

## Be The Church

### *What does it mean to “Be the Church?”*

1. There are many answers given today - some say the same thing but practice differently
2. Some say different things and practice the same way
3. Some say different things and practice differently
4. However, some say the same thing and practice the same thing - even if they look different.

### **The Seven Lampstands (Revelation)**

The Seven church ages:

- [Ephesus](#) (Revelation 2:1-7) - the church known for having laboured hard and not fainted, and separating themselves from the wicked; admonished for having forsaken its first love (2:4)
- [Smyrna](#) (Revelation 2:8-11) - the church admired for its tribulation and poverty; forecast to suffer persecution (2:10)
- [Pergamum](#) (Revelation 2:12-17) - the church located at 'Satan's seat'; needed to repent of allowing false teachers (2:16)
- [Thyatira](#) (Revelation 2:18-29) - the church known for its charity, whose "latter works are greater than the former"; held the teachings of a false prophetess (2:20)
- [Sardis](#) (Revelation 3:1-6) - the church that has a good name; cautioned to fortify itself and return to God through repentance (3:2-3)
- [Philadelphia](#) (Revelation 3:7-13) - the church steadfast in faith, that had kept God's word and endured patiently (3:10)
- [Laodicea](#), near [Denizli](#) (see [Laodicean Church](#)) (Revelation 3:14-22) - the church that was lukewarm and insipid (to God) (3:16)

1. These were seven churches in the region at the time of the writing of Revelation, AD 90
2. They also represent seven church ages from Pentecost until the Rapture.
3. However, they also can represent denominations and local bodies today - regardless of the name on the door.

**What do you think your church is? I think we'd all claim to be Philadelphia, but are we really?**

### ***But First, what does it mean to “Be a Believer?”***

**Rom 10:8-13 NKJV - But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your**

mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

That's it - to be saved, all one has to do is call upon the name of the Lord.

I believe David summed it up perfectly:

**Psa 116:1-2 NKJV - I love the LORD, because He has heard My voice [and] my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call [upon Him] as long as I live.**

## Four types of soil:

**Mat 13:3-11 NKJV - Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. "And as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.**

<https://www.hunker.com/12488407/what-are-four-types-of-soil>

### **Sandy Soil**

Sandy soil is light and airy, which allows plenty of oxygen to move through it, but it lacks in nutrients, making it less than ideal for growing. Since it is so light and drains easily, it does not retain nutrients and becomes very dry, which prohibits plant growth. Sandy soil has a rough texture.

### **Clay Soil**

Clay soil is a dense, extremely compacted type of soil; the soil's density makes it difficult for oxygen to pass through. It is on the opposite end of the spectrum from sandy soil, since it retains nutrients very well, but its density prevents the plant roots from accessing those nutrients for growth. Clay areas of soil become very wet, because the water cannot penetrate successfully.

### **Silt Soil**

Silt soil is in between sand and clay soil in consistency. It is commonly found near streams and rivers because the particles move with water without effort. Its texture has a tendency to become crusty

### **Loam Soils**

Loam soils are the best type of soil for gardening and general plant growth. Loam is very easy to work with, holds nutrients well and is able to retain enough water for plants to grow efficiently.

There are four distinct “experiences” we see when the word of God goes out and four distinct “results.”

Wayside - birds (enemy) came and devoured

Stony - not much earth, not deep - sprung up right away but scorched and died

Thorns - (soil may have been good), but it had thorns in it (cares of this world)

Good ground - actually yielded a crop. 100x, 60x, 30x - all good crop

**Who do we think we are? I think we all hope we’re good soil.**

**I think these can speak generally to all people as a whole and we’d fill in the blanks**

1 How many people do you know that have heard but it’s like it has no effect and they scoff?

2 How many people do you know that hear, get excited, plugged in, doing beginning of ministry - but something happens, when the first real challenge comes...they fade away

***The lie is that Christianity is easy...your best life now physically, emotionally...***

***The truth is that Christianity is the best life now - spiritually - because you can have the heavenly experience in the midst of death’s tragedy***

3 Thorns - how many Christians have you known that received it, responded properly, but eventually got side tracked by a marriage, financial desires, wanting to live with all this world has to offer? Begin to make decisions based on feelings, desires, but not God’s desires?

