

## **Sixteen Reasons We Say “The Church of Christ”**

**Christ built the church.** “...upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it” (Matthew 16:18). Since He is the builder of the church, and sustainer of the church, He certainly deserves credit for the church.

**The church belongs to Christ.** He called it “My church” (Matthew 16:18). No man or creed can possess the church, because Christ owns it and has not relinquished the title. Thus we should always be respectful when we speak of Christ’s church. When I invite someone to services, I try to remember to ask them to come visit God’s church rather than my church. When people ask, “What do you do at your church?” I try to remember to say, “Well, it’s not my church, but this is what we do...” It may sound nit-picky, but I believe it sets the tone for understanding that where I attend church is not a matter of personal preference, but rather a matter of acknowledging God’s will.

**The church is Christ’s body, and He is the head.** When Paul compares the church to a body, He always makes Christ the head of the body, that which directs and leads the body. “He [God] put all things in subjection under His [Christ’s] feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:22, *cf* Col. 1:18). The headquarters of the church is literally in heaven. We do not take orders from a man or council on earth, but rather we look to the book which He revealed from heaven.

**The church is Christ’s temple, and He is the chief foundation stone.** “You are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19–22).

**Christ manages His house, the church.** “Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant ... but Christ was faithful as a Son over his house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end” (Hebrews 3:6).

**The church is the kingdom, and Christ is king.** “To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever” (Revelation 1:5–6).

**The church is a priesthood, and He is high priest.** “He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17). “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5–6). All that we do for God rises as a sweet-smelling sacrifice to the throne in heaven through Christ (*cf.* 1 Peter 2:5, Colossians 3:17).

**Entrance into the church is provided through His name.** We are baptized in the name of Christ to be added to the His body. “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). “And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...” (1 Corinthians 12:12–13).

**The church is married to Christ.** “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7, *cf.* 2 Corinthians 11:2).

**Christ is the Savior of the church.** “Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body” (Ephesians 5:23).

**Christ gave Himself for His church.** “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her...” (Ephesians 5:25–26a).

**Christ purified His church.** “...having cleansed her with the washing of water with the word, that He might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5:26b–27).

**Christ purchased the church with His own blood.** “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

**Christ is the Shepherd of His flock.** “I exhort the elders among you ... shepherd the flock of God among you ... And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:1–4).

**“Church of Christ” is a Scriptural name.** Of the names recorded in the Bible, such as “church of God” (1 Timothy 3:5), “church of the living God” (1 Timothy 3:15), “church of the [locale]” (Colossians 4:16, 1 Thessalonians 1:1), and “churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16), never do we find denominational names.

**Members of the church are called by His name, too!** They are called “Christians” (Acts 11:26, 26:28, 1 Peter 4:16). Our label should come from the only one whose name can save (Acts 4:12).

Thus, to call ourselves the “church of Christ” seems entirely appropriate, and places the honor and glory exactly where it deserves to be. We are the church of Christ because we are the church that belongs to Christ. To call ourselves anything else—after a man, such as the Lutheran church or the Wesleyan church, or after a sect, such as the Methodist church or the Seventh Day Adventist church—takes the attention off of Christ. Paul says, “Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you ... for I have been informed concerning you ... that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, ‘I am of Paul,’ and, ‘I of Apollos,’ and, ‘I of Cephas,’ and, ‘I of Christ.’ Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:10–13). -- *John Guzzetta*