7: *On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them.*

Since the church gathered together every first day (I Corinthians 16:1-2), it seems reasonable to assume they always ate the Lord’s Supper, but it is easier to say with confidence that such a frequency would please God and be a valuable reminder of his love on every Sunday. The Lord’s Supper is focused on Christ. Like all acts of worship, when we partake of the Lord’s Supper our focus is on God, in this case God the Son, Christ Jesus our Lord. The purpose of the occasion is to remember Christ (I Corinthians 11:23-25):

> *the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”* 25 In the
same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

We also proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes (vs. 26). A proclamation (a statement of what we believe) that his death matters and that He was raised!

It is possible to eat the bread and drink the cup in an unworthy manner. In a manner unsuitable for the purpose, inappropriate for the moment – without a sincere desire to commemorate the death of Jesus. Paul is not speaking of us being unworthy to participate (for who is really worthy?), but the manner of our partaking is unworthy. Instead, we must be able to concentrate our mind, our whole being on Christ and what he accomplished in his death.

**Thought Questions**

1. What would impression would be made on a visitor who came to a worship assembly of the Embry Hills church?

2. What can be done to make the Lord’s Supper more meaningful?
Lesson 13
Upward Purpose of the Church

Class Goals
By the end of our study, each of us will:
1. Submit our lives more fully to the kingship of Christ
2. Have a more accurate view of what Christ’s church is and what it is not
3. Be more determined to please God in all that we do personally and in our part as a member of the body of Christ
4. Be a more active and faithful member of the church in our efforts to stir up one another to love and good works, telling others of Christ and honoring God in worship

Objective of Today’s Class
1. Review how the church is to glorify God.
2. Examine further the upward purpose of the church.
3. Explore the scriptural basis behind several acts of worship done in joint participation.

Introduction and Review
In this and the previous lesson, we are considering a third purpose of the church – to glorify and worship God. This purpose is linked in many ways with the other two we have studied: an inward purpose focused on building the spiritual strengthen and maturity of every member and an outward aim of spreading the gospel to the lost. Progress made in accomplishing either of those two callings will contribute significantly toward fulfilling this third purpose.

In the last lesson we noted two ways the church is engaged in this upward aim:

• By being the people we should be. A church doing what God desires – one where all members are steadily being remade in the image of Christ – is a body that reflects glory on God. One way to understand this to consider what a first-time visitor would observe as we come together and worship God.
• By praising and worshipping God through those acts he has requested of the church.

In the last lesson we looked at one of those acts – the Lord’s Supper, and here will examine singing, giving, exhortative learning and praying.

Preparation Questions
1. Read Ephesians 5:18-21 and Colossians 3:15-17. What are we to sing? Besides praising and thanking God, what else are we doing as an assembly in our singing?

2. Read I Corinthians 16:1-2. When was an offering made to be made? What should be done before we give (II Corinthians 8:5)?
3. Read Acts 20:7-9. Besides the Lord’s Supper, what else was done in Troas on this day when the church was gathered?

4. In Acts 2:42, what the church in Jerusalem devoted to?

**Worship in Song**

From the start churches gathered to worship God and that worship included singing (I Corinthians 14:15). Paul commanded the Ephesians (Eph. 5:18-21):

> be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart; giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Note how this singing both praises and glorifies God, while we are also teaching one another. More than one purpose is being accomplished. The command is to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to the Lord, yet they teach us. The singing of Psalms helps to illustrate how this is true. The Psalms are full of praise and thankfulness to God, but they are instructive to the reader. Thus, the words of our hymns and spiritual songs must be truthful in their honor of God and be in harmony with the message of his word.

A visitor to the worship assembly at Embry Hills might be surprised there are no instruments used with the singing, particularly given their prevalence in most Christian denominations. Why are they not used here? There are several important reasons — one related to the goal of praising and teaching. It’s our words that convey the praise and thankfulness we have for God (Hebrews 13:15), and clearly teaching comes from words not a melody. In Colossians 3:16 where Paul discussed singing he said *let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.*

Another reason comes from the passage in Ephesians above where it describes the music (melody) that accompanies our singing as being made with the heart. While it is true the passage does not specifically forbid instruments, there is a principle of restrictive silence taught in the New Testament (Hebrews 7:11-14 makes this clear concerning the silence regarding a priest coming from any tribe other than Levi), that causes us to reject the use of instruments. Essentially, this principle teaches where God has specified something, for example that a melody would be made in the heart, then silence about other practices is restrictive (i.e. forbidden) rather than permissive (i.e. I can do anything God has not said is forbidden).

