

# The Church: How Jesus Builds It #1 - Nature, Purpose and Function

by Bob Hoekstra

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*The church is a spiritual organism, the body of Christ, with Christ as the head, and its purpose is to glorify the Lord God and to make disciples of all nations.*

**Duration:** 43:50

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 3:17

**Topics:** "Church Leadership", "Discipleship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of staying connected to Jesus Christ as the head of the church. He highlights the need for the church to be led and controlled by Christ rather than being caught up in busyness and worldly plans. The speaker shares a personal experience of their church's struggle to develop a long-term plan, which led them to embark on a nine-month study project called 'Seeking the Master's Plan.' The sermon also discusses the purpose of the church, which is to make disciples through evangelism and edification, as described in Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:19-20.

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## Transcript

Beginning this morning and through the next few Sunday mornings and also along the way to Wednesday evening, six studies in all, we will look into the Word about the church. Actually what we're going to be doing is asking the Lord to show us how he fulfills this great promise he made. Remember, Jesus said, I will build my church.

He's certainly been doing that for 2,000 years, but how does he do it? It does involve us, but it's not really us making it happen. We'll look at that in the Word of God, these six studies. The church.

Today, the nature of the church, the purpose of the church, and the function of the church. It's so easy to be confused on any one of the three. In fact, on all three, it's easy to be confused.

Early as a Christian, I had much confusion on all three areas. Early as a pastor, I had confusion in these areas. When I began to pastor in Dallas, Texas in 1967-68, I could not have clearly told any one of you, biblically speaking, what is the nature, purpose, and function of the church.

Many think the nature of the church is that it is a religious organization. Well, that is wrong thinking on our part. Many often think that the purpose of the church is to get the most number of people you can with the

most sum of dollars you can.

That's wrong thinking. That's not the purpose of the church. Some think the function of the church, of course, is to do whatever it takes to fulfill that wrong purpose of the church.

Whatever gets the people and gets the dollars, that's the way to function. That is bad thinking. Early in pastoring, in fact, after two years of it in the late 60s, I was discouraged, frustrated, worn out, and had privately resigned 20 or 30 times.

And a lot of it was based on a misunderstanding of what is the nature, purpose, and function of the church. I was trying to build the Lord's Church. I think I was.

Maybe it was my organization I was trying to build. But anyway, I was trying to do it. And I didn't even know what I was doing, let alone did I know yet I couldn't do on my own energy and by my own mind what God had ordained.

The nature of the church, the purpose of the church, the function of the church, the Lord taught it to us in beginning stages. I'm still learning. I do believe it's a lifelong process.

He began to teach us in an interesting way. We were really struggling. One of our elders said, Bob, you notice this worldwide ministry over here? They just announced their five-year plan.

And I thought, aha, that's the key. We didn't even have a five-week plan, of course. Surviving week-to-week was our great goal, I think.

I thought, oh, this is the answer, five-year plan. And we went at it. Well, we didn't have a clue how to start, how to end, or what to do in between.

We were totally discouraged in it. And the Lord kind of humbled us and gave us a project as a church. It was a bit of His humor for us as a wonderful, loving, heavenly Father.

He gave us a nine-month study project in the church called Seeking the Master's Plan. We just went into the Word of God and started asking questions about the church of Jesus Christ. You'd think I would have done that.

Shouldn't a pastor know those things? Often, we don't. I praise God it's clear around here. It's one reason I love to hang out, serve, worship, and fellowship in this dear place.

The nature of the church, the Lord began to speak to us on that, the purpose and the function. And I must say, it revolutionized our ministry and the church in Dallas. And it's changed my perspective on the church ever since.

The nature of the church. When we're talking about the nature of the church, we're talking about the very essence of the church. The basic character and qualities that are to underlie everything that is visibly seen and done.

In talking about the nature of the church, we're asking this question, what is the church? Some have wrongly thought that the church is a building. Others have thought it is a religious organization. Others think it is essentially a human institution providing religious and social programs.

None of these define the nature of the church. In Ephesians chapter 1, at the end of the chapter, there are two verses that give tremendous insight on the nature of the church. Ephesians chapter 1 verses 22 and 23.