4 Good ground - how many do you know that are continuing? Actually bearing fruit in their lives? Personal fruit? Fruit in other’s lives as well?

**The reality is, I believe, that even good soil will have days where it behaves like bad soil, shallow/stony soil, thorns in it - Even the best field will have rough patches. Weeds love good soil just as much as plants do.**

**Not one of us is perfect, and in fact, if we were, where would the growth happen?**

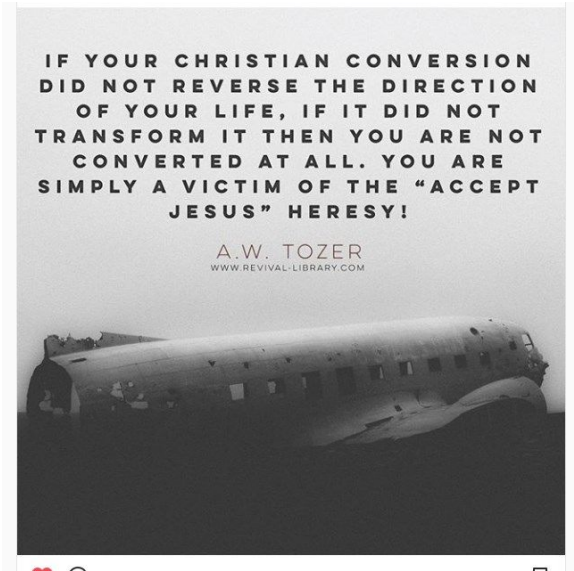
**The point is not that you are good soil automatically/naturally, but that you allow God to MAKE you perfect soil through allowing him to break you up, pull up the weeds, dig deep remove the rocks, water, plant, spray pesticide, put up a scarecrow in your life.**

### **Break up the fallow ground**

**Hos 10:11-13 NKJV** - Ephraim [is] a trained heifer That loves to thresh [grain]; But I harnessed her fair neck, I will make Ephraim pull [a plow]. Judah shall plow; Jacob shall break his clods."

**Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For [it is] time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you. You have plowed wickedness; You have reaped iniquity. You have eaten the fruit of lies, Because you trusted in your own way, In the multitude of your mighty men.**

**Eze 36:22-32 NKJV** - "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do [this] for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. "And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I [am] the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. **"For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do [them]. "Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. "I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. "And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that [were] not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. "Not for your sake do I do [this]," says the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!"**



### **Have you, since being saved, changed direction?**

How much of your life has changed direction?

Namely your inner life? The inner man or woman?

But also the outer? What do you act like, what do you do? What do you desire?

### **On what do you base your decisions?**

Is the the Word of God and prayer? Does he direct your paths? Or is God an afterthought?



Even if we claim to do so, what is the fruit in our lives? Is there a fruitful fellowship with the Lord? Or is is just going from guessing to guessing, stumbling to stumbling, or from faith to faith? Our walks should constantly be improving, the overall chart should be reflecting an upward call, not a downward spiral or the flat line of a dead heart.

## Turned from sin and turned to God...IN EVERYTHING.

Even in how we worship. In how we come to God. In how we live this Christian life.

*Read Tozer quotes January 16?, 28*

**It's not the good life, it's the best life.**

(raising kids radio advert)

**Sometimes we get saved, we put away the bad things, but begin to do some good things  
But we haven't moved on to the best things**

**We've changed who we worship, but not how we worship.**

*If you were of another faith and come to Jesus, is your ritual the same? Did you just change necklaces?*

*Personal testimony of getting saved, throwing everything out, coming to church and soaking everything up, looking to everyone else to see how to do life because I realized I didn't know how to do it.*

*Worship & bible studies in the home*

*Looking to God, looking to believers - just like a baby looking to their parents for everything, passively and actively*

*At some point, a kid grows up and becomes their own person, but with traces and foundations of their parents but taken to the next level*

*As believers we should look to God as our prime example, and follow others as "they follow Christ." But it has to become a personal relationship with the Lord, at some point, following an example is not enough, we must be the example and raise children of our own.*

