

MARKS OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

1. Head and Founder of a New Testament Church:

- Col. 1:18 * Jesus Christ is the head and founder of the Church.
- Eph. 5:23 * The Pastor or Deacon is not to run the Church.
- * A board of directors is not to run the Church. Christ, and Christ only, runs the Church.
- Eph. 4:5 * Christ chose one and only one institution to carry out his work.
- * Jesus didn't give authority to every church out there to preach the Word.
- * He gave it to the Church – one that meets His qualifications.
- * Faith – A system of doctrine and teaching.
- Eph. 3:21 * The Church that Jesus Christ established is the only church we can give God honor and glory in.
- Matt. 16:18 * The Church that Jesus established will never die out.
- * The same things the first church taught and believed in are still taught and believed in today.
- * Christ is that rock.
- I Cor. 10:4 * Jesus is the rock, the foundation that the Church is built upon.
- * Anything other than that of Christ will crumble.

2. Rule of Faith and Practice: Everything we need to know about God is found in His book.

- II Tim 3:16—17 * The Bible (scriptures) is a perfect book.
- * Every aspect of our life, any problem we might face, the answer can be found in God's Word.
- * Verse 17, Unto all good works, (everything)
- II Pet. 1:20-21 * Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the word of God was wrote.
- II Sam. 23:1-2 * Man didn't write the Bible, (not man's ideas)
- Ps. 119:160 * The Bible is perfect – man is not.
- Jer. 1:9 * Man cannot put together something that is perfect.
- Jer. 36:14
- Rom. 2:2 * Judge according to Truth.
- John 17:17 * God's Word is Truth.
- John 12:48 * The scriptures were put together over a period of 1,500 years by over forty different men. Many men wrote not knowing anything of the other.
- * Each book in the scriptures perfectly fit together.

3. What is the name of the Church: The name is not important but what it teaches.

- II Tim. 3:16-17 * All scripture must be studied.
- * A church is to teach the entire Word of God, not just the parts that make us feel good.
- * The only way a person can teach is through study.
- II Tim. 4:1-5 * You cannot teach something if you don't know it.
- Prov. 2:1-6 * How to study.
- I Cor. 9:14,27 * You cannot effectively preach it unless you live it.
- Ecc. 12:12 * Studying is a weariness to the flesh.
- * The Word of God just won't metaphysically come to you, you must dig it out.

- Matt. 28:18-20 * The only way a Church will remain strong is by following
II Timothy 2:15.
 * **When a Church no longer studies or prays, it begins to spiritually decay.**
 * **A Church is made up of individual members.** This church is only as strong as you.
 * **A Church must preach it, practice it, and have a lineage back to Christ.**

4. It's Policy: Congregational, every member having equal vote; truly democratic.

- Acts 1:15-26 * Mathias is elected by the Church to fill the office of Apostle.
 * All those present at the Church took part in the vote, (about 120).
 Matt. 20:24-28 * Every member is equal.
 * No man or group of people is to run the Church; the Church is to be a democratic body.
 Matt. 23:5-12 * No one member is to be lifted up and be over one another.
 I Cor. 12:12,13 * In God's eyes, we are the same whether rich or poor. God looks on all the same.
 I Cor. 12:24-26 * Jesus said to humble myself.
 * We're not to look for God to humble ourselves, we are to do it.
 * That is the only way to serve the Lord.
 * Put the Lord first, others second, and "me" last.
 Acts 1:15-26 * An example of the Lord's New Testament Church voting.
 Acts 6:1-5 * There were about 120 people in the Church and they all voted.
 * All having an equal vote.
 * Parents need to teach children who are members the importance of voting.

5. Membership: Who can be members? Those who are saved and scripturally baptized. Requires a person to exercise free will, therefore must have the ability to reason.

- Acts 2:37,41,47 * A question asked, what must I do to be saved.
 * Answer, repent. After repentance comes baptism.
 * Baptism does not save anyone.
 * Saved according to the scriptures.
 * Baptized according to the scriptures.
 * "for" means because of.
 * Baptize because sins are forgiven, not to forgive sin.
 Rom. 6:1-7 * "into" means with reference to.
 Rom. 5:1 * Baptized not to become a Son of God, but to manifest that you are a Son of God.
 I John 1:7 * Free will must be exercised.
 I Cor. 12:18 * Infants cannot exercise free will.
 * After all requirements are met, the Lord adds to His church.
 Acts 16:30-31 * Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way a person can receive Jesus Christ.
 I John 5:10 * Not by any other means than what God has set in order.
 Acts 4:12 * God's way is the only way for salvation.
 * Without salvation God's way, a person is dead and is on the road to Hell.
 Rom. 10:10 * With the heart a man believes in Jesus.
 * With the heart comes faith.

