

# Marks of a Biblical Church

## 1. A Biblical Church Must Meet under the Right Name

*“Where two or three come together in My Name there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).*

What’s in a name? Everything, for names have meaning. Though many names divide, the name of Jesus unites, for biblically speaking, the church:

- Belongs to God (I Timothy 3:15).
- Is founded by Christ (I Corinthians 3:11).
- Has Christ as the Head (Ephesians 1:22).
- Is made up of His followers (Acts 2:47).
- Has ministers equipped by Him (Ephesians 4:11,12).

## 2. A Biblical Church Is Mystical in Nature

The church can either be designed by man and operate on a human level, or be God-designed and operate upon a mysterious and spiritual level. It cannot be both because the bible clearly teaches that God’s ways are not man’s ways. Under God’s control, the New Testament church grew (Acts 2:41). Officers were divinely equipped (I Corinthians 12:7-11); apostles were appointed (Acts 13: 2) and enthusiastically sent forth.

Jesus promised that as long as His Spirit controlled He would lead, teach, guide, and supply leadership and growth in the church (John 16:13). Today, too often we turn our backs on this promise and look for artificial means of church growth.

## 3. A Biblical Church Recognizes the Word of God as Authoritative

For the early church, the Word of God was the prophetically spoken word. For us it can also be spoken, but it must always be in line with the revealed written Word of God. When sermons become man’s ideas, human philosophies, or unbiblical interpretations of God’s Word (and by their fruit we can know), the Holy Spirit is eliminated, and we are in trouble. The Bible teaches that God’s Word is truth (John 17:17). Hearing comes by the Word (Romans 10:17). Obedience must be to God’s Word (Psalm 119:9).

God’s Word never changes (Matthew 24:35). So who has changed the church of today, the church which God instituted and designed?

## 4. A Biblical Church Meets the Demands of Jesus

Jesus never called us to merely intellectual believing or church membership but to wholehearted following. He even instructed his followers to make him disciples, not just believers (Matthew 28:19). A disciple follows His Master and must

- Live in accordance to His teaching (John 8:31).
- Love other believers (John 13:38).
- Bear much spiritual fruit (John 15:8).

Many confuse personal salvation with discipleship. Following are a few distinctions.

<b>Salvation</b>	<b>Discipleship</b>
Is God’s gift-----	is our gratitude
Is an inward experience-----	is a physical response
Is free-----	is a commitment
Gives a white robe-----	gives an uniform
Is having a shepherd-----	is being under command

Comes by believing-----comes by obedience  
Offers forgiveness of sins-----gives a reward in heaven

## **5. A Biblical Church Has Standards for Membership**

The word “ecclesia” means a gathering of believers.

*“The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).*

In our churches today, we have believers as well as unbelievers. Because church membership is based upon a few questions and agreeing to a man-made creed, instead of revealing that God has personally transformed us, we have followers as well as spectators, We have made human standards for church membership, and do little searching for true evidences of salvation and separation from the world.

What was Jesus’ requirement and promise to new followers?

*“If you love me you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you my Spirit to be with you forever.*

*If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:15,16,23).*

Yes, Jesus promised us a Helper. He requires that we show love, bear fruit, and live in accordance to His teachings. Fulfilling these requirements are the evidences of a true believer.

## **6. A Biblical Church Grants Believers Liberty to Exercise Their Gifts**

In a truly Christian church, we don’t live by man’s rules but by God’s rules. Each believer is expected to be a minister. The Bible says,

*“You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (I Corinthians 6:20).*

Truly, a Christian church was never meant to be a lecturing place and to have one man performing all the actions. The church continues Christ’s ministry when it unites in action and believers minister one to another as well as the world.

## **7. A Biblical Church is a Liberating Movement**

*“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).*

Yes, Jesus has given us the greatest mandate ever! He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. (II Corinthians 5:18). Liberating people from prison and the powers of darkness and slavery and bringing them into the freedom of Christ is what the church is all about. Churches that do not preach the cross and are not following Christ’s teaching are missing the mark. A church was not meant to become a movement unto itself but a movement for God. Neither was the church meant to be an entertainment center, but was meant to be a refueling and action center.

May God give us the privilege to see His church become exactly that movement again!

Note: This article is based on the book, *Church on the Rock(s)*. It can be obtained by contacting the author’s website: [www.RichardOostra.com](http://www.RichardOostra.com)

