

Theme: Christians are called to embrace a local church where they live out their faith, and the universal Church, which is the fulness of Christ and the focus of God's great promises.

I. Intro – House of Prayer Church - Welcome

- A. We are very glad to have you worship with us today
- B. We are also glad to work with you to reach Annapolis
- C. We are two churches - but part of One Church!
- D. Today I want to talk about the universal & local Church

II. The Local Nature of the Church

- A. Definition - The church as it exists in a particular time and place
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 1:2 - Church in Corinth
 - 2. Many NT letters addressed to local churches
 - 3. Colossians 4:16 - Church of the Laodiceans
 - 4. Revelation 2-3 - seven specific local churches
 - 5. 1 Corinthians 16:19 - church in their house
- B. Looking at the local nature of the church
 - 1. Hebrews 10:24-25 - we gather in local churches
 - 2. Colossians 3:16 - worship, teach in local churches
 - 3. Romans 12:16 - we live in harmony in local church
 - 4. Acts 12:23 - elders in each church to care for flock
- C. The local church is essential for our Christian lives
 - 1. It is where we worship

- 2. It is where our faith is nurtured
- 3. It is where we serve brothers & sisters regularly
- 4. It is where we learn to walk through difficulties

III. The Universal Nature of the Church

- A. Definition - all who have trusted Jesus!
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 1:2 - note each part of definition
 - a. All those everywhere - this is universal - not local
 - b. Who call on the name of Jesus
 - c. Their Lord and ours
 - 2. This is all those who are “in Christ” - Christians
 - 3. This is the most important identity we have!!
- B. Looking at the universal nature of the church
 - 1. 1 Pet. 2:9-10 - all Christians called out; now the people of God
 - 2. Ephesians 4:4-6 - One Holy Faith and Church!
 - 3. Christ has One Bride - not many!
 - 4. Ephesians 1:22-23 - The Church is Christ's fulness
 - 5. Eph. 3:10-11 - The Church makes God's wisdom known
 - 6. These things are true only of the Universal Church
 - 7. No local church can lay claim to these things alone
- C. The Universal Church is essential for our Christian lives
 - 1. The Church is great than BRCC or House of Prayer

2. Local churches need one another!
3. It reminds us that the Kingdom is greater than we know
4. The universal Church gives us hope!

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Am I walking out my faith in a local church?
 1. God calls us to a specific local church
 2. Analogy - working for Ford Motors
 3. You don't just work at large - called to a specific place
 4. We need to be committed to a single place
 5. Do I know what local church I am called to by God?
 6. Am I an active member of that local church?
- B. Do I see the universal Church?
 1. The Church is bigger than BRCC of House of Prayer!
 2. We are to love and pray for the whole Church
 3. We have much to learn from one another!
 4. God's Church will grow and be perfected!
- C. Praying for local churches - and the Universal Church

The Universal and the Local Church

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

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Combined Prayer With Pastor Nelson of House of Prayer

Psalm 67:1-3

After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in **the church of the Laodiceans** and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

Colossians 4:16

The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does **the church that meets at their house**.

1 Corinthians 16:19

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 **Let us not give up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24–25

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 12:16

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 14:23

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9–10

4 There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:4–6

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for **the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way**.

Ephesians 1:22–23

10 His intent was that now, **through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known** to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 3:10–11