



Orthodoxy



September 2020

The Church Is God's House

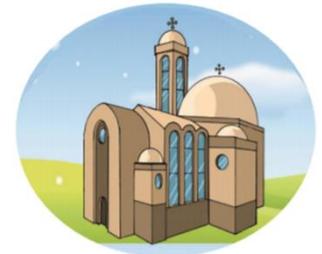
The Church is a special place it is different from all the places in the world. In the Holy Bible, Jacob said:

"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" (Genesis 28:16-17)

What made the church so special?



The church is a holy place, it is the house of God, He Himself dwells in it.



"But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; in fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple (Psalm 5:7)

The church is a place to prepare us for heaven, when we are in the Church, it is as if we are standing in Heaven and we sing with the angels, praising and worshiping God. Angels are truly with us as we sing beautiful hymns to worship and praise the Lord.



"I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD." (Psalm 122:1)



When we come to God's house we are happy and we thank God for opening His House for us, because we come to meet God and we have a feeling of joy, peace and comfort, the same feelings we have when we hug our Mom or Dad.

Throughout the time, God prepared man in conceivable ways (ways they could understand) to accept His presence among the people, so the church has many symbols in the Old Testament.



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The symbols of the church in the Old Testament



1. Paradise: where Adam and Eve were always in God's presence.



2. The Altar: When man sinned, the altar is where the sacrifice is offered to redeem from the sin by the blood of animals in preparation for the redemption by Christ's sacrifice on the cross.



3. Bethel: the place where Jacob saw his dream of a ladder connecting Heaven and Earth with angels going up and down on it. This means that in the church we are in the presence of God and His angels.



4. The Tabernacle: means the place of dwelling. The tabernacle was a tent that the people of Israel took with them wherever they went. It was the place of the presence of God among them.



5. The Temple: it was the permanent place of the House of God built by King Solomon after they entered the Promised Land. Both the tabernacle and the temple's design were given by God in all details.

In the New Testament

The First Church

The first Church started on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples while they were all praying together in the Upper Room. Many people became Christians that day and the Church continues today.





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In the Holy Bible, the Book of Acts tells us what the people of the first Church did and how the Holy Spirit blessed them (Acts 2:40-47).

- ❖ They prayed for each other.
- ❖ They broke the bread with one another, partaking of the Holy Communion.
- ❖ They praised God and thanked Him for taking care of them

Same as we are doing now, the church for us is more than just a building.



It is a group of believers (the bride for Christ) gathering together in love, peace, forgiveness, and fellowship.



It is a living God teaching, faith, and holiness. When we gather together at the church to worship Him, we resemble Christ's body.



the Church is a shelter and a dwelling place to protect from the storms of the world.

Now we know why we go to church?

1-The most important thing is to abide in Christ through the Holy Communion.

"He who eats My body and drinks My blood abide in Me, and I in him" (John 6:56).



2-The church is a place to receive all the **HOLY SACRAMENTS** in the Church. EX: we got baptized inside the church, received the sacrament of confirmation, confession, holy matrimony...

When we build the church the ark is the most commonly used shape in the Coptic Orthodox Church. This is symbolic of



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Noah's ark, as those who were in Noah's ark were saved from the flood, likewise the Church of God alone has the ability to save us because most of the holy sacraments take place in the Church.

3- The church is the group of believers, without living in close fellowship with real people, one can never really experience the help and hope Christ offers to His bride through faithful involvement in a local church.



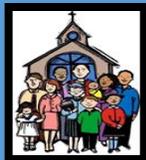
4- We need to be inside the church to have spiritual fathers, servants to teach us the word of God, help us, guide us, and correct us if we are wrong.

5- The church is a hospital for our souls and spirits, place to find godly friends, to use the talents, and gifts that God blessed you with in His ministry.

We need to understand that the church is essential for us to be saved and it prepares us to be in heaven with Christ.

Sometimes the devil try to put some wrong ides to separate us from the church!!

Here are some examples to learn how to answer:



1- You can pray at home!

Inside the church, I receive the body and the blood of our Lord, I abide in Him.

Worshipping God alone is wonderful, but nothing can replace the beauty of coming together to worship the Lord with others who also have the Holy Spirit in them.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20)

2- Not all the people at the church are good!

The church is a hospital for our souls and spirits, as all the sick people need to go to the hospital. All of us are not perfect and have a kind of sickness, so we need to go to church, to find support, help, guidance...

3- You can learn the word of God by yourself!

Learning the word of God is not only by reading, it is by practicing. Inside the church I can learn how to love others, how to share with others, how to serve others.....