

# Portraits of the Church

## I. Introduction

- A. Scripture uses a number of descriptions and metaphors to paint “portraits” for us of what the Lord’s church is all about. Consider five such portraits of the church. **Ephesians 2:19-22**

## II. Kingdom of Christ

- A. One way the church is depicted is as the kingdom of Christ. While the Lord’s kingdom in a sense includes the righteous of *all* ages, those in the Christian dispensation who enter His church enter His kingdom at the same moment.  
**Colossians 1:13**
- B. Like our present time, people in the first century often assumed that Christ’s kingdom was earthly in nature (cf. **Acts 1:6**). Jesus made it clear, though, that His kingdom is *spiritual*. **John 18:36**
- C. Jesus also emphasized what greatness in His kingdom is about. While earthly kingdoms emphasize prestige and preeminence, greatness in His kingdom is about servitude. **Matthew 20:21ff**
- D. Jesus’ Kingship is superior to all other kings. This demonstrates the absolute need we have to submit to His rule, and also shows us that those who do submit to Him need not fear.  
**Revelation 17:14; Philippians 3:20**

## III. Family of God

- A. The church is also referred to in Scripture as the household, or family, of God. **1 Timothy 3:15**
- B. Entrance into this family is described as both an *adoption* and a new *birth*. **Ephesians 1:5; 1 Peter 1:23**
- C. Those who are adopted into this family by being born again become recipients of the most wonderful inheritance, given by the most trustworthy Father. **1 Peter 1:3-4**
- D. We also enjoy the blessing of brothers and sisters we can strengthen and be strengthened by. **Ephesians 2:19**

## IV. Holy Temple in the Lord

- A. Another phrase used to describe the church is “a holy temple in the Lord,” with each Christian being a “stone” that is a part of God’s spiritual house. This picture of the church helps us understand that we are built on Christ and the truths concerning Him. It also helps us understand the fellowship we have with God.  
**Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5**

## V. Body of Christ

- A. Another portrait of the church is that of the body of Christ. The term “*body of Christ*” indicates possession on Christ’s part. The fact that Christ is the Head of this body shows His authority. Just as the physical body has a head that makes decisions for the rest of the body, the same is true with the body of Christ. **Ephesians 1:22-23**
- B. The direction Christ gives members of His body is for our benefit and nourishment, and demonstrates the perfect care Christ has for His body. **Ephesians 5:29-30**
- C. *All* members have great importance to the Lord’s body. This leaves no room for arrogance or envy on the part of the body’s members, and infers that each of us must do our part for the body to function as God desires.  
**1 Corinthians 12:14ff; Ephesians 4:15-16**
- D. The eagerness to help the body and support other members is given extra motivation when we consider the *oneness* of the body of Christ. **Ephesians 4:4**

## VI. Flock of God

- A. A fifth portrait of discipleship is the “flock of God.” Describing the church as a flock demonstrates our need for spiritual food and protection. It also ties in with the church’s organization and the role of shepherds within the local church. **1 Peter 5:2-3; Acts 20:28-32; 1 Peter 5:4**