***This is where the ven diagram begins of personal and corporate worship - there are things in our lives that overlap the church and things in church that overlap our personal lives - some things are separate, some are not, but they both completely affect the other.***

**If we are not personally worshipping (not just song) we cannot corporately worship**

**If we are not corporately worshipping together, we cannot effectively worship alone.**

**It is a singular relationship**

**[1Ti 3:5 NKJV] 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);**

The relationship is primarily with the Lord, but it extends to others  
It must be rooted and grounded on him, but branched out to others

**A tree without branches is a stump**

**Branches without a tree is just firewood**

Jhn 15:5-8 NKJV - "I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw [them] into the fire, and they are burned. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Personal worship, prayer, evangelism, study, fellowship

Seeking disciples, seeking to be discipled, seeking to encourage

- The church's function is an extension of the believer's personal lives
- The church cannot function without the life of the believer being right
- A believer is to personally worship, pray, study, evangelize and disciple
- The church is to corporately worship, pray, study, evangelize and disciple

The church corporately is not to be the shepherd of one's life, it might not have the relationship with one and make a harsh ruling or not take into account the details, unless directed by the result of sin (see Corinthians)

**But personally we can disciple others, love others, reach others**

We don't need to bring someone to church, we need to bring them to Jesus. Doing so might in practice bring them to church, but the fellowship of believers (church) is not the destination, it is like a public rocket launching pad to the heavens

**The problem is that we see the church as an organization to do things on it's own**

**To do things separate from the life of a believer**

*Oh, my pastor will do that,*

*i come to church to get ministered to (ok on some degree),*

*I come to hear the teaching*

*I come and only sing songs here*

*I come to have an outlet to serve (OK, but it shouldn't be the only outlet, it should be the outlet to serve as a group, and to serve the group)*

The church at large [discipling/worshipping/studying/evangelizing/fellowshipping...etc] should be, like when looking through a microscope, see the individuals [x,y,z].

The church at large is the outlet for the believer to co-minister, to co-labor in the gospel  
 Not to take the place of the individual, but to magnify the work of God in each individual  
 in a corporate way

**To help produce 100x, 60x, 30x fruit**

You're going to need more workers, but it tends to be 80/20

**Sadly, there are Not many like minded**

**Phi 2:17-21 NKJV - Yes, and if I am being poured out [as a drink offering] on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me. But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.**

**Church becomes kingdom building. Becomes about a man, a woman, a specific ministry to GO TO**

**Phi 1:15-17 NKJV - Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.**

**Paul knew it was only about Jesus. The only one we can go to. The only one who will truly listen. Who can truly heal.**

**He was glad that the gospel went out, no matter what the motivation because it was going out.**

**But he knew there was a better way.**

**Jhn 14:6 NKJV - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

**Jhn 15:13 NKJV - "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**

**That is being a believer. Going for, striving for, getting to and through the ONLY way. Jesus. And laying our lives down for him and for others.**

**Going where he says go. Loving who he says loving.**

***But being willing to be broken.***

*A lot of time we don't worship, we shy away from worship, because we are afraid to be broken*



**We will be broken one way or another. By our own volition or by something else.**

Ultimately we will be broken by God in the last day if we haven't allowed him to break us now

**Mat 21:44 NKJV - "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."**

**The truth is...from sin, we are already broken.**

**We don't allow him to break us because, through and by sin, we see him as somehow being cruel to break us**

*That if we allow him to break us, it will be a cruel experience, it will be a comfortless experience and we will be more hurt than we are now.*

**But that is a lie. We have experienced being broken in our lives** by others, by events, which are cruel, which are the result of sin. The breaking of the world, of life, by others, usually ends in more brokenness - sometimes not, like when a doctor sets a bone, but **the point is, there is no guarantee with the experience of life without God**

**But the breaking of the Lord always leads to restoration. That is guaranteed.**

Bruised reed, smoking flax, never leave you nor forsake you, give you a hope and future...

