MINISTÈRE DU PASTEUR CLÉMENT SALOMON · BIBLE STUDY #14

The Church: God's Family

Not a building — a people. And there is a place for you.

Wilner left Cap-Haïtien three years ago. In his new city he worked nights in a warehouse and drove for a delivery app by day. Church? He had an answer ready: "I have my Bible on my phone. I pray in the car. That's enough for me."

Then one cold February morning his phone rang. His mother had died back home. He could not travel. He could not even get the day off.

That evening he sat alone in his apartment, the phone dark in his hand. Then came a knock. It was Sister Mirlande, from the little church he had visited twice, holding a pot of hot soup. Three others stood behind her. Nobody preached. They sat with him. They sang his mother's favorite hymn, softly. They prayed. They stayed late.

When the door closed, Wilner remembered something his grandmother used to say: *"Yon sèl dwèt pa manje kalalou"* — one finger alone cannot eat okra.

That night he began to understand something the Bible has been saying all along. God never meant for anyone to follow Jesus alone.

Not a building. A people.

When we say "church," most of us picture walls, benches and a steeple. But the word the New Testament uses means an **assembly** — people called together. The first time Jesus uses it, He has just asked His disciples who they think He is. Peter answers, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matthew 16:16). And Jesus says:

> *"Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

> **Matthew 16:18 (KJV)**

Notice three small words. **"I will build."** Jesus is the builder. **"My church."** It belongs to Him — not to a pastor, not to a family, not to a country. And it stands on a rock that cannot crack: Christ Himself. Paul says it plainly: *"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 3:11).

A family with your name at the table

If you have ever lived far from home, you know what it is to be "the foreigner" — the accent, the papers, the looks. Now read what God says to everyone who comes to Jesus:

> *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God."*
>
> **Ephesians 2:19 (KJV)**

The household of God. Not guests. Not visitors on a temporary visa. Family. And this family is built on one cornerstone — *"Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone"* (Ephesians 2:20). In Him, people who had nothing in common become brothers and sisters.

A body where every part is needed

Paul gives a second picture, and it is the one Wilner's grandmother would have loved:

> *"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."*
>
> **1 Corinthians 12:27 (KJV)**

A body has eyes, hands and feet. They are different, and every one is needed. *"The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee"* (1 Corinthians 12:21). One finger cannot eat okra — and one believer cannot be the whole body.

And when one part hurts? *"Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it"* (1 Corinthians 12:26). That is what a pot of soup at the door means.

But who leads this body? Not the loudest voice in the room:

> *"And he is the head of the body, the church."*

> **Colossians 1:18 (KJV)**

He — Jesus. Every human leader is only a servant. The Head is Christ.

How much does Jesus love the church?

Here is a verse to read slowly:

> *"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."*
>
> **Ephesians 5:25 (KJV)**

He did not love it because it was perfect. He gave Himself to *make* it clean — "holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). The church was bought "with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

That means the church is not a museum for saints. It is more like a clinic. Jesus said so Himself: *"They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"* (Mark 2:17).

> Maybe church people have hurt you. That pain is real, and God does not ask you to pretend it away. But please hear this: the people who hurt you were not Jesus. He is the Head, and He has never stopped loving you. A wounded heart is welcome in His family.

What the first church did

What does a church do when it is healthy? Look at the very first one, right after Pentecost:

> *"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."*
>
> **Acts 2:42 (KJV)**

Four simple things. They **learned** God's Word. They **shared life** together. They **ate** together. They **prayed**. They met in the temple and "from house to house… with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46). And see who made it grow: *"the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"* (Acts 2:47). People did not build it. The Lord did.

"I can pray at home." Yes — and...

You can pray at home. You should! But the Bible says something more:

> *"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*
>
> **Hebrews 10:24-25 (KJV)**

We gather so that we can lift one another up. On the day your faith is small, your brother's faith holds you. On the day his is small, yours holds him. And Jesus gives a promise that is true even of the smallest group: *"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20).

A family with a mission

This family does not exist only for itself. Before He went back to heaven, Jesus gave it a job:

> *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost... and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*
>
> **Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV)**

The church is God's way of carrying the good news to every street and every language. And how will people know we belong to Him? Not by our buildings. *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13:35).

One day that mission will be finished. John saw the end of the story: *"a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues"* standing before the throne (Revelation 7:9). Every language — yours too.

The heart of it: you belong

Let us be clear about one thing. Going to church does not save anyone. Jesus saves. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith... it is the gift of God: not of works"* (Ephesians 2:8-9). We

do not come to church to earn God's love. We come because we already have it — and because He gave us one another.

The next Sabbath, Wilner walked back into that little church. The singing was not perfect. Neither were the people. Neither was he. But for the first time since leaving home, someone called him "frè" — brother — and meant it.

There is a seat with your name on it too. If you do not have a church family, we would be glad to help you find a congregation near you.

Before you close this — one question

Are you trying to follow Jesus alone? Maybe you moved far from home. Maybe someone hurt you. Maybe life just got busy, and one Sabbath turned into a year.

