



Rediscover Church

Why the
Body of Christ
Is Essential

Collin Hansen &
Jonathan Leeman

“This is a must-read book, not just because the authors have great insight to share on the topic, but because this is the most needed book for all Christians today. Many Christians believe the future of Christianity is the virtual church, and COVID-19 is reinforcing this idea. You will find *Rediscover Church* very helpful as a reminder to firmly stand on the biblical view of the church and nothing else. I cannot recommend this book highly enough.”

Nima Alizadeh, President and Founder, Iranian Revelation Ministries Inc.

“This is a very timely book in an age of confusion and disappointment regarding the essential need of the local church. Hansen and Leeman have provided a logical, practical, biblical, and basic understanding of the role of the church in the life of a believer. It is hard to imagine a Christian who is maturing in Christ and living the gospel consistently apart from a local church. If you wonder why that is, you need to read this book to be convinced and encouraged. I hope and pray that our God will use this book to contribute to the rediscovery and rebuilding of the church in our days.”

Miguel Núñez, Senior Pastor, International Baptist Church of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

“Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, widely different views on the Christian church had emerged. The restrictions due to the pandemic have further challenged our view on what the church and its function is; a biblical recovery is therefore needed more than ever. Collin Hansen and Jonathan Leeman have risen to this challenge and offer this book to help us toward such a recovery. Written in a lucid, conversational style, *Rediscover Church* offers a compelling, biblical view full of insight and practical wisdom. It should be read and discussed in every church because it offers important biblical guidance to help believers rediscover the church of Jesus Christ for his glory and for the progress of the gospel.”

Kees van Kralingen, Elder, Independent Baptist Church of Papendrecht, The Netherlands; Editor, *Reformation Today*; Council Member, The Gospel Coalition Nederland

“*Rediscover Church* is a timely, relevant book sorely needed for the post-pandemic world. No longer can church be taken for granted; this generation wants to know why we’re doing what we’re doing. Hansen and Leeman deftly combine biblical thought with real-world experience to deliver a manifesto of what the church should be today. Why do we physically gather in a virtual world? Who has given the church authority to proclaim truth? How do we love those inside and outside the church? How do we practice the tough love of church discipline? At times hard-hitting (the immorality of homogeneous churches), chock-full of memorable illustrations (the church as an embassy), and always thoughtful, this is a book your church should be reading and talking about.”

J. Mack Stiles, missionary and former pastor in the Middle East;
author, *Evangelism*

“Once upon a time, the basic truths about the church were foreign only to nominal Christians who had abandoned church commitment long ago. With the entry of COVID-19 and the availability of live-streaming services, more and more believers are preferring to ‘do church’ at home. Therefore, this easy-to-read book, rich with personal anecdotes, has come out at a crucial time. Collin Hansen and Jonathan Leeman invite us to rediscover church by savoring one all-embracing definition of the church. Walking with them through this book will give you a renewed love for the church and its head, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Conrad Mbewe, Pastor, Kabwata Baptist Church, Lusaka, Zambia

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Why the Body of Christ Is Essential

Collin Hansen
and Jonathan Leeman

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WHEATON, ILLINOIS

Rediscover Church: Why the Body of Christ Is Essential

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Published by Crossway

1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

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Cover image & design: Crystal Courtney

First printing, 2021

Printed in the United States of America

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All emphases in Scripture quotations have been added by the authors.

Trade paperback ISBN: 978-1-4335-7956-1

ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-7959-2

PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-7957-8

Mobipocket ISBN: 978-1-4335-7958-5

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Hansen, Collin, 1981– author. | Leeman, Jonathan, 1973– author.

Title: Rediscover church: why the body of Christ is essential / Collin Hansen and Jonathan Leeman.

Description: Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2021. | Series: 9Marks and the gospel coalition | Includes index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021005473 (print) | LCCN 2021005474 (ebook) | ISBN 9781433579561 (trade paperback) | ISBN 9781433579578 (pdf) | ISBN 9781433579585 (mobi) | ISBN 9781433579592 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Church.

Classification: LCC BV600.3 .H437 2021 (print) | LCC BV600.3 (ebook) | DDC 262/.7—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021005473>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021005474>

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

BP		29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21			
14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

*For my home group:
Those who pandemic together, stay together*

Collin

To my brothers and sisters at Cheverly Baptist Church

Jonathan

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Introduction

YOU MAY HAVE MANY reasons not to go to church. Indeed, many people stopped attending during the recent pandemic—as much as one-third of churchgoers by some estimates. You may be one of them. But this book aims to help you rediscover church. Or maybe it can help you discover for the first time why God wants you to make a priority of gathering with and committing yourself to the local church.