**We cannot be made one with God and one with others as the church, if we have not allowed to break us personally.**

Now is the time. It is so much better to broken with God, it will allow you to go through a broken experience of trial without being further broken - and really - that experience instead of breaking you down more will build you up more into a holy habitation for the Lord

## **So then, What is the church?**

**Ekklesia** - a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly...united into one body

**It is believers, being believers, together**

*And without it, I doubt you're being a believer*

**Heb 10:19-25 NKJV - Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and [having] a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of [our] hope without wavering, for He who promised [is] faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,**

as [is] the manner of some, but exhorting [one another], and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

*The way the church was when it was small (not that small is better)  
Always fellowshiping, a lot of new believers, full-on wanting to follow Jesus. Not concerned about kingdoms, about names other than His name lifted up  
Meeting each others needs and eager to meet others needs  
Because we eagerly spent time with the Lord personally and together*

**Act 2:40-47 NKJV - And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added [to them]. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**

*Worship and bible study experience early on  
OH, I CAN DO THIS? WE CAN DO THIS?  
I did it in the world to worship my idols, but I can do it this way to worship God? How much better!*

*"Get a CD player..."*

**Worshiping God is not just listening to a nice song, or singing - it's all of life, it's a condition and direction of one's spirit toward God**

*It is from the heart.  
Quietly in private at times  
Loudly in public if need be  
But from the heart*

**2Sa 6:12-23 NKJV - Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that [belongs] to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. Then David danced before the LORD with all [his] might; and David [was] wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and**

*whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece [of meat], and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house. Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" So David said to Michal, "[It was] before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play [music] before the LORD. "And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor." Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.*

**It's not about the experience. It's about the one we see through to.**

**Even if we don't feel like it, God deserves our song, deserves our prayer, deserves our worship**

**Because he saved us.**

**But the miracle is, he meets with us.**

Whether we sing, read, pray or minister in public or private, the end should be the same:

**To meet with Jesus**

When we come to church that is the goal. When we sit down to read at night, that is the goal. Not for knowledge (that should be a side-effect), but for time with Jesus

Luk 10:38-42 NKJV - Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Coming to church to hear a good message is not the point. We should come to church to meet with Jesus, and if we did that and the message was awful, well OK, we still met with Jesus. We came there for him. Not for a mug. Not for a great band. Not for a wonderful speaker. We can do that without going to church and probably get a better band, a cooler prize, a smarter more eloquent speaker.

The point is that we got to spend time with Jesus and hear from him.  
 But I think we miss that.  
 I think the church at large is missing that.  
 I think the believer at large is not aware of that.

Maybe it's because we were never shown it.  
 Maybe it's because we were never aware of how deep the well is.

*My cup runneth over*

Or maybe it's because we aren't the good soil we think we are  
 Maybe we're not the loving church we think we are  
 Maybe it's because we haven't allowed God to break us  
 We haven't fully turned from our ways and desired God's ways in us

**2Ch 7:14 NKJV - "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."**

**We say we want a revival. To see God work.  
 We say we want people to get saved and the word to go out.**

**But we haven't humbled our ways  
 We haven't sought his face**

And if we don't our lives, our families, our churches, our communities and countries won't be healed

**Religion won't save us. We bash the religious folk but is not the majority of modern Christian practice simple religion? God-toward at best, pagan at worst?**

That's not what God wants  
 God desires obedience and not sacrifice  
 God accepts the humble and not the proud  
 God is near the brokenhearted but far from the one who things he's rich in his own strength

When we come to church, do we want Jesus?  
 If we're coming for something else? Why? Why bother? Why want to go to heaven?  
 Our personal time with the Lord should happen at home, in the car, with others or by ourselves.

It's not the surface. It's not simple worship that's holy or complicated worship that's holy.  
 Worship that's holy is wholly about the One who is Holy and we won't be doing that unless we allow him to make us holy. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

I want to see God. I want to be with him. I don't want a club. I don't want a lesser experience in life. A lesser crop. I've had that. It never satisfies.

I want to be satisfied in Him. I want to want all that he intends, and for me to want that, it's going to take some breaking. For me to get that it's going to take some growing.

And that's OK, because he'll do the breaking. He'll do the growing.  
But we have to let him.

**We have to be His church.**

**Willing to go. Willing to say. Willing to do. Willing to be broken. Willing to be embarrassed. Willing to be vulnerable. Willing to be poor in spirit and rich in love.**

**Don't we want more of Jesus? Don't we need more of him?**