And He, the Father, put all things under His, Jesus, feet and gave Him, Jesus, to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. In these two insightful verses, there are four terms that unfold much of the nature of the church. The terms are church, body, head, and fullness.

First the word church, it's one we get an English word from. We talk about ecclesiastical things or ecclesiology, comes from this New Testament word, which really means the called out ones. It was a commonly used word in the first century.

It described any group of people called out, any place for any purpose. To really get at the heart of the church, or it could be translated assembly, you had to ask who called them and for what purpose? Well, we now know this word church has this meaning in God's vocabulary. It means we are the church, the people of God, called out of the world by Jesus Christ unto Himself.

The called out people of God. Just in that description of us, the nature of the church is defined. The church is a people, not a building.

We can get that confused. When I started out pastoring, we spent more time taking care of our building than we did the people. In fact, when we left that building to go meet in a school for a few years, I remember one family that said, I will not leave this building, it's my church.

Well, it didn't hit me then. What a misconception that is. The church is not a building, the church is the people of God.

The second term body, oh this one is just full of floodlights from heaven on the nature of the church. Body. The Lord uses the physical body in the scriptures to unfold wondrous things about the spiritual body of Christ and spiritual life in Christ.

The church is the body of Christ. Jesus received an earthly human body at Bethlehem when He walked upon this earth. That body now is glorified and Jesus is at the right hand of the Father and forevermore you'll have that body marked with the scars of His sacrificial death on our behalf.

But Jesus has another body now in the world and it's you and me, the church, the body of Christ. We are now the hands and feet and arms and eyes and ears and mouth to speak the word of the Lord and show the love of the Lord in this world. We are the body of Christ.

Think of that term. What is a body? A body is a living organism. A living organism made up of many members but still one unit and all sharing the same common life.

And the church is the body of Christ. The church is an organism essentially. It is not by nature an organization.

That's a critical difference to see. Someone might say, yeah, but wait a minute. I know churches.

They get organized. Well, yes they do. They can and they should.

However, here's the key difference. The church of Jesus Christ is to get organized the way a body does, not the way an organization does. Let's think about that.

How does an organization get organized? People decide, you do this, you do that, you'll be there, we'll be here, this part will do this, this part will do that. Do you know there was a man in legend and myth who tried to put a physical body together that way? His name was Dr. Frankenstein. And he did collect all the proper parts.

He got them in strange ways in the wrong places. Then as the myth goes, he zapped them with a lightning bolt from heaven after he sewed them all together and he had a body. It looked like, no, it was just an organization of parts.

And it stalked around frightening women and children. You know, the church often behaves like that. Too often the church looks like a monster scaring people because it's been organized as an organization.

Oh, you seem to have all the parts there, but where did that life come from? And what are all those strange scars that are sewed together? The church of Jesus Christ is a body. It's an organism. How did our bodies get organized? That's insight into how the body of Christ is to get organized.

How did we get organized? Why is my right hand coming out of my right wrist instead of out of my left ear? Not because someone well organized it there. Not because some committee decided, let's tag it on there. No, it just grew, nurtured in the life that my whole body shares together.

And the hand became a hand and the ear an ear. That's the way it is to be in the body of Christ. We're all to be nurtured on the common life we share, the life of Jesus Christ.

Christ in us, our hope of glory. Christ who is our life. Colossians 1:27, Colossians 3:4. And as we're nurtured in that life, each part of that body becomes what it is to be in that body, where it is to be, and doing what it is enabled to do.

The church is the people of God, and the people of God are the body of Christ. Now, every body needs a head. We can agree on that, right? We may behave like that's not important sometimes, but every body needs a head.

The body of Christ has a glorious head. The head of heads. The king of kings.

The Lord of lords. The Son of God Himself. He's the head.

The board of deacons, they're not the head. That would be a many-headed monster, wouldn't it? The board of deacons doesn't even appear in the Scriptures. A team of elders, which does appear in the Scriptures, they're not the head.

The senior elder, the senior pastor, he's not the head. My goodness, who's the head? We've run out of candidates. Oh no, we're just getting toward the right one.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of His body. The church. He's the one who's to call the shots.

