

Why You Need a (less than perfect) Church Family
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⁴¹Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

⁴²All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper^[a]), and to prayer. ⁴³A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—

Acts 2:41-46 (New Living Translation)

I. What is the church?

1. The church is God's family.

³All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation,

1 Peter 1:3 (NLT)

¹⁷Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.

Hebrews 13:17 (NLT)

¹⁵so that if I am delayed, you will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1 Timothy 3:15 (NLT)

⁵His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by sending Jesus Christ to die for us. And he did this because he wanted to!

Ephesians 1:5 (Living Bible)

2. The church is God's tool for accomplishing His purpose in the world.

¹⁰God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 3:10 (NLT)

⁸⁻¹⁰And so here I am, preaching and writing about things that are way over my head, the inexhaustible riches and generosity of Christ. My task is to bring out in the open and make plain what God, who created all this in the first place, has been doing in secret and behind the scenes all along. Through followers of Jesus like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels!

Ephesians 3:10 (The Message)

3. Jesus died for the church.

²⁵For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her.

²⁷He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.

Ephesians 5:25 (NLT)

4. The church is the only organization that will last forever.

²¹Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:21 (NLT)

¹⁷Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NLT)

5. The church is the only group big enough to solve the world's problems.

6. The church helps me discover my purpose in life.

7. The church helps me stay focused on God.

³³Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

II. Why get involved in a less than perfect church?

1. Because you are not perfect!

2. Because the church is uniquely positioned to help no matter what your struggle.

⁴He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

II Corinthians 1:4 (NLT)

3. The church is the perfect incubator for spiritual growth.

4. God has a history of choosing less than perfect churches.

²⁶Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy^[a] when God called you. ²⁷Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. ²⁸God chose things despised by the world,^[b] things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. ²⁹As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

³⁰God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.

I Corinthians 1:26-30 (NLT)