



What is The Church?

R.C. Sproul

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In this booklet, Dr. R. C. Sproul carefully and clearly explains that the church is a body of people saved by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit who live to glorify and enjoy God. Beginning with the ancient Nicene Creed, which affirms that the church is “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic,” Dr. Sproul provides accessible teaching on one of the most misunderstood of all Christian doctrines.

What is The Church? Details

Date : Published October 7th 2013 by Reformation Trust Publishing (first published August 1st 2013)

ISBN :

Author : R.C. Sproul

Format : Kindle Edition 82 pages

Genre : Religion, Theology, Christian, Nonfiction, Christianity, Ecclesiology, Church

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From Reader Review What is The Church? for online ebook

Fred says

An excellent, but brief, overview of the Biblical view of the Church. I particularly enjoyed the discussion of the difference between the visible and invisible Church. I will be recommending this book to others.

Bob T says

Short and concise

A good, quick summary of the main points of what the church is in the protestant tradition. I like how R C Sproul gets right to the important points in a direct and easy to understand manner.

larry brashear says

Great Book!

I learned a lot by reading and studying this wonderful book. R. C. Surely is a simple and effective writer. The big thing most churches are missing is any form of discipline.

Aaron says

A short read on the Christian Church. Sproul's Reformed theology certainly comes through (which one should expect.) The book is a basic, surface treatment of the doctrine of the church. It is divided into nine short chapters. I read it through in just a couple of hours. There was some good insights in the book. However, I found that it was short on Bible and long on tradition. I also found several instances where Sproul makes some rather hefty comments without providing documentation or evidence of some of his claims. For instance early in the book he states when talking about liberalism's impact upon the church that "80 percent of pastors in some denominations deny cardinal Christian doctrine." (paraphrase)

Should certainly not be the only book used for a study on the Church, but a helpful beginning point.

Jimmy says

I picked this book out to go over for a study for a small group since I wanted to review the basics of ecclesiology that was concise and Reformed. I was also hoping to glean from this book anything helpful as I was also preparing to preach for a retreat on the topic of the church. The author R.C Sproul is someone I esteem very highly and he is more than capable in writing on this topic. However I must admit that I was somewhat disappointed with this particular book even though I found his other works in his Crucial Question

Series to be quite helpful. This short book has nine chapters in which some of them could have been made into one. For instance I felt the first two chapters could have been combined together. Some of the chapters were so short that I was surprised to find I was done with them even though I was just getting started! There were some chapters that didn't have a single Bible verse in support of the discussion. Sproul has a chapter on the servants of the Lord and I wished he could have addressed the topic of serving in the church more practically. Upon further reflection after completing the book I think the book as a whole could have been more practical. Sproul did have a helpful discussion in his final chapter about the marks of a true church. I agree with Sproul that a true church must preach the Gospel but I had a harder time with Sproul's position that an essential element of a true church include the fact that it must practice church discipline. Now don't get me wrong I believe in the importance of the local church carrying out discipline but I do think it is possible that a church struggle to implement church discipline and still remain a church. In the end I would still say this book is still worth getting despite the drawbacks I've mentioned although I would also encourage people to read other works on the church alongside this book. Given how Sproul has made this book and others like it in the Crucial Question series free on Kindle, what's holding you back?

Brandon Wilkins says

Very brief, but very good.

Explains the phrase in the Nicene creed, "We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church." It gives roughly one or two chapters to each of these attributes of the church.

There are additional chapters on the church as God's possession and the marks of the church.

John Yelverton says

This is an absolutely amazing book! I cannot recommend it enough. R.C. Sproul breaks down what is the church, but then hammers home the Christian's responsibility toward the church. His whole emphasis on, how can we say we love Christ when we hate his bride, will leave you dumbfounded in places. It's extremely well done.

Alex Hannis says

I liked this book, but it was really nothing special. In classic Sproul fashion, he pulls from church history (Apostles Creed and Reformation) to give a definition of the church, both visible and invisible. I honestly found myself a little bored in some places. But to be fair, he gives good and faithful definitions and explanation and is faithful to his thesis; that is, he answers the question, "What is the church?"

However, my biggest critique is that his definition of the church was predominantly, if not only, inward focused. There is no mention at all about the mission of the church, or that God uses the church as the vehicle for his mission. There was a sentence in there about the need for evangelism, but it seemed more for individuals rather than a function of the church. In my opinion, he misses much of the nature of the church in Acts, and appeals too much to the Reformers, who were notoriously un-missional (not anti, just no real emphasis).

Overall, I think he wrote the book well, with typical Reformed strengths (one, holy, catholic, apostolic) and what I think are typical Reform weaknesses (mission, community transformation, blessing). But then again, as a Baptist, you could probably say the exact opposite is true about us. It's worth a read, but would definitely recommend other books to accompany it.

Steve Campbell says

This is a brief but solid examination of what the church is and what it should be. The section of this book that deals with the distinction between the visible and the invisible church is especially helpful. Of course, there is more that can be said about the church, but this booklet gives a good introduction to the issues.

John Goodsell says

Good intro to church

This is a good book on what a church is. Many of the topics discussed in this book could be studied in much deeper ways, but this book does a good job of giving an overview.

Wayne says

Decent little book that does what it sets out to do: Give a brief overview of the church. Nothing special, but a nice little read.

Rene says

I would say very simplistic ideas but really valid points delivered in an excellent work of Sproul

Isaiah Jesch says

Good overview book

I enjoyed this book as a very high level overview on the nature of the church, with the final chapter being particularly good. Again, as I have felt about most of this series, it serves as a good intro to the topic, but it is too short to really deal with the topic fully in my opinion.

Sakthivel Sundaresan says

A concise introduction about the doctrine of Church.

Nick says

It's not a bad book (really, it's a booklet), but it's just very simplistic. While I understand that it's hard to cut such a broad topic like 'the church' down into a few pages, but the way that this was done seems very haphazard, and it leads to a shotgun effect where 20 different ideas are touched upon weakly, instead of one or two points being explained well and driven home.
