

Frequently Asked Questions

How would you define what a "church" is?

- “A local church is a group of baptized believers who meet regularly to worship God through Jesus Christ, to be exhorted from the Word of God, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper under the guidance of duly appointed leaders. According to this definition there are at least seven qualifications if a group wants to be a church in the NT sense.”

(John Piper, <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-local-church-minimum-vs-maximum>)

What distinguishes new churches from new small groups or discipleship groups?

- When you begin to define what a church essentially is it becomes easier to see what it is not. The things groups have in common with churches is that gathering takes place, numerical growing may be happening, etc., but a small group is not the God ordained method of assembly. The church is. The church is the bride of Christ. The New Testament uses particularly endearing terms when describing the church. Small groups bear many similarities to marks of the church, but the church is distinct because God has called it distinct.

What are the implications of this course for larger churches?

- Larger churches are uniquely gifted by God to make a difference in church planting. Simultaneously, large churches are accountable in a way many churches are not (Luke 12:48). In short, what all of this information means for large churches is that they have an incredible opportunity to steward their resources for the spread of the gospel through the planting of churches in a big way! All churches should consider how they will support the spread of new churches. This could mean acting as a sending or parent church for new plants, commissioning local and global missionaries, praying for church plants, or educating their congregations about the importance of the Great Commission, which includes starting new churches!

I'm considering planting a church. Where do I find people to join me?

- Churches are made up of regenerate Christians that covenant together to be a local expression of God's globally redeemed people. So when considering who new churches are made up of, you should look to see if there is a group of people that have been saved by Jesus and are covenanting together to reach a certain context with the Gospel. While recruiting mature believers is important when planting a new church, particularly in the “core team” phase, planters should focus more of their attention on spending time where nonbelievers gather. New churches should strive to be full of new Christians, and not just Christians who transfer churches.

Should I consider helping a church plant?

- Easiest question in the world: absolutely. There are so many ways a person could consider helping a church plant. Session Four offers many examples every church member can and should consider. In addition to those, you could think creatively and consider joining a church plant effort for a specific season. You could treat it as a 6-18-month missionary effort. You could consider asking a church planter what needs he has and fill those needs. You could share what gifts you have with a church planter, and ask him how you could make a difference. You could leverage the next time your family faces a transition, like a move to a new state, as an opportunity to just be committed, faithful members of a church plant. The possibilities are endless!