



The Heart of the Matter

As we mature in our Christian faith, one of the most significant realizations we will reach is a healthy understanding of and appreciation for the church. Most of us go through great difficulty as we come to this conclusion. During our spiritual “growing-up years,” the church usually suffers the brunt of our criticism and the bulk of our complaints. We go through periods of ignoring and resenting the church and then travel to the other extreme of virtually worshiping the church. Therefore, we need to come to terms with the biblical role of the church and its God-given place in our lives.



Discovering the Way

1. People’s Comments about the Church

People bring a wide variety of perspectives on the church, which tend to revolve around three ideas: the identity of the church, criticism of the church, and their expectations of the church.

2. Christ’s Statement on the Church (Matthew 16:18)

When Jesus said, “I will build My church,” He made it clear that the project is His, that the church belongs to Him, and that the church will survive regardless.

3. Paul’s Commitment to the Church (Romans 12:4–13; 1 Corinthians 12:24–26; 2 Corinthians 8:1–7; Galatians 5:13–14)

Paul reminds us that the church should be a place to exercise healthy relationships; a place of unity, compassion, and giving; and a place for liberty, love, and serving.



Starting Your Journey

There are at least eight expectations for a thriving member of any local church.



Tools for Digging Deeper



Practical Christian Living
A Road Map to
Spiritual Growth
 by Charles R. Swindoll
 compact disc series
 ((10 messages on 10 CDs +
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 Application devotional
 Bible Companion))



Practical Christian Living
A Road Map to
Spiritual Growth
 Insight's Bible
 Application Series
 paperback book

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