He's the one who's to say yes or no. He's the one to put us here or there. He's the one to make decisions, lead out, set the pace.

We'll talk more about that in our next study. That is a critical issue. Jesus, the head of the body.

You know, often the body of Christ, the church, too often we do run around as the proverb goes, like a chicken with its head cut off. We city folks, I don't know if we even know what that looks like. I've lived in the city most of my life, but once in my life I saw what that little cliché was all about.

I was a child in Indianapolis, Indiana, where our family was as I was growing up, and we were over in Illinois in the summer at our cousin's farm. We often did that. I can remember vividly the afternoon they said, do you want to have fried chicken tonight for dinner? Oh, man, what kid doesn't? Oh, yes.

Before that day I loved fried chicken. Years later, I learned to love it again. So they invited me along in the process.

Oh, this is exciting, fried chicken dinner. First stop was the barnyard. Much to my amazement, we were going to eat the chicken I had played with that day.

The next step was a real shocker, removing the head. They did that swiftly, but what followed was not pretty. The chicken was flailing everywhere.

Cousin farmer just let it go down on the ground, and it began to run wildly, earnestly, energetically, but pointlessly around the barnyard, racing here, racing there. It looked like it had a lot to get done fast. And you know that's often what the church looks like, just racing here and there, do this, do that, get this done, get that, schedule that.

Oh, what about this? Oh, we forgot that. Looks very alive, certainly very active and energetic, but sometimes going nowhere, and sometimes totally out of touch with the head. Looking like there's life bursting forth, when really it's just the pangs of death overtaking.

It's critical in a body to know the head, to stay in touch with the head, to be controlled and led by the head. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. What a glorious head we have.

May He lead us. May He be our Lord. This fourth term, fullness, is a very unusual one.

I was really startled when the Lord first opened my eyes to this verse and this word in it. His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. We are the body of Christ, and the body of Christ is called the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The church can be and is to be, in fact by nature is, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. So often the church is just too full of itself and not at all filled with the Lord Jesus Christ. Full of programs, full of flesh, full of striving, sometimes full of pride.

By nature we are to be the fullness of Him who fills all in all. How does this work? Well, Christ is our life. He's the life we live on in the body of Christ.

Colossians 3.11 says He wants to be all in all. He's in all of us and wants to be all to all of us. To the extent that we believe that, receive it and walk in that, practically even the church can be more and more the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Jesus came that we might have life and that we might have it abundantly. Full life, not just surviving, but abounding in love and joy and peace and fruit and good works. Well, He is that fullness that brings that full

life forth.

And to the extent that we let Him be that among us, fullness of life is found in the church. Why is it that too many Christians find less than fullness of life in their walk with the Lord? Often it's because of a very loose attachment to the body of Christ. I don't know if you've ever heard, I don't know all the words or even the melody anymore of that old gospel, southern gospel song that the chorus kept saying, I want to be under the spout where the blessings come out.

I used to hear that song and wonder, where is that? I kind of like that too. Well, where is it? It's in the church. That's where God has ordained to reveal Himself, to help us grow, to let us minister to one another and mature in fullness of life.

The church is the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Sometimes a lack of a fullness in spiritual walk relates to a lack of relationship to the body of Christ. There are many who call themselves believers that just sort of are a dangling appendix at best in the body.

In just touch base now and then, once or twice or thrice a month. After all, I'm a Christian. I should make an appearance.

Well, that totally misunderstands the nature of the church. We are a body and we are the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Again, if my right hand were to develop that relationship with the rest of the body, what kind of life would it have? Well, I'll check in with you, body, a few times a month.

Not too much. I don't want to be a fanatical right hand. I don't want people to think being part of this body is all that big a deal.

What would happen to my right hand? It would shrivel up. The opposite of fullness of life. The church is the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Casual, sporadic, detached relationship to the body of Christ is violating the nature of the church for you and I who are members in the body of Christ. The nature of the church, the people of God, a spiritual organism, Christ the head and in Him we are the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Romans 12.5 adds, we who are many are one body in Christ.