Simply put, a Christian without a church is a Christian in trouble.

We're long past the time when we could assume even that dedicated believers in Jesus Christ understood why they should bother with church. The number who identify as Christians is far larger than the number who attend a weekly meeting. Even then, the bulk of the serving and giving in our churches tends to be done by only a few. So it's not as if COVID-19 suddenly convinced Christians they didn't need church. Millions had already made that decision even before gathering involved online registration, social distancing, and masks.

COVID-19, however, accelerated the long-trending separation between personal faith and organized religion. The shutdowns

caught all of us by surprise in their sudden onset and indefinite duration. And it's hard to get back in the habit once it's been broken for more than a year. That problem is not unique to church. Try getting back to the gym when you've been scared to darken the doors for months.

Resuming church attendance would be hard enough if our only problem were that a deadly disease kept us apart much longer than many expected. But fear of contracting COVID-19 might be the least of the reasons that convinced many Christians to stay away from church. Debates over masks, vaccines, and much else divided church members trapped in their homes and glued to Facebook feeds filled with dire warnings and conspiracy theories. Christians liked each other a lot more before social media. Take away the unifying experience of weekly worship together under the same roof, and the bonds of affection have frayed.

But that's not all. Recent elections—for American readers, at least—might have been even more divisive. How can Christians worship alongside voters with such different priorities? Sure, Christians might share the same views on the Trinity, baptism, and even eschatology. But what good is that when we feel more in common with our political allies who might not even be Christians?

The same goes for the causes of racial unrest. Why can unbelieving neighbors see the solutions so clearly, we might wonder, when the couple we used to sit behind at church every week promotes such ignorant and even dangerous views in their public postings? It's enough to make many think they could never be safe or comfortable returning to that same church.

And don't ask about pastors. They've heard our complaints. Why didn't they reach out to check on us while we were locked

down at home? How did they even spend their time during the pandemic? The online sermons were lackluster, when anyone bothered to tune in while distracted by stir-crazy children. Anyway, regular pastors can't compare to the courageous leaders who tackled the issues head-on in TV interviews and articles. Plus, the pandemic made it easier than ever before to watch other pastors' online sermons without guilt and skip our own church. We knew that no one would ever know the difference, since we couldn't see our pastors in person anyway.

Yes, we all have many reasons not to go back to church. In fact, many churches don't expect us to ever come back. They're launching virtual churches and hiring virtual pastors. No need to wake up early on Sunday. No need to put on pants. No need to search for a parking spot. No need to tune out other people's crying babies. No need to make small talk over bad coffee with the person whose politics disgusts you. No need to stifle a yawn through a long sermon. No need to taste the bread and the wine.

A Future for the Church?

Is there a future, then, for church? Is virtual church the future? Yes and no. That's why we aim in this book to convince you to rediscover church. We don't do so from naivete, as if we can't imagine why someone would struggle with the local church. In fact, anyone who loves the church must learn to forgive and forbear with Christians. God does not invite us to church because it's a comfortable place to find a bit of spiritual encouragement. No, he invites us into a spiritual family of misfits and outcasts. He welcomes us into a home that's rarely what we want yet just what we need.

Try to remember church before the pandemic. When you looked around the congregation gathered to sing, pray, and hear God's Word, you might have thought everyone was happy to be there. They might have listened quietly as the pastor preached or shouted "Amen!" when they wanted to affirm a point. They might have raised their hands as the choir led in song or buried their eyes in a hymnal. They might have extended a warm handshake and a friendly hello or offered a quick "Peace be with you" before moving on.

But not everything is as it seems, even in a church full of smiles. The pandemic strained our relationships and surfaced some of the pain and fear behind the happy faces.

Behind every smile in church you'll find a story. You'll find a family that bickered all the way from home until they crossed the building threshold. You'll find a widow grieving a loss that everyone else has already forgotten. You'll find a solitary soul wrestling with doubt about God's goodness amid a lifetime of pain and suffering. You might even find a pastor wondering how he can plead with the church to follow Jesus after a week when he so often has failed to do so himself.

