

The Church and the Communion of Saints

Opening reading:

1 Peter 2:4-12

I believe in ...

the holy catholic church

the communion of saints ...

Two things to explore:

What the church is

What the church is supposed to be doing

WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT

It isn't a building, it isn't a political organisation, it isn't a means to wealth and prosperity

THE CHURCH IS ...

Holy is 'Belonging to God', 'Set apart' 1 Peter 2:9

... a holy nation

The church is an *ekklesia*- a people called out

What are the implications of this for us? How should we see the church we belong to?

To think about: Use the church versus serve God through the church

Catholic - means universal (*kata holos*) (see Acts 9:31) also Galatians 3:28

... there is neither Jew nor Gentile ...

Catholic - the church is made up of all peoples of all places

What are your thoughts on this? How should this shape our approach to mission?

The Church is Christ's initiative:

Matthew 16:18

I will build MY church ...

The church of Christ is unstoppable

The church must go about Christ's agenda, not its own.

The church is a family

Galatians 6:10, 1 Tim. 5:1-2

Brother/Sister is not a title, it's a sign of family

Family members support one another - Galatians 6:2 (without being nosey!)

The church is a place where you can belong

Church is essential to a Christian

The church is sent on mission

John 20:21 - 22

'The church is the continuing presence of Christ in the world' - Adam Hamilton

We are sent to do what Jesus did - Matthew 9:35 - 38

The church brings glory to God

Matthew 5:14 - 16

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Christians usually referred to as saints in the Bible

E.g to the saints in Ephesus ... Ephesians 1:1b

Not used in the Roman Catholic sense.

Communion of saints - a belief that the church is made up of past, present and future Christians

Ref: Hebrews 12:1-2; Rev. 7:9-10