But the most important reason stems from our simple desire to please God in in all that we do as a church (John 6:38, 8:29; Ephesians 5:10). From the passages we have studied, singing with the melody in our hearts without question pleases God. Anything more is a guess or assumption on our part (and I would assert, a bolder assumption than we may realize). Some may think another reason for no instruments would be “because that is a Church of Christ doctrine or a traditional practice of this church or we would lose members if we changed”. None of those reasons have any validity and would be no more defensible than deciding how we worship based solely on what is comfortable or pleasing to us rather than what God wants. Such a spirit is hardly one of glorifying God.
**Worship in Giving**

The churches of the New Testament were sacrificial in their giving. In Corinthians 16:2 Paul made it clear the act of giving was to involve all members - *On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper.* He specified a time for the giving – the first day of the week which is the day when the church would assemble for the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7) – and he gave the same instruction to other churches (I Corinthians 16:1).

What is sometimes overlooked is that every example of the gathering of funds through the offering of members was done to address a specific need or opportunity. They gave because they knew the good that would be accomplished as a result and/or understood the need that would be addressed. Given the many opportunities to have fellowship with evangelists and the ongoing physical needs of fellow members, it’s hard to imagine a time when there would not be the need for monetary contributions, but it remains important to understand why we give. Members should understand how the funds are being used.

What truly make our offering an act of worship is the intent behind it. We should be like the Macedonians whom Paul commended for the manner of their giving in II Corinthians 8:1-4:

> We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

The real sacrifice was not their funds, but themselves, and our personal giving, while made in the midst of an assembly of believers must follow this dictate of Paul in II Corinthians 9:7 *Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver,* if it is to be worship.

**Worship in Exhortative Learning**

A visitor to Embry Hills might also note the extensive reading and teaching that is done during periods of worship. There is often a sermon lasting over half of our time together, plus readings of scriptures and teachings preceding partaking of the Lord’s Supper and sometimes before prayers or songs. Such instruction and reading in the assemblies of the churches in the New Testament was common:

- Acts 20:7  
- Colossians 4:16  
- I Corinthians 14:19, 26  
- I Timothy 4:13

But how is preaching, and listening to a sermon, worship? Does it honor God? Remember, the message from the New Testament, which we are studying, is a message from God. This was Paul’s point in I Thessalonians 2:13

> that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers
We are listening to what God wants to tell us, the very thoughts of God (I Corinthians 2:11-13). If you can picture a small child listening with undivided attention and love to a parent, then you should be able to see the value of our joint study, as we focus on God; spiritual beings listening together to His spiritual truths, striving to spiritually discern the things of God. As we gain in our discernment, we are edified and prepared to worship God more fully the next time we assemble. Once more, we see the upward purpose of the church combining with the accomplishment of the inward purpose.

**Worship in Prayer**

Of all the acts of worship involving the church, perhaps the most intensely focused on God is prayer. The churches of the New Testament were well known for their constant prayers:

- Acts 2:42 devoted themselves to prayers
- Acts 13:4 Antioch - prayer before sending off Paul and Barnabas
- Acts 21:5 Tyre – church prayed with Paul on the beach
- Romans 15:30 strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf
- 1 Cor. 14:13-15 Prayer in a worship period
- Philippians 1:19 Paul mentions their prayer for him
- Colossians 4:2-3 Requests the church pray for him

They prayed together, but for each member to be a true worshipper during a prayer led by others, our thoughts have to be combined with them; we have to affirm our agreement with the requests, petitions and thanksgiving the leader makes. There should be things said on occasion that are especially meaningful to us personally – where we add to the intensity of the prayer. Once again, this upward focus on God reminds us of the value of being a church that has deep relationships with one another, where we are building taught the word and growing spiritually.

Consider how it takes knowing what it means to be forgiven when we thank God for our salvation, an appreciation of what lies before us when we pray about our hope. It requires gratitude for our physical blessings when thanksgiving is given; it requires knowledge of the individuals who are mentioned in prayers (result of our relationships with one another), and knowledge of the men who are supported by the church as we pray for their work (the outward purpose). It’s not enough to be moved by the eloquence of someone’s prayer. For it to be worship, we must join in – in spirit and in truth.

