

New Testament Local Church Fellowship

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Acts 2v41-47; 1 Corinthians 1v1-2

The New Testament (NT) describes 2 aspects of the Church:

The **universal Church**, all believers in this day of grace, **“My church”** (Matt 16v18), **“the church which is His body”** (Eph 1v22-23).

The **local church** / assembly (Matt 18v17), a company of believers gathering in a locality to the Name & Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 18v20).

There are 2 corresponding aspects of church fellowship taught in the NT.

1. Christian Fellowship

Connected with the universal Church, a fellowship we are **called into** (1st Cor 1v9), fellowship with Christ & God the Father, connected with all true believers in the family of God (1st John 1v3,7).

2. NT Local Church / Assembly Fellowship

Connected with the local church, a fellowship we are **received into** (Acts 2v41).

1st Cor 1v2: The Doctrine of NT Local Church Fellowship

1. Designation of a NT local church: “the church of God”, i.e. a gathered company of believers in a particular locality, who regularly assemble together, gathering in accordance with NT teaching & practice.

The term **“church of God”** indicates that a local church is a distinct entity, with the stamp of God upon it:

- **Divine origin / derivation** (not a man-made institution)
- **Divine ownership / possession** (purchased at Calvary, see Acts 20v28)
- **Divine character** (marked by divine order, not the disorderly character of men)
- **Divine testimony** (to represent God & Christ in a dark sinful world)

2. Composition of a NT local church: “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called ... saints”, i.e. a separated company of baptized believers (see Acts 18v8), set apart to God, positionally secure in Christ, called to be God’s holy ones.

3. Occupation of a NT local church: “with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord”.

In a NT local church, the Lord Jesus Christ is given the preeminent place in the gathering (see Matt 18v20).

Acts 2v41-47: The Practice of NT Local Church Fellowship

v41: The **pathway to the fellowship**; i.e. saved, baptized & added / received.

v42: **“they continued stedfastly ...”**, i.e. **constancy in the fellowship**, they had perseverance and endurance.

“in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship”, i.e. the **doctrinal basis to the fellowship**.

“in (the) breaking of bread”, i.e. a **visible expression of the fellowship**, the Lord’s supper (1st Cor 11).

“in (the) prayers”, i.e. the **empowerment of the fellowship**.

V43: **“fear came upon every soul”**, in appreciation of the presence of Christ & the holiness of God.

V44-46: The **practical expression of the fellowship**; the company was united in **“singleness of heart”** (v46).

V47: The **spiritual expression of the fellowship**; the privilege of collective worship of God.

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”; there were conditions for divine blessing.