6. Ordinances: Baptism and Lord's Supper

a. **Baptism:** Five elements necessary for scriptural baptism:

1. Candidate must be saved.
2. Proper Authority (New Testament Church)
3. Proper Administrator (God-called, ordained man)
4. Proper Mode (complete immersion)
5. Proper Purpose (desire to be obedient)

Matt. 3:7-12 * Must be saved.
Acts 2:38,41 * John the Baptist demanded evidence of salvation.
Acts 8:36,37 * Not just anyone can be baptized.
* Repentance (accepting Christ) then baptism follows.
Rev. 1:5 * Baptism does not wash sin away. It testifies that our sins were already washed away (by the blood of Jesus Christ).

b. **Proper Authority:**

Mark 1:1-8 * John the Baptist was given authority by God to prepare the way.
John 1:6-8 *
Matt. 3:13-17 * Jesus Christ comes to John the Baptist for baptism, yet, Jesus had the authority. Why did Jesus go to John?

c. **Proper Administration:** The authority lies within the Church. The Church does the baptism through a proper administrator. A God-called, ordained man, fitting the qualifications for a Bishop, is the only example found in the scriptures administering baptism.

Acts 8:35-39 * Philip, the evangelist, sent by the Church in Jerusalem baptized the Ethiopian eunuch.
Acts 21:8 * Philip formerly a deacon, but not at this time.
Acts 16:31-33 * Paul and Silas baptize the jailer after repentance.
* Baptized not to wash away sin, but to show publicly he had been saved. He was baptized with reference to salvation.

d. **Proper Mode:** Greek word for baptism is "Baptizo", which means to immerse, or plunge.

Matt. 3:13-17 * Jesus went down into the water and straightway he came out of the water.
John 3:23 * John baptized in an area where there was much water.
* According to the scriptures, baptizing is always done in water.
* Baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection. Shows that old life has been done away with.
Rom. 6:1-7 * Baptism is to show forth a public testimony that we believe in the death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism shows a picture of the resurrection.
I Cor. 15:1-4 * (1) death, (2) burial and resurrection. According to the scriptures.

Lord's Supper: Closed, local, visible assembly.

Matt. 26:26-29 * Closed: Every time the Lord's Supper is instructed in scripture, it is members of that Local Body partaking in it.
* Visible: Only those members present took part in the supper. Nowhere do you see that Church taking the supper to members not present.
* They must assemble in church capacity in order to take part.
Ex. 12:42-48 * The Lord's supper shows a picture of Christ's death. It is a type of Passover.

I Cor. 10:14-22 * Should we fellowship with those who do not follow scriptures?
The word "communion" means fellowship.

7. Offices of the Church: We are not to add more or take away from.

I Tim. 3:1-13 * The scriptures show only two offices within the Church; Bishop (pastor) and Deacon.

* Jesus Christ did not institute Priest, Archbishop, Rabbi, etc.

Acts 6:1-7 * Deacons were instituted in the Church to help the Bishop with the physical and spiritual needs of the Church.

* They are not called of God, but chosen by the church.

The Calling:

Rom. 11:29 * God does call men.

* Calling to the ministry (preach) is not a job, but a way of life.

* A lot of people like the title. Many answer the call, but don't surrender to the work.

I Cor. 1:18,21,26-31 * Don't be lifted up in your calling.

* It's a call to complete surrender of service to the Lord.

I Peter 5:1-4 * To be an example.

Heb. 13:17 * The responsibility.

II Tim. 4:1-5 * Charge to preach.

Is. 58:1 * Cry loud and faint not.

Jer. 20:9 * Once called, always called. Can you keep from it?

Bishops:

I Tim. 3:1-7 * Pastoring is a work. God' won't use a lazy man.

* Must have a burning desire to Pastor one of God's churches.

* Prayer and Bible study is the key.

* **Blameless does not mean sinless**, but a legal charge cannot be brought against.

* One that does not get caught up in the affairs of this world.

* The husband of one wife (one means first). Also, since it says "husband", this means that it is a man. Women are not called to either the position of Bishop or Deacon.

* If a man has to be married to be called, then the only one in scripture qualified would be Peter. Paul nor Jesus married, however who was the first Pastor of the Lord's New Testament Church? Jesus Christ.

* Sober means one that has self-control. He must have his flesh under subjection.

* Of good behavior, simply put, to be a gentleman.

* Apt to teach. One who can rightly divided the Word of God. Must preach to them, but also teach them.

* Not given to wine – not a partaker of drinking.

* No striker. Not necessarily one who physically fights, but also who fights with his tongue.

* Not greedy of filthy lucre – not desiring to be richer than you need to be.

* Patient. Someone who can get along with others and longsuffering.

* Not a brawler. Not someone who fights.

* If a man of God does not meet these qualifications, they must

- * One who ruleth well his own house – a man that leads his house by example.
- * Not a novice – not a newcomer to the work.
- * Must have a good report by those who are not necessarily a part of the church.
- * Must be grave; serious minded.

