

*“What's the big deal about going to some building every Sunday... I mean isn't God everywhere? And don't you think that the Almighty has better things to worry about than where one little guy spends one measly hour of his week” Homer Simpson*

What do you think about Homer's view of church?



**COMMUNITY  
CHURCH**

What do you think of when someone says “**church**”?



If you had to define the word **church**, what would you say it is?

# CHURCH IS COMMUNITY

The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything.

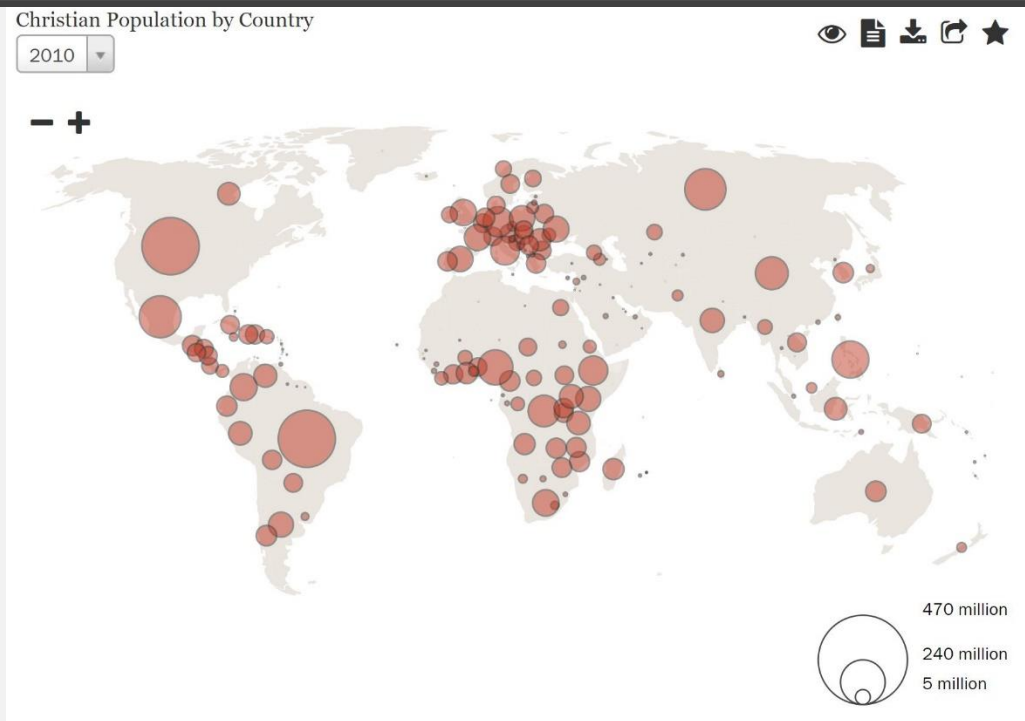
*1 Corinthians 12 (The Message Version)*

The Bible uses the picture of a body to explain what church should be like. It isn't about a building, or a particular type of service. Instead, when the Bible talks about church it is about **people**.

*Why do you think the members of the church are described like body parts?*

*What do you notice about who the body belongs to in this passage?*

# WHO IS PART OF THIS COMMUNITY?



Jesus' church is made up of people from **every tribe and language and people and nation.**

Being part of the church means belonging to this body – a body that includes people from all over the world.

We can be tempted to think that church is made up of people who look and think, worship and meet just like us.

The church is not a Western cultural phenomenon though.

This verse about Jesus from Revelation shows us that from the beginning, the church (Jesus' followers) has been a diverse, multicultural and multi-ethnic movement.

And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

- Revelation 5:9 -

heartlight.org

## WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH COMMUNITY DO TODAY?



It is really important that we take the opportunity to acknowledge the terrible injustice that happened in America two weeks ago.

Perhaps you stood in solidarity on your doorstep on Friday evening, with many others in Brighton and Hove.

*All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed. (Acts 2)*

From the days of the first Christians, the church was involved in caring for one another and those in need.

Another important role of the church is to **stand up against injustice** – defending those who are vulnerable. In Bible times the widow, fatherless and homeless were the most vulnerable. Today, many black Americans feel vulnerable, especially after the killing of George Floyd.

Across the world, the church (all the people who follow Jesus) needs to be active in calling out evil and praying for justice.

How might this verse from Revelation change or challenge our 21<sup>st</sup> century British cultural view of 'church'?



How might belonging to a church community be an encouragement if you are facing injustice?

If you belong to the church community, how can you love and serve the 'body' today?

“You are Christ’s body—that’s who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your “part” mean anything.” *1 Corinthians 12*

## **Father God**

Thank you that you want us to be part of communities and especially that you want us to be part of your church. Please help us to understand that church is being part of your people – not a building or rituals once a week.

We want to pray for your church around the world, that we can stand up for justice. Help us to remember that Jesus died to bring people of every tribe, nation and language into his church. Please give us the courage to stand against injustice. Please bring justice to those who are vulnerable.

**Amen**

## FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON RESPONDING TO INJUSTICE

If you wanted to find out more about how the church has responded to George Floyd's death, you could start by looking at the following links.

This is an article about how Christians can respond to injustice:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/when-injustice-seems-prevail/>

A response to George Floyd's death from Pastor Tope Koleoso of Jubilee Church, London: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XZx0BeqOAY>