

## WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES ABOUT THE NATURE, FUNCTION AND PURPOSE OF A LOCAL ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Headline:	1. THE DIVINE PLAN for every individual believer	2. THE DIVINE PURPOSE for the present dispensation	3. THE DIVINE PRINCIPLE on which to gather together	4. THE DIVINE PATTERN for the conduct of assemblies
<b>Key concept:</b>	God's will is that people be saved, baptised and added to an assembly	An assembly is a "called-out company" bearing testimony to Him	Christians are to gather in the name [authority] of the Lord Jesus alone	The NT sets out a fixed pattern for assembly order and function
<b>Explanation:</b>	God desires each believer to contribute to and benefit from being in fellowship in a local assembly. He grants spiritual gift(s) to each one, so that the whole might be edified and grow in truth and love. In turn all men will know that we are Christ's disciples.	Local churches are unique to the parenthetical period between Pentecost and the Rapture. With Israel temporarily set aside, God is now calling "out of the Gentiles" a people for His name to testify to a rejected but returning Christ, before working nationally with Israel again.	Prior to Calvary, God dwelt a single location at Jerusalem. Today He dwells wherever two or three are "gathered together unto His name" – i.e. under the authority, lordship and ownership of Christ alone. This foundational basic principle is our one and only "ground of gathering".	The precepts, principles and historical pattern of the NT provide a blueprint for assembly order and function today, showing us "how to build" and "how to behave" in the house of God. Assembly principles are called the "commandments of the Lord".
<b>Bible References:</b>	Acts 2:41-42, 9:26-28, 1 Cor 14:26, Phil 2:1-2, Heb 10:24-25, 1 Pet 4:10	Acts 15:14, Heb 13:13, 1 Cor 10:21, 2 Cor 6:14-18, 1 Thess 1:8	Matt 18:20, Jn 4:21-24, Acts 20:32, 1 Cor 1:12-16, 3:3-4, 5:4	1 Cor 3:6-17, 14:37, Col 2:5, 1 Tim 3:14-15, Titus 1:5
<b>Contradictions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a member of a 'ministry' but not of a local assembly</li> <li>• "Online church"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State-Church alliances</li> <li>• "Holy wars"</li> <li>• Judaistic practices</li> <li>• Political activism</li> <li>• Emphasis on social work</li> <li>• Taking money from the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denominationalism</li> <li>• The Seminary system</li> <li>• "I am a [denominational name]"</li> <li>• Synods, councils, central oversights, head quarters</li> <li>• Creeds and confessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastors (male or female)</li> <li>• No display of headship</li> <li>• "Sign gifts" in operation</li> <li>• Lack of reception/discipline</li> <li>• Infrequent Lord's Supper</li> <li>• Rock music and drama</li> </ul>
<b>Examples of contradictions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay-at-home Christians</li> <li>• Lone ranger Christians</li> <li>• Church-hopping Christians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Roman Catholic Church</li> <li>• The Eastern Orthodox Church</li> <li>• The Episcopal Church</li> <li>• Faith &amp; Freedom Coalition etc.</li> <li>• Christian Aid etc.</li> <li>• Messianic Churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Presbyterian Church</li> <li>• The Methodist Church</li> <li>• The Baptist Church</li> <li>• The United Church of Christ</li> <li>• Church of the Nazarene</li> <li>• The Assemblies of God etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The typical nondenominational community-type church</li> <li>• Mega-churches (Village Church, Lakewood, Potter's House, Saddleback, Bethel)</li> <li>• Calvary Chapel, Harvest Bible Chapel, Vineyard, Hillsong etc.</li> </ul>