From week to week in your church, you can never be quite sure how everyone feels or what everyone thinks, no matter their appearance. You can't even be quite sure why everyone shows up. That's why you don't know who will come back. One person thoroughly researched various churches' doctrinal positions before selecting the best match. Another person just needed friends in a new town. One person has bounced from congregation to congregation and never found the right fit. Another person can't imagine any reason to leave the church where she

grew up and observed every milestone of birth, marriage, and death. By appearance alone, you never can tell the full story, even in your own church.

So why would you rediscover church? What could get you out of bed again on a Sunday morning or off the couch after work on a Wednesday night? Why would you return to a particular congregation among other options? Why even bother with Christianity at all? The world hardly mourned the absence of church during the pandemic. What is it, anyway? Is it a self-help club for the mentally and emotionally weak? Is it a political action group for the like- and closed-minded? Is it a community-service organization for people who enjoy old-timey songs?

Even before the threat of deadly contagion, the church looked increasingly strange in an age when neighbors rarely gather for things like intimate discussion, quiet learning, and enthusiastic singing—especially when the subject matter comes from an ancient book about strange practices such as animal sacrifice, a book that Christians regard as having absolute authority.

What exactly happens, then, when you go to church? We don't just mean things like the sermon, the singing, and the service (though we'll address all those things and more in this little book). We're talking about what happens beyond the smiles, beyond the songs, beyond the Scripture reading. We're talking about the plans and purposes of God—because your church is much more than meets the eye. It is, in fact, the apple of God's eye, the body for which Jesus Christ gave his body. It's essential.

That's why God uses the most intimate of human relationships, marriage, to explain what's happening in your church. Teaching the church in Ephesus about marriage, the apostle Paul writes:

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Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:25–27)

In this passage, Paul helps us deduce from a relationship we know, marriage, in order to understand something about the church that we cannot see. Husbands love their wives by giving up their lives. Likewise, Jesus Christ—God’s only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, crucified by order of Rome, risen from the dead on the third day—gave himself up for the church. Through his sacrifice on the cross, he pardoned all who turn from their sin and trust him. You can be holy because Jesus gave his body. Just as you nourish and cherish your body, so Christ nourishes and cherishes his church (Eph. 5:29).

Imagine the profound mystery of Christ and the church when the old lady next to you wears too much perfume, when the guy in front of you claps on the wrong beats, and when your friend on the other end of the aisle forgets to tell you “Happy birthday!” It’s even harder to imagine that mystery when you’re home alone, because even and especially the awkward members of the body remind us that no one approaches God except by sheer grace. No one can buy a seat at this table. You can only be invited.

Believe it or not, your church gets even more interesting. The apostle Paul tells the church in Corinth, “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Cor. 12:27). Yes,

your church is the very body of Christ. That goes for the banker who chairs your deacon board and the recovering alcoholic who can't control his body odor. That goes for the homecoming queen who greets you with a smile at the door and the nursery worker who has never been on a date. If you have repented of sin and believed the good news of Jesus's death and resurrection, you all belong to Christ—and one another. Paul tells the Romans, “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Rom. 12:4–5).

In Christ, your church is perfect—without spot or wrinkle. That holds true even in a pandemic and through political turmoil. In practice, you already know—or you'll eventually find out—that your church comprises members who still sin against God and one another even as the Spirit sanctifies them. They step on your toes. They forget to show up for child-care duty. They say offensive things. They demonstrate sinful partiality. And the list goes on.

But as we help you rediscover church in this book, you'll need to remind yourself of what you cannot see. You return to church because you belong to God, because Christ gave his body. And because he gave his body, Christ made a body of believers from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9). In this body, no one person is more important than any other, because everyone belongs by grace alone through faith alone. There is no partiality for the rich, no preference for the important (James 2:1–7). Because we owe all to Christ, we share all with one another: “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Cor. 12:26).

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You belong to God and to one another. One body, many members—including you. You have many reasons not to rediscover church and one reason why you must: because through these people you don't much like, God wants to show his love to you. It's the only kind of love that can draw us out of ourselves and into a fellowship that transcends the forces tearing apart our sick world. It's the only essential way for us to find healing together.

Beyond all that, your church is where Christ says he's present in a unique way. We would even dare to say that your church and ours is where heaven touches down on earth—where our prayers begin to be answered: “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

What Is a Church?

Jonathan Leeman

MAYBE YOUR PARENTS took you to church as a child. Mine did. Some things I liked. Others I didn't. One thing I loved was playing hide-and-seek with my friends in the church building. It was a sprawling, irregular building, with unexpected hallways, doorways, and stairwells—perfect for hide-and-seek. If you had asked me, “What is a church?” I probably would have pointed to the building.

