

04 True Church

What makes a church a church? What does it take to be a true church? Can all Christian gatherings be considered a church? A true church is not solely based on history, number, or tradition. A true church therefore requires marks, which are, in sum, the Word, sacraments, and discipline.

1. False vs. true church & More pure vs less pure church



- Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem -

2. A mark of the true church 1: the true preaching of the Word

1) Pure preaching of the Word of God (Acts 6:2-4)

2) Acknowledging the authority of the Word of God, proclaiming that doctrines and life are under the authority of the Word

3) Preaching of the Gospel

- Exaltation of Christ

- Hope for Heaven

- Walking the narrow path

- Changes in perspective (the Kingdom perspective, eternal perspective, sinner's perspective)

3. A mark of the true church 2: the right administration of the sacraments

(Mt. 16:18-19)

1) Sacraments instituted by Jesus: baptism and communion

2) Visible preaching of the gospel

3) Acceptance as member of the church (baptism),
continuous confirmation of that membership (communion)

4. A mark of the true church 3: the faithful exercise of discipline

(Mt. 18:15-18)

1) Discipline is exercising Christ-given authority to the church to preserve the purity and well-being of the church by educating and guiding the members.

2) The authority of the church (Mt. 16:19)

(1) Authority not of an individual but of the church exercised properly in accordance with the Word.

(2) The purpose of discipline is to build up brothers and sisters in Christ.

3) Proper discipline follows the words of Jesus in Matthew 18

(1) Encouraging and teaching through the Word

(2) If one denies, then bring one or two others as witnesses

(3) If one refuses to repent, let the church through a governing body exercise admonition, probation, suspension from communion, administrative suspension, suspension from office, administrative leave, dismissal, or excommunication. (KPCA Constitution)

Let us think

Every month, our church participates in communion. What does it mean that we are called to participate in communion? The weakening of the church today has to do with the weakening of church discipline. How can we build upon the marks of a true church?

"Discipline is the strength of the church." [John Calvin]