

## Lesson 2-1 The Church

1. For the purpose of this lesson, we will define the church as a "community of believers." Please express your opinion on what you think a church is or should be.

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2. List three reasons you think it is important to go to church. (If you don't think it is important to go to church - give three reasons you don't go to church and skip to item 7.)

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3. How did you choose your church?

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4. What do you enjoy most about your church?

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5. Are you active in your church?

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6. Do you go to church to minister or do you go to be ministered to?

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7. Read 1 John 4:20, John 15:12 and John 13:35. Summarize in your own words.

1 John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? (KJV)

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. (KJV)

John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (KJV)

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8. How can we know if we love God whom we haven't seen if we don't love our brother and sister believers whom we have seen?

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9. Taking the scriptures in item 7 into consideration, how can we apply these scriptures to our church experience?

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10. Sam is a member of a local church. He loves his church and loves his pastor. He never misses a Sunday service, but allows others do the work since he is a very busy and important man in the community. How can he enhance his church experience?

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11. Evelyn is a believer, but doesn't go to church. She has heard that churches are filled with hypocrites and people with worse problems than she has. What do you think?

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12. How to select a church: Most people in the world have many churches from which to choose. We recommend that you ask the Holy Spirit (lesson 1-2) to help you choose the best church for you at each stage of your life.

13. The church, with all its imperfections, is perfect for our spiritual development. Here are some benefits that result from attending church:

a. We can fulfill the first commandment and express our love for God our father and worship Him in "spirit and truth."

John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

b. We can develop our obligation for forgiving everyone.

Matthew 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

c. We can develop our obligation for loving everyone. (Luke 6:27)

Luke 6:27 "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

Luke 6:28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

d. We can practice not judging others.

Matthew 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.

Matthew 7:2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. (ESV)

e. We can be and observe spiritual role-models.

Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

f. We can teach or receive teaching.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

g. We can enjoy camaraderie with others.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

h. We can have a platform to practice our spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;  
1 Corinthians 12:5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;

#### 14. Testimony (Newman and Ardyth)



We have been married for more than 50 years and we have been involved in church for the same number of years. Church is everything to us: fellowship, worship, teaching, ministry, and a refuge from the world. We raised two daughters in the church. They both continue to be active in their churches. I (Newman) was in Northern Africa during world war II. I was nearly killed

in a bombing attack and decided I needed to get right with God. I started going to church the next Sunday in the army chapel. I continued to attend church after the war and in church, I found the Savior, and was born again. I dedicated my life to the Lord. Shortly after I met my wife (Ardyth) and we were married. We went to church together and have continued. Every time the door was open we went. For years, we were members of a Baptist church



and later members of an Assembly of God church. We have many fond memories of both churches and all the people. We also have wonderful memories of worshiping the Savior, but our greatest memories are of the power of God and the changed lives, including ours. Without church, our lives would have been shallow. Without

church, we wouldn't have learned the lessons we needed to learn. We are now in our 80's and still go to church once per week. Many of our friends are gone now, but we have a friend that is with us always and He is the cornerstone of the church (Jesus).

Newman and Ardyth

15. Please read:

Isaiah 58:13 "If you turn back your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;  
Isaiah 58:14 then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will

feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Psalm 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

What do you get when you combine these two scriptures?

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16. Conclusion: Church can be a highlight in your life. However, in order to maximize your experience, you need to fulfill the words of Jesus: forgive, don't judge, give instead of receive, and, above all, love by faith.

17. To do:

a. Next time you go to church, check your worldly ways at the door. Be kind and friendly to others. Look for those who need encouragement. Ask people about themselves and how they and their families are doing. Be caring about people's physical and spiritual lives.

b. Work with the Holy Spirit in knowing what to do and when to do it.

c. Fulfill, in your life, the scriptures in item 13.

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