

Bible study on-line

Background

Over the next few weeks {only, hopefully} we are not able to meet in our normal manner at Church, due to the Coronavirus.

This raises all sorts of issues but in particular- what is Church? and do we need it, or maybe this is the opportunity to completely rethink and examine our assumptions!

The intention of this Bible study is to examine what the Scriptures say about Church as found in the New Testament in particular.

It is acknowledged that a lot of traditions have grown up, some good, some unhelpful. So the present situation is bound to make us feel insecure.

In our Tuesday studies I make it clear that it is not my personal view that counts or even quoted speakers, but that all views must be measured against the Scriptures. That principle also applies against accepted traditions. The Bible is the test, and on some issues there may be different interpretations, or even silence.

These studies will be circulated either on e-mail or by on-line conference and comments will be welcome, also further suggested topics on this subject. My intention is it should be interactive.

Bible Study

The starting point ought to be a definition of Church.

The O.E.D. defines Church as: a building for public Christian worship. An organised Christian society of any time.

The I.V.F. dictionary: A Christian place of worship, the N.T. definition:- a local congregation of Christians and never a building. While there might be many Churches or households there was one Church [ekklesia].

In the fullest sense the Church is described as 'the company of all believers, this includes all those who have passed on, as well as true believers still alive. 'The Church is the universal society of all the faithful whom God had predestinated from eternity to everlasting life' {Nowell's Catechism}. That is the Church triumphant [those who have died] and the Church militant {those here on earth}.

A more usual distinction is between the 'Church visible' {as seen by men ecclesiastically organised } and the 'Church invisible' {as known by God alone}

How do you define Church? Take a concordance and follow through verses using the word Church.

Just some suggested verses:-

Mt.16v18, Acts 2v40-47, Acts 20v27-31, Acts 14v12,26, 1 Cor12v27-31, Eph 5v24-27, Col 1v18, 1 Tim.5v16-20, Rev 2&3

Future Topics to consider :

Purpose of the Church

Nature of Church

Characteristics of the True Church

Means of Grace- Prayer, Bible reading, Worship

The relationship of the Individual to the Church

The Authority of the Church

Salvation, Baptism, Communion

Service, Participation, Community, Evangelism, Revival