In high school, the main thing that interested me about church was the Friday night youth events with fun songs, silly skits, and a quick devotion. But if you had asked me whether I had ever considered joining the actual church, I would not have known what to say. Probably I would have waved away the question, not seeing its relevance.

In college and graduate school, I stopped attending church. I still believed the truths of Christianity, at least in my head. Yet

I wanted the world more than I wanted Jesus. So I pursued the world with gusto. As best I can tell, I was a nominal Christian—a Christian in name only. I called Jesus my Savior, but he certainly wasn't my Lord. I "believed," but I hadn't "repented and believed," as Jesus calls us to do. Had you asked me, "What is a church?" I probably would have said, "It's a bunch of people who want to follow Jesus, which is why I don't want to be there." Ironically, the further I had strayed from the church, the better I had understood what it is.

What about you? Have you ever stopped and asked yourself, "What is a church?"

Preaching and People

In August 1996, I completed graduate school and moved to Washington, DC, to find a job. A Christian friend told me about a church in town. Feeling a little guilty about how I was living, but mostly desiring something deeper and more meaningful out of life, I decided to attend. I don't remember the sermon that first Sunday morning back at church, but I remember returning that night for the Sunday evening service and also the following Wednesday evening for Bible study. The following week, I attended the same: Sunday morning, Sunday night, then Wednesday night. I suddenly transformed from a nonattender to a three-times-a-week attender. Nobody made me. Something was drawing me.

Actually, *someone* was drawing me—the Holy Spirit—and he was using two things. First, he used Pastor Mark's preaching. I had never heard anything like it. Mark preached the Bible verse by verse, chapter by chapter, without embarrassment.

For instance, one Sunday Mark preached one of those difficult-to-stomach chapters in the Old Testament book of Joshua. God commanded Joshua to enter a Canaanite city and kill every man and woman, young and old, as well as all the cattle, sheep, and donkeys. He read the text out loud, looked up at us, and paused.

What is he going to say next, I wondered. That text is outrageous!

Finally, Pastor Mark spoke: “If you are a Christian, you should know why a text like that is in the Bible.”

Wait, what?

At first, I was annoyed by Mark’s challenge. *I should know why it’s in the Bible? Why don’t you tell me why it’s in the Bible, Mr. Preacher!*

Yet a moment later, Mark’s challenge started making sense. Verses like the one Mark had read remind us that God doesn’t owe us explanations. We owe him explanations. God is not on trial. We are on trial. He is the Creator and Judge. Only he can give life and can take life.

I don’t remember what Pastor Mark said next. The point is, my world had already changed. Reality had been reordered. I was seeing with a slightly different set of eyes—kind of like the new perspectives one acquires with age, but gained in an instant. A conviction had settled in: *God is God. I am not.*

Good preaching does this kind of work every week. It faithfully reveals the Bible and changes the eyes of your heart, helping you see the world from God’s perspective, not your own. We’ll think more about preaching in chapter 4.

Yet preaching like this wasn’t the only thing the Holy Spirit used to draw me into that church. He also used the people. A man named Dan invited me to join his family every Saturday morning for breakfast and a study of Isaiah. A retired couple named Helen

and Hardin invited me for dinner. So did another older couple named Paul and Alice. The church's embrace was sweet and warm. I had a few non-Christian college friends there in DC with me, yet more and more I wanted to spend time with these new church friends as well, and to invite my college friends to join us.

This congregation, its loves and commitments, offered me a picture of a different kind of life. I had lived to serve myself. They lived to serve God and others. I used my words to show off or to criticize. They used their words to encourage. I talked about God as if he was a chapter of philosophy. They talked about God as if they knew him. I wanted to enjoy the weekend party. They wanted to enjoy Christ.

The congregation also gave me a picture of a different kind of city. There we were in Washington, DC, a city awhirl in conversation about the upcoming elections of November 1996. Members, too, enjoyed such conversations. Some of them even departed to home districts for several weeks of campaigning for their bosses' congressional or senatorial seats. Yet these folks talked about politics as if it was merely *important*. The city wanted them to treat it as *ultimate*. Church members had political *interest*. The city wanted us to worship politics as an *idol*.

That meant that inside the church, the political culture felt . . . calmer, not frenzied, more respectful. Our agreement over truly ultimate things, like the source of eternal justice, allowed us to disagree lovingly over important things, like the best political strategies for justice now.