You were not made to carry your faith by yourself. We would be honored to pray with you, study the Bible with you, and help you find a family of believers where you live.

Would you like to know more about Jesus, study the Bible, or go deeper on this topic? Reach us today:

📞 **903-748-9353** · ✉️ **jils19802012@gmail.com**
Or leave a comment, send us a direct message, and **subscribe + follow** on YouTube and Facebook.

Don't miss what's next. On the night before the cross, Jesus set a table, knelt down and washed His friends' feet. Why? Our next study: *"The Lord's Supper: A Table Set for You."* Subscribe now so it reaches you the moment it's out. If you wait, you'll have to come find it. 🔔

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Viewer Handout

The Church: God's Family — pocket version

5 truths to remember

1. The church is not a building. It is the people Jesus calls together, and He is the one who builds it (Matthew 16:18).
2. In Christ we are no longer strangers but members of God's own household (Ephesians 2:19-20).
3. The church is a body: every member is needed, and Christ alone is the Head (1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:18).
4. Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it — it is a place for sinners who need a Saviour (Ephesians 5:25; Mark 2:17).
5. We gather to learn, share, pray and encourage one another, and to carry the good news to the world (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 28:19-20).

Memory verse

> *"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."*
>
> **1 Corinthians 12:27 (KJV)**

Think & pray about it

- When I hear the word "church," what do I picture — and how does the Bible's picture change it?
- Is there a hurt that keeps me away from God's family? Can I bring that hurt to Jesus today?
- Who near me is carrying a load alone — and what could I bring to their door this week?

FOR TEACHERS & SMALL GROUPS

Presenter Bullet Sheet

- **Open with the story** (Wilner and the pot of soup) — ask: "Who showed up for you on your hardest day?"
- **Point 1 — A people, not a building:** Matthew 16:15-18; 1 Corinthians 3:11. Jesus builds it, owns it, and is its foundation.
- **Point 2 — God's household:** Ephesians 2:19-22. No more strangers; Christ is the chief cornerstone.
- **Point 3 — One body, many members:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Colossians 1:18. Every member needed; when one suffers, all suffer; Christ is the Head.
- **Point 4 — Loved at the price of the cross:** Ephesians 5:25-27; Acts 20:28; Mark 2:17. A clinic for sinners, not a museum for saints. Speak gently to anyone who has been hurt in church.
- **Point 5 — What a healthy church does:** Acts 2:41-47. Teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, prayer — and the Lord adds.
- **Point 6 — Why we gather:** Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 18:20. We need one another until the Day comes.
- **Point 7 — A family with a mission:** Matthew 28:19-20; John 13:35; Revelation 7:9.
- **Christ-centered close:** Ephesians 2:8-9 — the church does not save; Jesus saves, and then He gives us a family.
- **Appeal:** invite each person to take one step this week — come back, reconcile, or bring someone. Offer prayer, Bible study, and help finding a local congregation.
- **Close:** memory verse (1 Corinthians 12:27) + tease the next study ("The Lord's Supper: A Table Set for You").

EVIDENCE-BASED · FACT-CHECKED

10 Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact (with Bible)
1. The church is a building.	"Ye are the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27); believers are "lively stones… built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5).
2. The church stands on a human leader.	"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11); "he is the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18).
3. Church is for people who have their lives in order.	"They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17).
4. Going to church is what saves you.	"By grace are ye saved through faith… not of works" (Ephesians 2:8-9); there is no "salvation in any other" than Jesus (Acts 4:12).
5. I can follow Jesus just fine on my own.	"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25); "the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee" (1 Corinthians 12:21).
6. Ministry is the pastor's job only.	Leaders are given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:11-12); all believers are "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).
7. Some members matter more than others.	"Ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28); "all ye are brethren" (Matthew 23:8).
8. A small group does not count.	"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).
9. The church has faults, so Jesus has given up on it.	"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it" (Ephesians 5:25-26).
10. The church exists only for its own members.	"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19); "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

Where this comes from (Sources)

This study is built on the Bible and reflects the published beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Verify everything for yourself:

- The Bible — passages on the church: Matthew 16:15-18; Matthew 18:20; Matthew 23:8; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 2:17; John 13:35; Acts 2:41-47; Acts 4:12; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:8-9, 19-22; Ephesians 4:11-12; Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 7:9 (King James Version, public domain).
- Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #12, "The Church" (see also #13 "The Remnant and Its Mission" and #14 "Unity in the Body of Christ") — official beliefs: https://adventist.org/beliefs
- 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2020 edition, PDF): https://adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ADV-28Beliefs2020.pdf
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: https://gc.adventist.org/
- Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (ch. 1, "God's Purpose for His Church"), public domain: https://whiteestate.org/ / https://m.egwwritings.org/
- Related studies in this library: *"Baptism: A Brand-New Beginning"* and *"The Family Altar: Worship at Home"* — https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/resources.html · Questions? https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/faq.html · Faith Journey: https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/journey.html

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