

The church that Jesus built
Universal Church/Local Church
Implications

As we have studied together, there are many differences between the universal and local church. As we come to a fuller understanding of these differences, we can identify the instructions that pertain to one but not the other and vice versa. We can also better apply the scriptural authority for what we do and in what context we are allowed to do them.

I Corinthians 7.1-5

1. Is this a command? To whom? Would it be appropriate or authorized in the setting of the local church?

James 1.27, I Timothy 5.3-16

2. Is this a command for the universal or local church? Both? Why does it matter?

I Corinthians 11.17-34

3. Can this be done outside of the local church? Why or why not?

Conclusion: There are things that we are allowed or even commanded to do as Christians (universal church) where in one context is good and pure and right, yet in another context (local church) would be wrong. The reverse can also be true.

Matthew 18.15-20

4. Note vs. 20 especially, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” Is this a definition of an assembly? If not, in what sense is Christ with us when two or three are gathered in his name?

Remember that universal church covers all of a Christian’s life and has much greater latitude in what is authorized than the local church. The local church and the contributed funds are limited to what God has authorized in His word for very specific purposes.

Consider what the universal church can do in these areas (note any limitations):

5. Work

6. Recreation

7. Education

8. Charity/Benevolence

Does the ability of the universal church to be involved in these life activities allow the local church to do the same?

May God help us to not go beyond what is written, but also not to bind where God has not bound.