In the ultimate sense, the nature of the church is this, one Lord, one church, one head, one body. All around the world, those who are in Christ, those who have believed on the Lord Jesus and are joined to Him by faith and are part of the body of Christ, we are one body, we who are many. And we are many.

Praise God at this time we are many in numbers around the world. We are also many in cultures, in colors, many in languages, many in liturgies, many in types of buildings. But if we are in Christ we are one body.

What a glorious plan, what a great thing. Our head, the Lord Jesus, is able to manage, lead and guide, give life to, coordinate and direct a body that now stretches around the world on every continent. It is all praise to the head of the church.

We should pray for one another near and far, love one another near and far, speak the truth to one another near and far. We must grow in both. We will talk much about that in our upcoming studies.

The nature of the church, what is the church? Essentially in her very being, she is the people of God, a spiritual organism. Christ is her life and her leader, her head. It comprises all believers around the world,

one church, those in Christ.

Well this is a glorious place in God's grace and mercy that we have come. Now what is our purpose in the world? We see a bit of who we are, why are we here? What is the purpose of the church, the goal, the objective? In talking about the purpose of the church we are asking the question, what is our reason for being here on this earth? Some would say, well it is obvious, it is just to enlist people. You want to be bigger don't you? Some would say it is obvious, it is to raise money, you have got to have money you know.

Some would say you want to be famous so you can be influential as a group. You want to develop security, after all you want your organization to perpetuate. All of that can produce the very user friendly kind of church growth phenomenon in America today.

This misses the purpose of the church. Why are we here? 1 Corinthians 10:31 gives us a wonderful general perspective on that. Therefore whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Our reason for being here on this earth is to glorify the Lord God, to give glory and honor to Jesus Christ our head. Ephesians 5:10 puts it this way, we are trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Why are we here? What is our goal? What are we aiming at? Biblically our purpose should be to glorify and please the Lord more and more here upon this earth.

To bring that down to a more specific bull's eye target, how do we do that? What is the purpose that refines that? Matthew 28:19, called the Great Commission because it was the great overarching instruction of Jesus Christ to his followers and we who would follow after them. The purpose of the church is seen beautifully in Matthew 28:19. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. The purpose of the church is to be about the business of making disciples.

Not getting church members, not getting rich, not getting famous but making disciples. Jesus Christ left glory above. The throne room of the universe amidst honor and praise and adoration to come down to this sin scarred dead world and suffer humiliation and alienation from the Father on our behalf.

Not just to fill chairs and pews in meetings or to get religious organizations pumping. He did all that to get disciples. To call out lives that would follow him and that would be the purpose of their entire being.

Just follow the Lord Jesus for everything that is involved in that and for everything that flows out of that. Jesus went around saying, come follow me. Not gather and erect a religious monument.

Come follow me. He did all that for me. And now we go around in his name saying, come follow the Lord Jesus and we'll do it with you.

Let's help each other. Let's remind each other. Let's tell each other what it's all about.

And that is our purpose. To make disciples. To be followers of the Lord.

To find in him forgiveness, new life, purpose, resources, new life, new life, new life. Purpose to live. Transformation.

Much fruit and abounding good works. All as we follow him. That's our purpose.

Now our function grows out of the purpose and should fulfill the purpose. What is the function of the church? That is the proper characteristic activities of the church. When we're talking about the function of the church, we're talking about this question.

What does the church do? What is she to be doing? Many have thought the church is there to entertain and just give it a kind of a religious G rated flavor. Others behave as though the church is to function in contests. We're better than that one down the street.

Oh, we can go beyond that. Hey, our department is better than your department in the Sunday school. And to make the point, the one with the most people, you know, will get a side of beef and the other superintendent will get his tie cut off.

You know, that sort of thinking. Does that happen in churches? If you've kind of been hanging around Calvary Chapel, you haven't seen a whole lot of that sort of stuff, but it's out there. I won't even embarrass myself and take your time to tell you some of the crazy things I thought and did early on as a pastor.

But what I mentioned that sounds so ludicrous, didn't always sound that foolish to me. It's like, oh man, you got to motivate people somehow. It's like the young believer at a denominational convention went up to the president of the organization and said, all these things we're talking about doing with our people sound so carnal.