Traditional demographic divides also held less sway. I was a single man in my early twenties. With time, I spent more and more evenings with married couples in their seventies or a widow

in her eighties. My first meaningful and deep friendships with minority brothers and sisters would occur in that church.

In short, I learned that the city of God marches to a different drummer even as it participates in some of the civic and cultural marches in the cities of this world.

If you had asked me in those days, “What is a church?” I could not have given you a well-formed answer. But these two ideas of preaching and people—a gospel word and a gospel society—were growing in prominence in my mind. A church—I knew—has something to do with a group of people gathering to be shaped by God’s Word. That way, they begin to live together as a different kind of people, one that’s both *in* and *not* of the world.

Why a Right Understanding Matters—Living Like Heaven

Let’s bring it back to you again: What would you say a church is?

When we don’t think about that question carefully, we risk cheating ourselves out of the sweet goodness that God intends for us through his family. After all, your *understanding* of what the church is will shape your *life* and your *living*.

For instance, think about how people today talk about “joining” a church, as if it’s a club. Or “driving down to the church,” as if it’s a building. Or “enjoying church,” as if it’s a show. What assumptions are at work when we talk about church in these ways? Further, how do these assumptions shape how we engage with our churches? I’d say they make it easy to think about our churches for ninety minutes a week and ignore them otherwise.

“But hold on,” we hear from the Scriptures. “A church is actually a gathering and a fellowship of the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Spirit.” So if we continue to

mindlessly treat our churches as little more than clubs, buildings, or performances, we'll miss the truckload of support and blessing that God means to park in our driveways.

This book aims to help you rediscover church so that you both *understand* what a church is and in turn discover the richness of *living* as a brother or sister in the family of God; the joy of *living* as one part of Christ's body united to other parts of the body; and the countercultural power of *living* as one brick in the holy temple where God dwells on earth now. We want you to experience all these benefits and blessings, both for your own sake and for the sake of your non-Christian friends and neighbors.

More than anything else, your non-Christian friends need not just your gospel words but also a gospel community that testifies to the truth of those gospel words. You want them to watch the life of your church and say, "God really does change people. And he really is building a just and righteous city—here in the church" (see 1 Cor. 14:25; Heb. 11:10).

Just think: American political leaders have long referred to America as a "city on a hill." Yet part of rediscovering church is rediscovering that *our churches* should be those cities on the hill, whether we live in the United States or any other nation. This is what we all—Christian and non-Christian—most need in culturally and politically tumultuous times.

Heaven will not descend to earth through any nation today. And it hasn't descended to earth among any nation since God tied his presence to the temple of ancient Israel.

Yet remarkably, amazingly, astoundingly, your church, the one we want you to rediscover, is the place where the Bible says heaven has begun to descend to earth:

- The kingdom of heaven is at hand here (Matt. 4).
- God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven here (Matt. 6).
- We store up the treasures of heaven here (Matt. 6).
- We bind and loose on earth what's bound and loosed in heaven here (Matt. 16, 18).
- We are the heavenly temple (1 Cor. 3; 1 Pet. 2).

Heaven touches down on planet earth through our gathered churches. And when this happens, you offer the citizens of your nation the hope of a better nation, the residents of your city the hope of a better and lasting city.

No matter what challenges you face as an American or non-American, ethnic minority or majority, rich or poor, your hope for a just and peaceful society should not rest on the kingdoms of this world. It should rest on the King himself, who is establishing his heavenly kingdom in the outposts we call the local church.

What Is a Church?

What is a church? The Bible uses all kinds of metaphors to answer that question—the family and household of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Spirit, the pillar and foundation of truth, the bride of Christ, Christ's flock, and more. Each one of those metaphors tells us something wonderful about your church and ours. We need all of those metaphors because there is no other organization, body, or people like the church. We discussed a couple in the introduction, and we'll continue to mention them throughout this book.

Yet here's the theological definition of a church that we'll spend the rest of the book unpacking:

REDISCOVER CHURCH

A church is a group of Christians (chapter 2)



who assemble as an earthly embassy of
Christ's heavenly kingdom (chapter 3)



to proclaim the good news and
commands of Christ the King (chapter 4);



to affirm one another as his citizens
through the ordinances (chapter 5);



and to display God's own
holiness and love (chapter 6)



through a unified and
diverse people (chapter 7)



in all the world (chapter 8),



following the teaching and
example of elders (chapter 9).

