

Why do we meet as the church in Fountain Valley?

Simply stated, according to the Bible, God desires that we meet as the church in Fountain Valley. As Christians who love Jesus Christ, we should love what He loves and know what God desires: His church. To truly see His heart's desire for ourselves, we must come back to the word of God in much prayer. Have you ever come to God's word and asked the Lord to reveal His church to you, to show you how He wants to build His church? May we pray and ask the Lord to reveal His church to us.

What does the Bible Say?

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus Christ declares, *"I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."*

Jesus Christ, the One building His church, is uniquely qualified to define what the church is and how the church should be built up. And, no matter how hard God's enemy, Satan, tries to frustrate the building up of the church, he will not prevent the Lord from accomplishing His purpose.

What is the church?

Some would say the church is a building, a religious organization, or even a social club. But what does the word of God say about the church? The book of Ephesians reveals that the church is the living body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), the kingdom of God (Eph. 2:19), the household (family) of God (Eph. 2:19), the spiritual house of the living God (Eph. 2:20-22),

the one new man (Eph. 4:24), the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-27) and the warrior (army) of Christ (Eph. 6:11-18). The church is ultimately the expression of God's fullness (Eph. 2:23).

We are the church

The Bible also tells us how we become members of the church. We must first become genuine believers of Christ. John 1:12-13 says,

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

When we believe and receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, we not only receive the forgiveness of sins, but also His eternal life. Through our baptism, by the one Spirit, we also are baptized into His one body (1 Cor. 12:13). Becoming a member of the body of Christ is not a matter of passing a test, joining a denomination, or following a religion; it is a matter of life and the Spirit. His divine life constitutes us to become His children, to be in God's family, and His Spirit joins us into one body. Thus we are the church, God's expression here on earth.

Oneness of the Christians

God also desires that we, as His believers, be one. Ephesians 4:1-3 says,

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

All the true believers are members of the one body of Christ. God wants this testimony of oneness expressed on this earth for all to see (John 17:21). Hebrews 10:25 shows that God desires us to express this oneness by meeting together: "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." But, practically speaking, how can all the Christians in the world meet together as the church?

The practical oneness of the church

In Acts, the epistles and the book of Revelation, we see a pattern of how God wants all the believers in Christ, called Christians (Acts 11:26), to meet. The church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1; 11:22), the church in Antioch (Acts 13:1), the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2), the church in Ephesus (Rev. 2:1), the church in Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7) are all examples of the following principle: All Christians living in the same city should meet together as the church in that city, as the one testimony of Christ in that city. According to the Bible, there should only be one expression of His church in one city. God's way is so simple. Isn't it wonderful?

Man's way to meet

Knowing God's desire to build up the church in oneness, Satan has been hard at work trying to destroy this oneness. He does this by using man's own thoughts and concepts to confuse God's people. Over the past 2,000 years, the various ideas of man have caused Christians to become divided and go astray from God's unique way. But, God clearly warns us not to divide ourselves based on spiritual leaders

(1 Cor. 1:12-17; 3:3-7), culture, religion, or social class (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col. 3:11). In fact, God categorizes dissension in the same class of sin as idolatry, hatred, jealousy, and heresy (Gal. 5:19-20). God desires oneness and hates division. Would you want to go against God's word and be a part of division?

Sadly, today, there is so much division among Christians. Many Christians "choose" a "church group" based on their own preferences. This is contrary to God's will and does not satisfy Him. In the Old Testament God already says, "You shall not at all do as we were doing here today – every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes," (Deut. 12:8). In the New Testament, Jesus Christ also says "[a] house divided against itself will not stand," (Matt. 12:25). Man's opinion, no matter how seemingly logical, convenient or brilliant, is the source of division among Christians today. Don't be fooled by Satan! Come out of all division and return to the oneness that God desires for His church.

How do we unite?

In all four gospels in the New Testament, Jesus Christ says,

"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Do you love Jesus Christ so much that you would be willing to put aside your own preferences, traditions, and good ideas? Are you willing to ultimately deny your soul life and follow Him? The word of God reveals clearly that all Christians are part of the one church of God and that all the believers in one city should

meet as the church in that city. This is how God desires us to express the oneness in a practical way. It is our desire to follow the Lord Jesus Christ in how He wants His church to be built. This is why we meet as the church in Fountain Valley.

How do I "join" the church?

Would you like to become a member of God's family, do His will and be in His church? God has made it simple for you. First, be saved. Mark 16:16 says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." Then, once you are saved, start to meet with the church in your city. That's how simple it is to follow God's will concerning His church.

If you are a born again Christian and have been baptized into Christ, and you live in Fountain Valley, spiritually you are a member of the Church in Fountain Valley. We welcome you to also practically meet with us on this unique biblical ground of oneness. If you live in another city, we invite you to come and experience the church life with us.

If you are not yet a Christian, do not wait or postpone your decision to receive Christ and be added to His church. Choose Him now. Open up your heart to Him and pray: "Lord Jesus, I repent of all my sins and receive you as my Savior and life. I want to become part of Your family, and be brought back to Your home in the church."

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