And the leader said, well, let's face it, we're ministering to carnal people. How sad! We can't change carnal lives by carnal means. We can't see our flesh dealt with and Christ formed in us in maturity and fruit by fleshy means.

We want to be doing, functioning in the way the Lord has called us. The church has often behaved as though our function was just to be a fundraising organization and just kind of put the name of God on it so people would take it all real serious. Well, sadly, we've made almost a mockery to many of the name of God.

What is the function of the church? What are we to be doing? We're to be doing what fulfills our purpose. Our purpose is discipleship. And Matthew chapter 28, verses 19 and 20 just continue to elaborate on how disciples are made.

They're disciples made, therefore defining for us, the church, what our function is to be. Disciple making involves two things. See, go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.

How? One, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Two, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. Baptizing and teaching.

Evangelism and edification. Sharing the gospel by witness and word that people might be identified with the Lord Jesus. Take a stand with Him in water baptism.

Say, the Lord is mine. I am the Lord's. My all life has been buried.

I've been raised to newness of life. Christ died on the cross for my sins. I now have forgiveness and new life in Him.

This is the end of side A. To listen to the rest of the message, please turn the tape over now. And Matthew, chapter 28, verses 19 and 20, just continue to elaborate on how disciples are made, therefore

defining for us, the church, what our function is to be. Disciple making involves two things.

See, go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. How? One, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Two, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

Baptizing and teaching. Evangelism and edification. Sharing the gospel by witness and word that people might be identified with the Lord Jesus.

Take a stand with Him in water baptism. Say, the Lord is mine. I am the Lord's.

My all life has been buried. I've been raised to newness of life. Christ died on the cross for my sins.

I now have forgiveness and new life in Him. That's the first part of discipleship. Meeting the Lord.

Taking that first step to follow Him for forgiveness and new life. What's the rest of discipleship? Teaching. Edifying the saints.

Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. This is to be the function of the church. These are the things that we are to be doing.

Too often the church is so busy doing other things that she never does these two things. Now interestingly enough, these two things can be done in all kinds of arenas. Our God is not some letter of the law, stiff, narrow minded Pharisee.

He brings us into a broad place. It's on the narrow way, but it's life abundant. In 2 Corinthians 3.17, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

There's all kinds of spiritual freedom in the ways that this can be done. But this is what it's to be. Fulfilling our purpose of disciple making by evangelism and edification.

Acts chapter 1 verse 8 is a good picture of the evangelism and witness side. That getting of the truth out that people might come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 1.8 speaks beautifully of that.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. This is to me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. This is the witness of the church in disciple making.

The witness that can lead to evangelism. The sharing by word and deed and attitude. The reality of the Lord Jesus Christ who is our head and is our life as His body.

And in witness we get out the truth of Jesus. Who He is, the Son of God. What He did, died and rose again on our behalf.

And our testimony, He's done this for me and He's giving me a new life. And all of that is by the power of the Holy Spirit. Not by religious energy, not by organizational overwhelming of other people.

It's by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit coming upon us to empower us. The Spirit who was with us to convict us.

Then came to live in us when we repented and believed. And now loves to come upon us with enablement, overflowing unto witness. It can be done in all kinds of ways, this witness.

Personal testimony, a harvest crusade, an outreach concert, missionary partnerships, gospel preaching, church planting, trips to London. There are all kinds of ways to do it. And the Spirit of the Lord can lead us in liberty in all kinds of directions if we let the head do the directing.

But that's the initial part of disciple making. Here's the other part. Once meeting the Lord, what are people to do to grow as disciples? Acts 242, the early church was involved in these things.

Here's what the church was doing. Here was the function of the early church as led by the Spirit, as recorded by the Spirit. Acts 242.

And they continued, that is those who were baptized, those who turned to the Lord, and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship in the breaking of bread and in prayers. They were functioning in four arenas. The Word of God, fellowship, worship, prayer.

And they continued steadfastly in these things. They devoted themselves to these things. They didn't dabble in these things.

They didn't hang out together for eight hours and then someone would go, oh, you know, we should read a Bible verse. They devoted themselves to the Apostles' doctrine. They gave major attention.

