

Bible Uses of Bible Terms

I. Introduction

A. The Bible contains a number of terms that are often used differently in the religious world than they are used in Scripture. Consider six specific examples of such terms, and how the Bible uses them.

II. Fellowship

A. The word “fellowship” comes from a term (*koinonia*) that generally refers to sharing, partnering, or jointly participating in something. This word is typically used to show the communion Christians have with God and with one another. **1 John 1:3**

B. While faithful Christians have *continuous* fellowship with God and with one another, there are certain works that the Bible shows are acts of fellowship. Such “fellowship activities” are different, though, from what the religious world often refers to when using this term. **1 Corinthians 10:16; 2 Corinthians 8:4; Philippians 1:5**

III. Church

A. The word “church” is at times also used much differently than how it’s used in Scripture. While the church could be described as a building (cf. **1 Pet. 2:5**), it is a *spiritual*, rather than physical, building. **Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 2:47**

IV. Pastor

A. The word “pastor” is another term that is biblical, but it is often used very differently from how the Bible uses it. While many in the religious world use the term to refer to the work of preaching, Scripture uses the term differently. **Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-2**

V. Minister

A. Unlike the word “pastor,” the word “minister” can always describe a faithful preacher of the Gospel. However, it’s usage in the Bible is inclusive of many more than just those who serve as evangelists. **Matthew 8:15; Mark 10:43**

VI. Priest

A. The term priest, as it’s used in New Testament references to Christians, has no special application to a certain group of religious leaders. Like the word “minister,” it includes *all* who are a part of the Lord’s body. **1 Peter 2:5, 9**

VII. Saint

A. The same principle applies to the term “saint.” This word, as it’s used in Scripture, alludes to the holiness God expects of us. Such holiness is not just something that should be true of a select few, but should be true of *all* Christians. **1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Peter 1:15-16**

VIII. Conclusion

A. Part of understanding the Bible involves understanding how Scripture uses terms. Many unscriptural practices (i.e., church-sponsored “fellowship halls,” preacher expected to “pasture the flock,” etc.) are promoted, in part, because men have applied the world’s definition of a given term instead of asking, “how is the Bible using this term?” May we avoid this pitfall as we endeavor to rightly handle the Word of truth.