



Kyle encouraged us to commit to being active members of the church by the end of the series. He observed that many people attend church but avoid forming meaningful connections. While they value the message, fellowship, and worship, over the past two decades, there has been a shift toward attending church without fully engaging in relationships. Despite valuing the church experience, many resist being known or deeply connecting with others.

#### Starter:

- What does it mean to be a part of the church?
- Why do you think people tend toward anonymity in the church?
- What are the risks of treating the church as a service provider rather than a community?

#### Digging Deeper

Kyle emphasized that we were created to live in community, not just experience church remotely. Though we may fear vulnerability and want anonymity, we long for fellowship and unity. We are wired for meaningful relationships because we are made in God's image, reflecting His relational nature. God exists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and this community is evident in Scripture. By creating us in His image, God instilled in us a deep desire for connection, mirroring His own nature.

- Why do we have this deep yearning for a community?
- What does it mean to live in community, and why is it essential to the Christian life?
- In what ways is God's relational nature, as seen in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, evident in your life?

- How can the church orient its life around community, joy, and suffering as a unified body?

**Kyle expressed his hope that as you walk into the church, worship alongside your brothers and sisters, and hear God's Word preached, you will receive something meaningful. But is that all the church is about? Is it simply a place for us to come and consume? Many people seem to view the church in this way, or perhaps as merely charitable organizations, something akin to the YMCA. He pointed out 5 things the church is not.**

**Biblically speaking, the church is NOT...**

- >a social club
- >a volunteer organization
- >a service provider
- >an interest group
- >a weekly pep talk or a motivational platform

**Kyle emphasized Matthew 16 as a pivotal moment in Jesus' ministry. Having performed many teachings, miracles, and healings, Jesus now focused on Jerusalem and the cross, preparing His disciples for life without His physical presence. During this time, Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter boldly declared, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The exchange took place in Caesarea Philippi, a city known for its paganism and temples to Caesar, who was worshiped as a god. In this context of spiritual darkness, Peter's declaration of Jesus as the true Son of God stands as a powerful statement of faith.**

- Peter confession was made on behalf of who?
- Why is the confession "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God" so important and foundational to the church?
- How does the context of Caesarea Philippi enhance the meaning of Peter's confession?

**Matthew 16:18**

**And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**

- What does it mean when Jesus refers to the church as being built "on this rock?"
- How should we understand the term "church" (ekklesia) in its original biblical context?
- In what ways does Jesus serve as the ultimate foundation and leader of the church?

### **Ephesians 1:22-23**

**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.**

### **Colossians 1:15-18**

**15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.**

- How does the church embody the image of heaven on earth?
- How does church discipline reflect the authority Jesus gives to the church?
- According to this passage, everything in creation was made "through him and for him." What implications does this have for how we view the purpose of creation and our role within it?

**The church is the authority on earth that Jesus has instituted to officially affirm and give shape to my Christian life and yours.**

**Our mission statement, "Live and love like Jesus, right where you are," reflects a deeply apostolic mindset. To be an apostle is to be a sent one—not in the same way as the apostles in Scripture, but in the sense of carrying the gifting and mission of being sent out. Interestingly, as we read further in Ephesians 2, we see that the foundation of the church is not limited to the apostles and prophets. Paul makes it clear that anyone who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and King becomes part of that foundation.**

- What does it mean to be an ambassador of heaven where you live, work, study, and play?
- Have you made the "right confession," and how does this impact your commitment to the church?
- Why is confession (proclamation of faith) critical for the church's foundation and function?

### **Personal Reflection:**

- How can you personally invest in building relationships within the church to avoid anonymity?
- How can we balance personal discipleship with our responsibility to hold others accountable in the church?
- How can you ensure that your life reflects heaven as part of the church's mission?