

Biblical Doctrine of the Church (Fall 2023)



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Course Description

God has always desired a relationship with those who bear His image and likeness. Adam and Eve's sin severed that relationship as it stood. As a result, God put in motion a plan to reconcile people to Himself, culminating with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Before this plan came to fruition, our completely holy God was willing to have fellowship with less than completely holy people because the solution was coming; since the plan came to fruition, He is willing because the solution has come. The experiences and expectations of those with whom God related before the Cross form a background for us to understand what He has revealed about those with whom He relates now, i.e., the church. Against this background, we will examine what the Bible says about the church's mission, its assemblies, its organization, and its expectations, among other topics.

Course Objectives

- 1) To understand what the Bible teaches about the church.
- 2) To reflect on how well our congregations measure up to the Bible's picture of the church.
- 3) To draw ourselves and the congregations of which we are a part closer to the ideal God has revealed.

Course Evaluation

QUIZZES (45%)

BEE ASSESSMENT AND PLAN (30%)

BOOK REVIEW (15%)

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS (10%)

Required Readings

- As always, our primary textbook is the Bible. I typically use the ESV, but you may use the translation of your choice.
- Ferguson, Everett. *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Course Schedule

Week 1	9/7	Syllabus, Preface/Introduction, Covenant	
Week 2	9/14	Kingdom and Christ	
Week 3	9/21	Community, Centrality, People of God	
Week 4	9/28	Body of Christ and Community of the Holy Spirit	
Week 5	10/5	Family of God, Agricultural/Architectural Images, Meaning of Ekklesia	Quiz (Chapters 1–2)
Week 6	10/12	The Church and Her Savior	
Week 7	10/19	Word Meanings, Theological Foundations of Worship, The New Temple in His Body	<i>Book Review</i>

Week 8	10/26	Attitudes Towards Worship and in Worship, The Importance of the Assembly	
Week 9	11/2	The Day of Assembly, Purposes of the Assembly, Activities in the Assembly	Quiz (Chapters 3–4)
Week 10	11/9	The Worker and His Works, The Giver and the Gifts, The Minister and the Ministries	<i>BEE Assessment Draft</i>
Week 11	11/16	The Shepherd and the Shepherds, The Preacher and the Preachers, The Servant and the Servants	
Week 12	11/23	Women Servants, Autonomy and Cooperation, Form and Spirit	
Week 13	11/30	Morality and Community, The Nature of Christian Ethics, Fellowship	
Week 14	12/7	Discipline, Christian Liberty, Church and Society, Unity	
Week 15	12/14	Class Presentations	Quiz (Chapters 5–6)

Assignments Description

Quizzes (45%)

We will have three quizzes during the semester, each of which will cover two chapters of material in the textbook and additional material covered in lecture. The quizzes will consist of multiple-choice, matching, and essay questions. They are due at 11:59 on Saturday of the week noted in the table above.

BEE Assessment and Plan (30%)

One of the major themes of this course is that God has entrusted the church with three main jobs, namely benevolence, evangelism, and edification. How is the congregation of which you are a part fulfilling each of these? What do you think are the strong points of your congregation? What are some areas where you think your congregation could improve? What biblical passages and/or themes will you share with the others in your congregation to move them towards God's ideal for the church? Set specific goals for your congregation and outline how you plan to achieve them.

Written (20%): Present your answers to these questions in a paper of 2,000 words, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font. Cite any sources you use in accordance with the *SBL Handbook of Style, 2nd Edition*.

Oral (10%): Be prepared to present a 10-minute summary of your findings on the last day of class.

Book Review (15%)

The book review should be typed in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double-spaced. It should be roughly 1,000 words in length. No references to other sources are required. If you choose to include any, cite them in SBL style. The review should contain each of the following:

- (1) a complete bibliographical entry in SBL style,
- (2) a summary of the book in no more than 300 words,
- (3) a discussion of the book's strengths,
- (4) a discussion of the book's weaknesses

(5) a final evaluation of the book, including whether you would recommend it and, if so, to whom.

Weekly Reflections (10%)

As you are doing each week's reading, jot down in your own words the main point of each section of the textbook. Add any reflections on or critiques of Ferguson's argument (e.g., a passage he seems to have missed or a gap in his logic). Also add any questions you would like me to address in class. Please submit this assignment by 5:00 PM on Wednesday of each week, so that I can prepare for our discussion on Thursday afternoon.

Policies and other information

Attendance (From the GLBC Catalogue)

Students are required to attend classes regularly. One unexcused absence for every credit hour in a given course may be permitted, i.e. per one-hour class. Two percent (2%) of the course grade per academic hour for each hour of classroom instruction missed may be deducted for each unexcused absence beyond the above.

Late Work (From the GLBC Catalogue)

Assignments for the term are listed in the syllabus supplied for each course. Every assignment so listed must be completed to pass the course. Late submission of assignments need not be accepted by the instructor. Extenuating circumstances and emergencies will be taken into consideration. If a late assignment is accepted, a grade reduction of 5% per instructional day may be assessed.

Bibliography

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