**Thought Questions**

1. How does a period of worship in an assembly of the church strengthen us personally and assist in the spreading of the word to unbelievers?
2. What are hindrances to your personal worship of God when the church has gathered? What can you do to overcome these hindrances?
# Appendix A

## Deacon Duties at Embry Hills Church of Christ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deacon Job Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Worship Management: Prepare Duty Roster; Ensure leaders are present, informed, &amp; prepared; ensure worship is scriptural &amp; orderly; Provide guidelines on methods, dress, &amp; decorum; Implement changes to increase effectiveness. Ensure participation. Staff AV room and manage AV software used during worship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Parking Lot &amp; Grounds Maintenance: Organize lawn-maintenance duty schedule; oversee landscape and parking lot maintenance; ensure lawn equipment is in working order; Schedule, plan, organize, supervise congregational work days &amp; work lists; organize any materials purchase or equipment rental for work day; Compile &quot;punch-list&quot; for work day.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3a</strong> Building Maintenance: Inspect building for periodic &amp; other required maintenance; prepare &amp; maintain a task &quot;punch-list&quot; for building repair/maintenance, inside &amp; out; Call &amp; oversee contractors to accomplish required work. Coordinate with Classroom maintenance (5c) and Building Security (6), and other Maintenance (2a &amp; 2c). Provide inputs to Long-term site planning (28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3b</strong> Residence Maintenance: Serve as point of contact for residence for major requested/required repair/maintenance, both inside &amp; out; Inspect residence for periodic &amp; other required maintenance; Engage &amp; oversee contractors to accomplish major work.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Building Organization: Maintain supplies for the copier room, keep visitor cards on hand, organize classroom material and communications (including tracts and flyers) held on foyer tables or other locations, ensure there are sufficient songbooks, determine a location and monitor the lost and found</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5a</strong> Treasurer: Keep monthly financial records; project financial status to year end; prepare yearly budgets; write checks; verify checking &amp; loan balance; prepare W-2 &amp; 1099 forms; provide monthly written/oral report, advise elders on financial status.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5b</strong> Contribution Deposit - Ensure deposit of weekly contribution on each Monday; write &amp; distribute year-end statements for contributors' tax preparation. (Do not count contribution.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5c</strong> Contribution Counting: Oversee counting of contribution each Sunday (Recruit 2 deacons with a 3rd person to help &amp; a 4th assigned as backup each month). Ensure periodic rotation of counters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5d</strong> Financial Auditor: Arrange for qualified, independent audit of treasurer's records every six months. Provide report in monthly elders/deacons meeting, and produce written record of audit to Secretary (See Job #11a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> Adult Education: Assess requirements; plan yearly curriculum; recommend teachers; keep records of courses, teachers, materials; prepare map &amp; announce classes. Conduct annual teachers meeting. Coordinate archiving on website &amp; resources center. Maintain four-year curriculum for the High School class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7a</strong> Children's Education - A: Develop strategy for children's Education; Divide classes by age (annually); Recommend, Select, &amp; Schedule teachers (coordinate with 6.), Arrange substitutes/interns, Plan teacher development &amp; training. Conduct teacher's meetings. Room assignments. Develop a mentoring program for students lacking spiritual leadership at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7b</strong> Children's Education - B: Teaching Materials: Plan subject matter, define objectives by age, select and/or provide materials for children's studies; Keep records of materials used, oversee archiving of teaching materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7c</strong> Children's Education - C: Classroom maintenance: equipment requirements &amp; purchase, develop attendance tracking mechanisms; Arrange to ensure teachers in place at every service; oversee VBS planning. Coordinate with 4. Building Organization</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Building Security: Ensure ushers are in place (see "Ushering Duties"); arrange for hall & parking lot monitoring during services; Ensure exterior doors security; Plan & lead in evacuations & other emergencies.

Greeter: Organize the greeting of visitors, help to classes

Evangelism: Propose, plan, & implement efforts to reach lost in community, such as recorded messages, ads, publicity, correspondence courses; arrange database & follow up of local visitors, maintain materials for visitors (EH business cards, visitor packets, tracts, etc.). Periodically evaluate a visitor’s experience (greeters, OH messages, ease of seating).

Home and Outside Studies Management: Coordinate home Bible studies; assist local supported evangelist in arranging & tracking home studies; keep database of attendance, teachers, & results; Report status & propose improvements. Coordinate evangelism outreach through small group studies, provide strategic vision for such classes. Coordinate with 10. Evangelism

Meeting Secretary: Record, publish, & retain minutes of elders & deacons meetings; Write & mail support rejection letters.

Directory Maintenance: Update & publish membership directory every 6 months. Maintain group assignments. Integrate directory, website, picture board and attendance tracking mechanisms. Improve directory & contact information access & utility.

Transportation: Oversee the provision for transportation to building for members as required, for college students, elderly, etc. Mobilize many members. See big picture. Delegate accountability.

