

Church: What's It Good For?

"Church. For Good." series- Part 01

Use the next few minutes to connect and fellowship with other members of the group by discussing the following: What brought you to Grace Hills Church and what kept you coming back?

Let's get on the same page -

Pew Research found in a 2016 study, that respondents noted seven key reasons for choosing a church. They were allowed to offer more than one reason. Here are the top seven responses:

1. Quality of sermons (83%).
2. Feeling welcomed by leaders (79%).
3. Style of services (74%).
4. Location (70%).
5. Education for kids (56%).
6. Having friends/family in the congregation (48%).
7. Availability of volunteering opportunities (42%).

Which of the above 7 reasons really surprised you?

Which one do you identify with the most?

Which reasons really reflect or measure God's mission for the church?

For some the church is a social network—a place to meet like-minded people. For others, it's a place to help raise their children. For others, it is a place for social justice—helping the poor, the trafficked, and the unborn. How we view something affects how we treat it.

Today we will study a brief passage of Scripture to discuss how God views the church and, therefore, God's mission for it?

Book: 1 Timothy 3:14-16

1Ti 3:14 I am writing these things to you now, even though I hope to be with you soon,

1Ti 3:15 so that if I am delayed, you will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1Ti 3:16 Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory.

Let's get into the Word:

In this passage, Paul writes about God's expectations for church conduct. In fact, in 1 Timothy 3:15, he gives three metaphors of the church—three ways God views it:

1. The church is a family,
2. the assembly of a living God, and
3. the support (pillar) and bulwark (foundation) of the truth.

How is the church like a family and how should we apply the fact that we are God's family?

What do your relationships with others in the church say about your relationship with God?

How might growing in fellowship with God help you in fellowship with others?

Are there any relationships God is calling you to make right so you can be closer to him (Matt 5:23-24)?

What applications can we make from the fact that believers are the assembly of the living God?

What are your thoughts and feelings about the reality of the living God being among us in corporate worship?

What does Paul mean by calling the church the pillar of the truth?

How can churches and individual Christians fulfill God's call to be the pillar and foundation of the truth?

After talking about the church's duty to the truth, Paul describes the primary content of that truth in verse 16. There are six aspects of the "mystery" or truths that we are to solidly stand upon and proclaim. List the six and discuss how we proclaim these truths with real action:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Based upon our discussion today, what is the mission of the church...what is it good for?

In my personal time with God:

How can I treat the members of the church as family?

How can I increase my sense of reverence for God's presence when gathering with the church?

What else can I do to strive to hold firm to the purpose of God's church?