Deacons:

- Acts 6:1-15 * Deacons called by the church.
- * Deacon not to do physical, but to oversee physical work.
- * Deacon is also to be spiritually minded.
- * Deacon is a help-meet for the Pastor.
- Acts 7:51-60 * Stephen, the Deacon, no Pastor, preaches to the people.
- I Tim. 3:8-13 * Not double-tongued, i.e., saying one thing and doing another.
- * Holding the mystery of faith – one who knows the word of God and lives it.
- * Let them prove themselves. Not necessarily setting them aside for a time, they should already be doing these things or they won't do them.
- * Husband of one (first) wife.
- * Their wife must be sober, self-controlled.
- * One who does not backbite and is faithful in the Word.
- * A man who uses the office of a Deacon well, has some rewards waiting for him.

8. The Work of a New Testament Church is to teach, baptize, and then teach to observe all things.

- * Jesus has all power. The church does not. The church only has the authority that God gave it in His Word.
- Matt. 4:17-22 * Be fishers of men.
- Matt. 28:18-20 * Teach Jesus Christ to the lost world (preach the gospel).
- Acts 1:8 * After a person accepts Jesus, baptize them.
- * After baptism, teach them to observe all the commandments of God.
- Acts 2:37-47 * Day of Pentecost, Peter through the Church, preaches (teaches) Christ.
- * Must realize our only obligation is to preach Christ, baptize those who believe and continue to teach the doctrines of Christ.
- * Then the Lord will bless the church and He will add such as should be saved.
- * But we cannot teach something we do not know.
- Rev. 2:1-7 * Thou has left thy first love.
- Mark 12:28-34 * How to love the Lord.

9. Financial Plan: Tithes and Offerings through free will offering.

- Tithes:** * The first fruit, the very best; a tenth part.
- Offering:** * Above and beyond your tithe.

The Lord's work is supported by giving of your BEST. The Bible says to honor the Lord with our first fruits.

Prov. 3:1-9	*	A tithe is a tenth part.
Lev. 27:30,31	*	A tithe comes from the top.
Deut. 26:2,16	*	Our gross, not our take home pay.
	*	Do we really live by faith? What does it take to live by faith?
Mal. 1:6-8	*	Israel continued to serve God, but they were giving Him their seconds – giving their leftovers.
Mal. 1:13	*	God demands our very best in all things, financial and spiritual.
Hag. 1:5-7	*	Is giving to God a weariness for you?
Luke 6:38	*	Does it maybe bother you to give your best?

What do we give God in our time? Job, Family, Relaxation? Does God receive the time we have left over?

	*	Where does study, sincere study, and prayer fall in your life?
	*	Do we rob God in our time?
	*	Israel became lifted up in "self" because they were God's chosen people. They took for granted what God had done.
Mal. 3:8-10	*	When we fail to give God our best, we are robbing God and cheating ourselves out of a blessing.
	*	God demands the first of our fruits, money, time, service, etc.
	*	When we give to God willingly, God will bless us abundantly.
I Cor. 16:2	*	God is talking to the Church.
	*	We are to give on the first day of the week.
II Cor. 9:6-8	*	We are to give as purposed in our heart. If you cannot give willingly, God does not want it. Let us make no mistake, God does not need our money.
John 15:10-11	*	He wants us to give willingly so that He might take care of all our needs.
Ps. 37:25		
Phil. 4:19		

10. Weapons and Warfare: Word of God, sword of the Spirit. Our weapons are to be spiritual, not carnal.

II Cor. 10:3-5	*	Our war is not in the flesh.
	*	Our weapons are not carnal (fleshy), but of God (spiritually).
	*	The only hope of victory is by the sword of God – His Word.
Heb. 4:12	*	With God's Word, we have power.
	*	When we present God's Word, it strikes a man to the core of his being.
	*	God's Word brings all things out.
Eph. 6:10-18	*	Just as a soldier goes into battle with his weapons and armor, so must we.
	*	The armor of God only covers the front. The back is exposed, why?
Matt. 28:18-20	*	The purpose of the Lord's church is to preach the gospel to all the world and to teach them to observe all things. That's all.
	*	In order for us to proclaim God's Word, we must get our flesh out of the way.
	*	You cannot proclaim something if you do not know it.

11. Church's Independence: Separation of Church and State.

- Matt. 22:21 * We are to obey the laws of the land.
* Children of God are to pay taxes, etc.
* We are to obey the laws of the land until it interferes with God's law.
- Acts 5:27-29 * We are to follow God's law over man's law.
* God has commanded us to preach the gospel no matter what happens.
- Matt. 28:18-20 * Jesus said all power is given unto me.
* When there is no longer separation between Church and State, the Church is no longer under God's law, but man's.

12. It's Existence: How long will the Church exist?

- Matt. 16:18 * God will build His Church, and God is in control of keeping it in existence.
* The Church never has, not ever will, die out.
* The same church that Jesus established is the same church today.
- Eph. 3:21 * The only place we can give God glory is in His New Testament Church.
* The gates of Hell shall never prevail, throughout all ages, world without end.