Library/Resource Center Management: Arrange for organizing, stocking, & maintenance of resource room. Arrange for archiving of class materials in paper or electronic form (and on website); Approve resource room purchases. Develop Bible Study library plan.

Meeting members’ temporary needs. Assess needs of Christians (comfort, food, help, transportation…) communicate to elders, coordinate help. Arrange visitation of elderly, sick, & others. Arrange for hospitality for new members. Coordinate with Transportation (13) and Benevolence (15b).

Meeting Members’ Long Term Needs Assess long-term needs of Christians (widows, single parents, children with only one “spiritual parent”, financially challenged, disabled) communicate to elders, coordinate help.

Benevolence - members: Coordinate gifts from members to chronically needy. Arrange financial counseling (may include coordination of one-on-one oversight, as assigned by elders).

Benevolence - visitors: Screen outsider's requests--advise elders.

Advertisement/Publicity/ Front Marquee: Develop advertising methods & materials to support evangelism efforts & special events, such as Gospel meetings. Prepare marquee announcements for meetings and special events. Update periodically with other messages.

Rolling screen display: develop, operate, & maintain rolling screen display for announcing times of services, special events, classes, etc.; ensure proper content & operation before each service.

Attendance Tracking: Devise means to track attendance at worship & Bible studies; Keep database of attendance & report to elders & group meeting leaders those in need of encouragement to better attendance. Integrate with membership database (see task 11)

College Students: Identify & welcome incoming college age & young single members; Track attendance; Determine special needs; Arrange for "adoption" & other assistance by families; Propose initiatives (e.g. classes, devotions) to meet them. Involve them in on campus evangelism opportunities

Lord's Supper Supplies: Coordinate & check Lord's Supper preparation each week. Ensure Lord's Supper supplies are stocked, and preparation room is operational and equipped,
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td><strong>Picture Directory &amp; Picture Board.</strong> Arrange for photos and photo updates members, and update the picture directory and photo board in the foyer, make photos available for online directory (see task 11B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>Legal Issues Management.</strong> Keep articles of incorporation current. File all necessary forms for maintaining tax-exempt status. Ensure compliance with local and state tax, property, employment, and immigration law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td><strong>Foreign Evangelism.</strong> Correspond with non-local, supported evangelists. Encourage &amp; organize member contacts and public prayers. Assess needs for support, arrange for publication/posting of reports.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td><strong>Insurance Matters.</strong> Assess insurance needs for building and local supported evangelists. Ensure needs are met at reasonable expense.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td><strong>Long-term site planning.</strong> Project facilities needs for 5 and 10 year horizon. Evaluate potential growth options, including consideration of construction and building arrangements, financial resources, zoning restrictions, and other factors. Maintain a 5 year plan for building growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>Recorded Teaching:</strong> Arrange/oversee recording, archiving, &amp; distribution of teaching events (sermons, meetings, key classes); maintain machinery; Propose &amp; implement other methods of distribution (e.g. internet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td><strong>Computer &amp; Audio Visual Equipment Management:</strong> Maintain computers &amp; audio equipment; recommend upgrades &amp; configuration changes to meet congregation’s needs; Ensure qualified operators are available for meeting times; Train members in equipment use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td><strong>Develop &amp; maintain web page:</strong> to meet evangelism, publicity, &amp; member support requirements. Contents: upcoming events, online directory (see task 11B &amp; 24), access to class material &amp; recorded teaching, &amp; links for evangelistic purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td><strong>Social Media</strong> - Work with evangelists and other interested members to effectively use social media to spread the gospel and edify the members of Embry Hills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td><strong>Group Meetings</strong> - Prepare for and lead your group's Sunday night meetings. Meet with the previous month's leaders and prepare informational material to hand out to group members. Hold members accountable for work they have volunteered to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td><strong>Special Studies/Services</strong> – Arrange the Youth Forum and similar weekend studies (young professionals, singles), also Wednesday Nights between sessions, Prayer meetings and the Year-end studies. Work with evangelists on ideas, find teachers, coordinate schedules.</td>
</tr>
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Appendix B
Evangelists Supported by the Embry Hills Church of Christ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evangelist</th>
<th>Where He Labors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allen, Dennis</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauer, Robin</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland, Jady</td>
<td>Manhattan - New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall, Ben</td>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall, Gardner</td>
<td>Spanish in New Jersey and New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall, Sewell</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamm, Joe</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones, Glenn</td>
<td>Kiel, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morales, Arturo</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphy, Kieran</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paquette, Skip</td>
<td>Milbridge, Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peters, Dan</td>
<td>Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polanco, Roger</td>
<td>Manhattan - New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanchez, Bill</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shumake, Phillip</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>