

CHURCH, THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Speaker: Assistant Lay Director

Time: Sunday 2:30 p.m.

Length: 30 minutes maximum

Purpose:

The Christian life is not lived in isolation but among people. God called us to live in community, among His people, the Church. Although the true Church is the invisible Body of Christ (the whole number of believers in Christ), each congregation (with the Word and Sacraments) is a human expression of that invisible Body.

As you prepare this talk, keep in mind these two passages:

“Where two or three come together in My name, I am there with them.” (Matthew 18:20)

“Because there is the one bread, all of us, though many, are one body; for we all share the same loaf.” (1 Corinthians 10:17).

Outline: Begin Your Talk Here

Scripture reading: 1 Peter 2:9–10

Response (ALL): But you are a chosen people, the King’s priests, a holy nation, God’s own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God.

Introduction:

Church is similar to other communities, like a school club or a family. Each requires membership. Each involves dedication, participation, and responsibility. Each results in personal and community benefits.

Unless all members of the community (including the Church) work together, the “whole” suffers.

Examples (and visual-aid ideas):

- A puzzle (requiring all the pieces in order to present the picture)
- An engine (requiring all parts to function correctly in order to run)
- A recipe (requiring all the ingredients in the right proportions to create a dish)

Once the point is made, then share the following verse: “If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share in its happiness.” (1 Corinthians 12:26)
See also Ephesians 4:2–6, 16.

The Church is unique from other communities because Christ is the head of the Church.

I. Roles in the Old Testament

To establish a relationship with His people, God called leaders to fulfill special roles. In the Old Testament, God chose Israel (Exodus 19:6).

A. Priests

1. Talk to God.
2. Make sacrifices to teach truths (sin is serious, but God is merciful).

- B. Prophets
 - 1. Talk *for* God.
 - 2. Share His message with authority for all generations.
- C. Kings and Other Leaders
 - 1. Rule in God's stead.
 - 2. Hold unique and specific leadership positions.

II. Roles in the New Testament

In the New Testament, God chose the new Israel, all believers, in Baptism. God Himself, in Christ, became Prophet, Priest, and King.

- A. Priest (to sacrifice Himself once for all)
- B. Prophet (to proclaim and be the message of God, salvation)
- C. King (our personal Lord and ruler)

III. We Are God's People

- A. Our membership is received through Baptism (1 Corinthians 12:4–6, 11–31).
- B. Now, we have roles:
 - 1. Priests (not to sacrifice, but with direct access to God in prayer, and His direct access to us in Word and Sacrament)
 - 2. Prophets (“to proclaim the wonderful acts of God”; to tell others about what He has done, 1 Peter 2:9b)
 - 3. Kings/leaders (to serve others in God's stead, Galatians 6:2)

This could be a good opportunity to share examples of people who serve as a prophet, priest, or king in your life.

Conclusion:

The results are seen/experienced, not only in our eternal salvation, but also in the fruits of the Christian life as we live together (Ephesians 2:8–10).

QUESTION (asked by Lay Director following this talk):

What is my unique role in the Body of Christ?

OR What evidence, or fruit, in my life shows that I am connected to Christ?