



## Is "Church" Really the Best Word to Use? Maybe Not.

You are most likely aware the New Testament was not written in English. It was written in Greek and therefore must be translated into English. Translators have always had a very difficult job deciding what English words to use in place of Greek words. The Greek word, "ekklesia" is the word most commonly translated, "church." But given where the English word "church" comes from, it is probably not the best word for us to use when talking about the people of God.

### What is the Etymology of the English Word "Church"?

Our English word "church" is derived from the Greek word, "kyriakon," which means, "of the Lord." Although it was never used this way in Scripture, this word was used to refer to buildings of worship (i.e. "house of the Lord"). The word eventually evolved into the Germanic word, "kirika" and then eventually into our English word, "church."

So you see, it's kind of funny when we say, "The church isn't the building; the church is the people." Which is something I've been told and repeated my whole life. But technically speaking, the English word, "church" has always referred to a building.

What we really mean is, the "ekklesia" isn't the building; the "ekklesia" is the people. So I think it's a shame that English translators chose a word which historically refers to a building and used it to translate the Greek word, "ekklesia," which referred to Christians collectively.

### What is Ekklesia?

The word, "ekklesia" always refers to a group of people. Some have suggested that it is a compound word meaning, "called out." This may be where the word came from, but when it was used the emphasis was not on being "called out," but on coming together.

In Acts 7:38, "ekklesia" refers to Israel and is translated "congregation." In Acts 19, "ekklesia" refers to a group of citizens gathered together and is translated "assembly" (vs. 32, 39, 41). Both of these English words capture the meaning of "ekklesia" very well. When we hear the word "assembly," we know we are talking about a group of people who "assemble." And when we hear, "congregation," we know we are talking about a group of people who "congregate."

We often use the word "congregation" to refer to the local "ekklesia," but have you ever thought about the fact that the universal body of Christ could accurately be called "congregation"? We are the great world-wide congregation of the saved. The same is true with the word "assembly." The Lord's church – the saved throughout the world – are an assembly of the redeemed.

### Why does it matter?

I'm not saying we should never use the word, "church." It has become a part of our vocabulary over the last several hundred years and it's not going anywhere. But this is an important discussion for a least a couple of reasons:

**1. Don't be so quick to play the role of semantics police.** When we correct people about things like calling the building a "church," we may find out that they were technically correct all along. But beyond that, we forfeit many good opportunities to teach people about Jesus when we care more about correcting their use of the English language.

**2. Realize that "ekklesia" is about being an assembly.** The most important reason this issue must be discussed is because we have come to a point in our culture where many Christians see no need to come to the worship assembly. They believe they can be "members of the church" without ever assembling. But if we started thinking of the church as the "assembly" then we might realize that an assembly assembles!

And even when the assembly is not assembled, we should still think of ourselves as a member of the assembly of Jesus Christ (both locally and universally). The rest of the assembly should be on our hearts and our minds as we go throughout our day. We should pray for the assembly, look for every opportunity to assemble with them, and encourage them "all the more as [we] see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:25).

Jesus died to save His assembly. Someday He is coming back to take His assembly home to heaven. On that day, the great assembly of Christ will be assembled around the throne of God and we will praise His name forever and ever.

Here's a sobering thought: If you don't appreciate the assembly now, what makes you think you'll appreciate it – or even be a part of it – for eternity? Think about it.

- Wes McAdams

<http://www.radicallychristian.com/is-church-really-the-best-word-to-use-maybe-not>

## PRAYER LIST

- Pauline Alvarez (health)
- Lauren Babb (health)
- Aaron Banks
- John Beiler (health)
- Dawn Clarke (Shirley Kuchynka's daughter)
- Betty Cox (Brent Barnick's sister—homebound, rheumatoid arthritis)
- Helen Davis (hospice)
- Dixie (Debbie Faires's mother—Alzheimer's)
- Leon Giesecke (Jan Moerbe's father—throat cancer)
- Herbert and Nelle Hahn (health)
- Jamesley Hilt (Winegearts' great niece—health)
- Sandra Jetton (health)
- Debbie Jalufka
- Edward Jungbauer (Moerbes' friend—health)
- Family and friends of Mike Pitts (Don's brother)
- Junior and Ada Powell (Sharron Mason's brother-in-law and sister—health)
- Family and friends of Edna Randall (Hahns' friend)
- Maria Rhodes
- Penny Rhodes (concussion)
- Fabian Riojas (Maria Rhode's uncle—health)
- Family and friends of Parker Robertson (Ratliff's friend)
- Jocelyn Seals (Hallettsville—cancer)
- David Taylor (Cody Chrismon's uncle—cancer)
- Adrienne Zingrich (Susan Barnick's cousin—cancer)

If you have any announcements or prayer requests you wish to have included in the bulletin or to sign up for weekly e-mail updates, please contact Victoria Johnson: 325-518-9205, [victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org](mailto:victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org).

