

# PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH

## “Purposes Derived from Selected Commandments of the Lord”

(Mat 22:37 NRSV) He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' (Mat 22:38 NRSV) This is the greatest and first commandment. (Mat 22:39 NRSV) And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Mat 22:40 NRSV) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

(Mat 28:19 KJV) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (Mat 28:20 KJV) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

1. THE PURPOSE FOR THE CHURCH.
  1. *Why does the church exist?*
  2. *What are we to be as a church?* (Who and what are we?).
  3. *What are we to do as a church?* (What does God want done in the world?).
  4. *How are we to do it?*
  
2. LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART.
  1. *A word that describes this purpose is worship.*
  2. *We love the Lord by worshipping him; when we express our love to God, we =re worshipping.*
    1. AWorship the Lord your God, and serve him only@ (Mat 4:10).
    2. Worship comes before service; the church=s first purpose is to worship the Lord.
    3. We can get so busy working for God, we don=t have time to express our love for him through worship.
  
3. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.
  1. *The word we use to describe this purpose is ministry.*
  2. *One of the reasons for the church=s existence is to minister to people.*
    1. Ministry is demonstrating God=s love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus.
    2. Each time you reach out in love to others you are ministering to them.
  3. *A purpose of the church is to Aequip the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12 NRSV).*
  
4. GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES.
  1. *This purpose we call evangelism.*
    1. The church exists to communicate God=s Word.
    2. We are ambassadors for Christ, and our mission is to evangelize the world.
  2. *The word go in the Great Commission is a present participle in the Greek text. It should read Aas you are going.@*

1. It is every Christian=s responsibility to share the Good News wherever we go.
  2. We are to tell the whole world of Christ=s coming, his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his promise to return.
  3. ***In the Greek text of the Great Commission there are three present participle verbs: going, baptizing, and teaching.*** These are the essential elements of the disciple-making process.
5. BAPTIZING THEM.
1. ***This symbolizes one of the purposes of the church: fellowship--identification with the body of Christ.***
  2. ***As Christians we=re called to belong, not just to believe.***
    1. We are not meant to live lone-ranger lives; instead, we are to belong to Christ=s family and be members of his body.
    2. Baptism is not only a symbol of salvation, it is a symbol of fellowship.
    3. It not only symbolizes our new life in Christ, it visualizes a person=s incorporation into the body of Christ.
6. TEACHING THEM TO OBEY.
1. ***The word we commonly use to refer to this purpose is discipleship.***
  2. ***The church exists to edify; or educate, God=s people.***
    1. Discipleship is the process of helping people become more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings, and actions.
    2. This process begins when a person is born again and continues throughout the rest of his life.
  3. ***The church has been called not only to reach people but also to teach them.***
  4. ***It is the church=s responsibility to develop people to spiritual maturity.***
7. EXAMPLES OF THESE FIVE PURPOSES BEING FULFILLED.
1. ***Jesus.*** If you examine the earthly ministry of Jesus, it is apparent that he included all five of these elements in his work.
  2. ***Paul.*** This ministry is summarized in Ephesians 4:1-16.
  3. ***The early church.***
    1. Acts 2:1-47.
    2. They taught each other, they fellowshiped together, they worshiped, they ministered, and they evangelized.
  4. ***Today=s purposes.***
    1. Edify.
    2. Encourage.
    3. Exalt.
    4. Equip.
    5. Evangelize.