In fact, it's the first thing listed here. What a priority it is. Yes, God loves to hear from us in prayer and praise and worship.

And yes, we can hear from each other the things God is teaching and doing. But if we're not hearing from God, all the rest of that just falls apart. It's just dead religious words.

We must hear from the Lord. We can only live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The words of the Lord, they are spirit, they are life.

So they continued in the Word of God, learning it. And then in fellowship. Fellowship, that's a word that talks about partnership, sharing together in common.

What is it that we have fellowship in? What is our partnership in? Too often Christian fellowship means, oh, that's when you have your coffee and doughnuts in the church building. Well, you can have coffee and doughnuts as Christians and do it together here and there. But that doesn't cause fellowship and that isn't the definition of fellowship.

A lot of Christians have coffee and doughnuts together and they have no Christian fellowship. First John 1.3 tells us what our fellowship is. Indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son.

Our partnership, what we share in common, what we give to one another and receive from one another is a share in the life and the work of the Lord in our lives. He is the one we fellowship in. As we minister the Lord to each other, we are truly fellowshiping.

And you can do that in all kinds of places. But the Lord is the heart of Christian fellowship. And then the breaking of bread.

Not just food together, though that's a blessed arena to have fellowship in as Christians. It's great to hang out and eat together. The Lord did it often with His disciples and there's great blessing and warmth and intimacy in that, a great place to minister.

But the breaking of bread was the breaking of the bread of communion, often added on to an agape feast or a fellowshiping in food. In other words, remembering the Lord together. This is worship.

Remembering the Lord, who He is, what He did, the cup, the bread, the bread, the spotless Lamb of God, a qualifying sacrifice, He went in my place. The cup, the cup of the new covenant, His shed blood providing for us forgiveness and all that we need for life of growth and service in the Lord. Worship.

And then prayer. Prayers of thanksgiving, intercession, praise, just prayers of adoration of the Lord. Letting the Lord hear from us.

He loves that too and we need to express our hearts to the Lord. This is how the church is to function. You could say it in a number of ways.

You could say it's about building relationships with the world, with one another. Don't forget with God. In fact, the priority is reversed.

In the Word of God, the number one relationship to be about building is with God. Then with His people. That's not setting aside the world, that's being prepared to impact the world.

Building relationships with God, with each other and with the world, helping them start the process with God, with one another in the body of Christ and then the world. Some have used the phrases in-reach and out-reach and of course we could add up-reach, but again the order would be the reverse. Up-reach, reaching up to the Lord, we'll talk a lot about that in our next session together.

It's critical for the body of Christ. The up-reach to the Lord, then the in-reach to each other, building up and then out-reach to the world. Praise the Lord that He's not left us in the dark about who we are, why we're here and what we're to be doing.

The nature, the purpose, the function of the church is beautifully, gloriously covered in the Word of God. And in conclusion, I think of those wonderful words of Jesus in Matthew 16, 18 where He said, I will build my church. We're not the builders, He is.

But we say, how does He do it and what does He use? Well, we're looking at today and in five more studies, we're looking at who's doing it and how He does it. He uses us. May He sharpen our understanding of the nature of the church, who we are.

The purpose of the church, why we're here and the function of the church, what we're to be doing. Often it can be a revolutionary work of God in our lives. And even in a healthy church ministry like this one that I believe really manifests so much of these realities, we can just keep growing in them, deepening, extending and God will get the glory and lives will be touched.

Amen. Let's stand together and pray. Father, we thank You so much for calling us unto Jesus Christ, our Lord.

We're so blessed to be in the family of God, members in the body of Christ, relating to one another, but above all, connected to Jesus Christ, the head, our life giver. Thank You, Lord, for letting us know who we are in Christ as the church. Lord, refine our purpose.

Keep reminding us we're here to glorify You by making disciples and give us in our everyday thinking, planning and activities a function that grows out of our purpose. May we be out there, Lord, with witness

for the world and with encouragement and edification for one another. We want to press on to follow and know the Lord.

And Lord Jesus, would You just use us in all of this as Your instruments, as You build Your church. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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