## PRAYER UPDATES

Please pray for **Paul Faires's** health. He has had biopsies from a medical procedure.

Please continue to pray for **Steven Faires**, who is in Corpus Christi, that he will stay strong. Pray for Lexi, also.

**Jamesley Hilt**, the Winegearts' great niece, was taken to San Antonio on Friday for surgery after doctors discovered she had a ruptured appendix.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Fall Fellowship

You're invited to fall fellowship at the Hendershots on **TONIGHT from 5-7 p.m.** Please bring soups, sandwiches, or finger foods. Please also bring a bag of candy to share. Costumes are encouraged! (Out of respect for our littlest members, please no clown costumes this year.)

### Ladies Bible Class

Ladies Bible Class continues **this Tuesday, Nov. 1 at 8:30 a.m. at Jennie Chrismon's house in Shiner.** The book for class is *Wives After God: Encouraging Each Other in Faith and Marriage* by Jennifer Smith. Please contact Jennie if you would like more information.

### Wednesday Evening Meal & Bible Study

Please join us at **5:15 p.m. this Wednesday** for dinner in the annex. This week's entrée is turkey and dressing. Sides are included this week! Anyone who is able is asked to bring desserts to share, but please do not let that prevent you from joining us.

### Directory Picture Days: Additions and Updates

Would you like to be included in the church directory? Does your family picture need updating? **Picture days for church directory additions and updates are Wednesday, Nov. 9 and Sunday, Nov. 13.** Please sign up in the foyer for a picture time and pick up an information sheet to bring with you to your picture appointment.

### Youth Sunday: Rocky Creek Maze

Please join us on **Sunday, Nov. 13 at 2 p.m.** for youth Sunday at the Rocky Creek Maze in Moulton. After our time at Rocky Creek, we will go to the Chrismons' house in Shiner for dinner and a devotional. Our activities should conclude by 7 p.m. **If you plan to attend, please sign up in the foyer by Wednesday, Nov. 9, so we can get make reservations for the group rate for admission if enough people are attending.** Group admission is \$8.50 per person. (Standard rate is \$10.) You may pick up a flyer in the foyer for more information.

### ISF Thanksgiving Meal

Our dinner with ISF (Intermediate Sanction Facility) residents and staff is only three weeks away. This year's meal is on **Friday, November 18.** The ladies will prepare the food on Wednesday, Nov. 16 in the annex. The sign up sheet to provide desserts and to attend the meal is now available in the foyer. Please keep in mind no children under 16 are allowed at the ISF facility. More information to come.

### Fleetwood Church of Christ Gospel Meeting

Fleetwood Church of Christ (15935 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77094) invites you to their 2nd Annual Fall Gospel Meeting, "The Urgency of God's Word," **November 6-9.** Keynote speaker is Robert Stapleton, Director of the Brown Trail School of Preaching.

### Volunteers Needed: Wednesday Night Meals

Volunteers are needed to prepare the entrée for meals on Wednesday evenings. To help, please sign up in the foyer. **If you signed up to prepare a meal, please send your menu to Victoria by Wednesday the week before your turn.**

### Sunday Night Small Group

There is a small group that meets in the annex each Sunday evening from 6-7 p.m. The Lord's Supper is available.

### Tuesday Morning Men's Prayer Breakfast

All men are invited to the annex each Tuesday morning at **6:20 a.m.** for a time of breakfast, prayer and fellowship.

### Mark Your Calendars:

*November*

16—ISF Thanksgiving Dinner Prep

18—ISF Thanksgiving Dinner

20—Men's Meeting

## YOUTH ZONE



**MONDAY, OCT. 31**  
**JUNIOR HIGH VOLLEYBALL**  
**GONZALES 7TH "B" V. WIMBERLEY, 5 P.M. (GHS OLD GYM)**  
**GONZALES 7TH "A" V. WIMBERLEY, 6 P.M. (GHS OLD GYM)**

Coach Kevin Johnson—Gonzales 7th Volleyball



**THURSDAY, NOV. 3**  
**JUNIOR HIGH FOOTBALL**  
**SHINER V. REFUGIO, 5 P.M.**

Caden Chrismon—Shiner Jr High Football