

Answer Key:

2022

- attitudes
- adjustments
- actions

Church Why?

- journey

1. center

- ourselves

2. connect

- isolated / practice.

3. cultivate

- baby

- discipleship

4. contribute

- consume

- abilities

5. communicate

- accept / pass

- showing

What can I do?

- God’s power
- language
- talent
- Word
- Love
- joy
- sacrifice
- friends

The State of the Church

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 Message

Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life emerges! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what he is doing. We’re Christ’s representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God’s work of making things right between them. We’re speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he’s already a friend with you.

Introductory Statement

The church is God’s instrument to deliver the message of transformation to our communities and to the world.

You will discover in the Bible that God’s favor rests on the church, and communities.

When God transforms lives, He does not just build temples of the Holy Spirit in the individuals,

He builds His church by adding more lives to the body.

Let's take a look....

- U.S. church membership was **73%** when Gallup first measured it in 1937 and remained near 70% for the next six decades, before beginning a steady decline around the turn of the 21st century. **Today it is at 43%.**
- The decline in church membership is primarily a function of the increasing number of Americans who express no religious preference. Over the past two decades, the percentage of Americans who do not identify with any religion has grown from **8%** in 1998-2000 to **22%** in 2021.
- With Covid, we need to understand that about 20 percent of attendees will not return. Church leaders are sharing that one out of five of the pre-COVID attendees will not return.

Trends developing....

- The majority of "Attendees" may no longer be in the room.
- Growing churches will shift their focus from gathering to connecting.
- Pastors and church leaders will try to fill worship centers while others focus on fulfilling the "Mission."
- Growing churches will see the **internet** and their **buildings** differently.
- Content alone won't cut it. Community and connection will.
- Generational differences will become clearer than ever.
- Unchurched people are not looking for an echo of the culture, they are seeking an alternative to it. The future church will consist of Christians who look, live and sound much more like Jesus than the political candidate of their choice.
- We need spiritual leaders who will find tomorrow's solutions when most leaders can only see today's problem.

As is often in culture, the leaders you criticize today will be the leaders who coach you tomorrow.

2022

- **This New Year we are going to face new problems, new possibilities, new pressures. Each of these things will require a new response. New _____, new _____, and new _____.**

Church Why?

- God created His church so that we would not have to do the _____ by ourselves.

1. The Church helps you to _____ your life around God.

Jude 1:20-21 Message

"...friends, carefully build yourselves up in this most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit, staying right at the center of God's love, keeping your arms open and outstretched, ready for the mercy of our Master, Jesus Christ. This is the unending life, the real life!"

*The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the importance of local assemblies. In fact, it was the pattern of Paul's ministry to establish local congregations in the cities where he preached the gospel. Hebrews 10:24-25 **commands every believer to be a part of such a local body and reveals why this is necessary.***

- We must remember that God did not put us on this earth just to live for _____.

2 Corinthians 5:14 Message

"Our firm decision is to work from this focused center: One man died for everyone. That puts everyone in the same boat. He included everyone in his death so that everyone could also be included in his life, a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own."

Question: *Is your life centered on God?*

2. The Church helps you to _____ with other followers of Christ.

Romans 12:5 GWT

"...Christ makes us one body and individuals who are connected to each other..."

- God did not put you on this earth to live _____, His plan was for each one of us is to _____ loving others in HIS FAMILY.

Romans 12:5 Message

"The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body.

But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much..."

Did you know: *That being connected to the church is proof of your salvation!*

God wants our congregation to do much more than just come to church, focusing on more than just how they can benefit from what the church has to offer. His people are to be the church toward a world in desperate need of its message –growing more like Jesus and doing their part to carry out His mission.

3. The Church helps you _____ spiritual maturity.

Ephesians 4:16 NCV

The whole body depends on Christ, and all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part does its own work to make the whole body grow and be strong with love.

•God does not want you to remain on this earth a spiritual _____.

Ephesians 4:12-13 GWT

"Their purpose is to prepare God's people to serve and to build up the body of Christ...until we become mature, until we measure up to Christ, who is the standard."

•The Bible calls this process: _____

Ephesians 4:15 Message

"God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything."

The church is God's instrument to deliver the message of transformation to our communities and to the world. You will discover in the Bible that God's favor rests on the church, and communities. When God transforms lives, He does not just build temples of the Holy Spirit in the individuals, He builds His church by adding more lives to the body.

2 Peter 1:5-7 Messages

"So don't lose a minute in building on what you've been given, complementing your basic faith with good character, spiritual

understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love, each dimension fitting into and developing the others."

4. The Church helps you _____ something back.

Ephesians 2:10 Living Bible

"God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus; and long ages ago he planned that we should spend these lives in helping others."

● God did not put you on this earth to just _____ resources and live for yourself.

2 Timothy 4:5 NLT

"...fully carry out the ministry God has given you."

● You and I are to use our _____ to serve others in God's love.

Hebrews 6:10 NLT

"He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do."

5. The Church helps you _____ God's message.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NCV

"Through Christ, God made peace between us and himself, and God gave us the work of telling everyone about the peace we can have with him...he gave us this message of peace. So we have been sent to speak for Christ. It is as if God is calling to you through us. We speak for Christ when we beg you to be at peace with God."

● God did put you on this earth to _____ Him as Lord and Savior, now He expects you to _____ it on.

1 Peter 2:9 Message

"You are... God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you."

- Your mission involves more than speaking, not just sharing it, but

_____ it.

Philippians 1:27 NCV

"...live in a way that brings honor to the Good News of Christ... standing strong with one purpose, that you work together as one for the faith of the Good News,"

Our Purpose:

Carolinas Cornerstone exists to love God, love others, serve others, grow in Christ, and share the Good News.

God wants our congregation to do much more than just come to church, focusing on more than just how they can benefit from what the church has to offer. His people are to be the church toward a world in desperate need of its message –growing more like Jesus and doing their part to carry out His mission.

What can I do?

- We must pray for _____.
- We must use everybody's _____.
- We must employ every member's _____.
- We must be devoted to God's _____.
- We must _____ each other deeply.
- We must worship with _____.
- We must be willing to _____.
- We must bring our _____ to Jesus.

John 13:35 GNT

"If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples."

"You are the church! We are the church together. All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we are the church together. The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is a people."

A Great Commitment

To the Great Commandment

And the Great Commission

Will produce Great Christians

And a Great Church

But it starts with YOU!