

## Question: "What should be the mission of the church?"

**Answer:** The church is a creation of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 17; 15:9), founded and owned by Jesus Christ—"I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18)—and directed and energized by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:5-27; Romans 12:4-5). Therefore, it is the church's joy to look to God to explain His design for the church and His mission for it. God's mission for the church proves to have several parts.

**1. The mission of the church is to make disciples.** Just before Jesus returned to heaven, He commissioned His disciples this way: "Going into all the world, make disciples of all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you" (literal translation of Matthew 28:19-20a). A disciple is a follower, someone who attaches himself to his leader. Therefore, we reason, Jesus sent the church on its mission to acquaint people in every place with Himself. As the church makes disciples, people can admire, worship, trust, follow, and obey Jesus as their Savior and Lord. The church's members, having become enamored of Jesus Christ, assemble around Him as Master, Leader, Savior, and Friend. Our joyful mission is to put Him on display to every nation.

**2. The mission of the church is to glorify Christ.** Paul wrote, "In Christ we were also chosen ... in order that we ... might be for the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:11-12). Part of God's purpose for the church is to exalt Jesus Christ by the way that the church lives and by what it does. Christ designed His church to represent His supernatural, life-saving work to the world. In His church, Christ shows to the world what a freed and forgiven people can be—people who are satisfied with God as the result of Christ's joyful, triumphant self-sacrifice. He has planned the church's values to be His values. He expects its lifestyle to reflect His character (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 5:23-32; Colossians 1:13, 18; 1 Timothy 3:15). As the moon reflects the sun, so the church is to reflect the glory of God to a dark world.

**3. The mission of the church is to build up the saints.** The church is to encourage and comfort its individual members (1 Thessalonians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 13:11). "There should be no division in the body, but . . . its parts should have equal concern for each other" (2 Corinthians 12:25). Jesus is the chief [cornerstone](#), and the church is likened to a building "joined together and [rising] to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22; see also 4:4-25). Jesus Christ designed His Church to showcase God's family on earth, so that the pagan world can see how God builds His family around Jesus Christ and how that family cares for one another (see Mark 3:35 and John 13:35).

The mission of the church is to know and love Christ so supremely as to represent Him and His values accurately and vividly to the world and serve people's deepest needs in the way Christ Himself would meet them. As W. C. Robinson says in *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, "Our Lord Jesus Christ is the sun about which the whole mission of the church revolves. Public worship is the encounter of the risen Redeemer with His people; evangelism is calling men to the Savior; publishing the law of God is proclaiming His lordship; Christian nurture is feeding His lambs and disciplining His flock; ministering to the needs of men is continuing the work of the Great Physician." The church's mission is to present Jesus Christ to the world, while He presents to the same world His rescuing work in and through His church.