Finally, a Member

A couple months after I arrived in DC, one of my new friends invited me to join the church. Actually, he invited me to move into the church's men's house, yet only church members were permitted to live in the house. It was a nice row house on Capitol Hill—a desirable neighborhood—and the rent was cheap. "Sure, I'll join the church! Tell me how to sign up," I said.

What I intended for financial gain, God intended for my good.

The church asked me to sit through several membership classes and an interview with Pastor Mark before joining. Having grown up in church, I knew the right answers. The congregation then voted to receive me as a member in November 1996.

If you had asked me at that time what a church is, I assume my answer would have been vague and generic. I do remember walking back from lunch one day with Pastor Mark and giving him a hard time about why our church insisted on being "Baptist." Those were the kinds of fights twenty-three-year-old me would pick.

Truth be told, I had one foot in and one foot out for the first year. On Saturday night, I partied with non-Christian friends. On Sunday morning, I went to church. It was like trying to stand on two horses at once. You know that won't last long.

But the Lord was gracious. Little by little, he changed my desires, and I began to place both feet on one horse. I began to repent and look to Jesus as both Savior and Lord. The Bible became interesting. Christian friends became precious. Sin increasingly seemed stupid, even detestable.

Repentance included abandoning the sins of my youth—the kind that youth pastors warn high schoolers about.

Yet biblical repentance also has a corporate dimension. In my case, it meant abandoning my life as an unattached, autonomous individual. It meant joining a family and taking responsibility for that family. It meant inviting other Christians into my life and having embarrassing conversations that included confessing sin or admitting weakness. It involved looking for older men to disciple me and younger men to disciple. It led me to show hospitality to folks who were new or in need. It trained me to rejoice or suffer with those who rejoice or suffer.

To put it another way, repentance always involves love. Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34–35).

Notice that Jesus doesn’t say that non-Christians will know we are his disciples by our love *for them*, though that’s also true. He says they’ll know by our love *for one another*. Interesting, isn’t it? How could that be?

Well, look again at the kind of love it is: “just as I have loved you . . .” How did Jesus love us? He loved us with a sin-bearing, self-sacrificing, grace-giving love. “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

What is a church? It’s a group of people who know they’ve been loved by Christ and have begun to love one another like that. This is how Pastor Mark and Dan and Helen and Hardin and Paul and Alice all loved twenty-three-year-old, feet-on-two-horses me.

In fact, this is how our fellow church members love Collin and me today, too—with a forgiving, forbearing, and patient love. And this is how we try to love them in return.

It's a love that the unbelievers out in the world should not only hear about in our words, but also see in our lives together, leading them to say, "We want some, too! Can we join?"

"Ah, friend," we say, "let us first tell you where such love comes from."

Recommended Reading

Dever, Mark. *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Hill, Megan. *A Place to Belong: Learning to Love the Local Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.

A church is a group of Christians



who assemble as an earthly embassy
of Christ's heavenly kingdom



to proclaim the good news and
commands of Christ the King;



to affirm one another as his
citizens through the ordinances;



and to display God's
own holiness and love



through a unified and
diverse people



in all the world,



following the teaching
and example of elders.



THE GOSPEL COALITION

The Gospel Coalition (TGC) supports the church in making disciples of all nations, by providing gospel-centered resources that are trusted and timely, winsome and wise.

Guided by a Council of more than 40 pastors in the Reformed tradition, TGC seeks to advance gospel-centered ministry for the next generation by producing content (including articles, podcasts, videos, courses, and books) and convening leaders (including conferences, virtual events, training, and regional chapters).

In all of this we want to help Christians around the world better grasp the gospel of Jesus Christ and apply it to all of life in the 21st century. We want to offer biblical truth in an era of great confusion. We want to offer gospel-centered hope for the searching.

Join us by visiting [TGC.org](https://www.tgc.org) so you can be equipped to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself.

TGC.org

IX 9Marks

Building Healthy Churches

9Marks exists to equip church leaders with a biblical vision and practical resources for displaying God's glory to the nations through healthy churches.

To that end, we want to see churches characterized by these nine marks of health:

- 1. Expository Preaching**
- 2. Gospel Doctrine**
- 3. A Biblical Understanding of Conversion and Evangelism**
- 4. Biblical Church Membership**
- 5. Biblical Church Discipline**
- 6. A Biblical Concern for Discipleship and Growth**
- 7. Biblical Church Leadership**
- 8. A Biblical Understanding of the Practice of Prayer**
- 9. A Biblical Understanding and Practice of Missions**

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