

MAIN POINT

As those called by God to make His name known, the church is not the place we go, but the people we are.

INTRODUCTION

What comes to mind when you hear the word “church”? What images or ideas have you traditionally associated with the idea of the church?

Do you more often think of the church as a place or a group of people? How has this view been shaped throughout your life?

For many people, especially in the Bible Belt, the term “church” is most associated with a building. From the time we are children, we sing songs about and hear talk of the church as a place where God’s people go, but not necessarily who they are. However, the Bible makes it clear that the church is the people of God, not the place where they meet. Today we will look at some passages that highlight that God does not live in a temple made by human hands, but in the people He has come to save.

DISCUSSION

> READ EPHESIANS 2:19-22.

How is the building described here different than a physical structure built by men?

How do individuals in the church show they are part of this spiritual building?

According to these verses, what are some hallmarks of the church built by God? How do you see these characteristics displayed at our church?

In what ways can you see God’s earthly church being fitted together and growing in the Lord? What role does our group gathering play in God working this way?

> READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17.

According to this passage, where does the Holy Spirit live?

In what sense are believers God’s temple? Why do you think Paul used the concept of a temple here?

APPLICATION

In what ways would our church look different if we were more aware of God dwelling not primarily in our church building, but in our church body?