

The Purpose of the Church

Church Visions or Philosophies of what the church is “for”

1. The Missional Church

Focus: The church exists to reach the lost and spread the Gospel. Everything revolves around evangelism and global missions.

Key Scripture: *Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 1:8.*

Strength: Keeps the church outward-looking.

Risk: Can neglect discipleship and worship if mission is seen as the only goal.

2. The Discipleship or Formation Church

Focus: The church’s main work is to grow believers in maturity and obedience to Christ.

Key Scripture: *Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 4:13–15.*

Strength: Deep spiritual growth and biblical literacy.

Risk: Can become inward or academic, neglecting outreach.

3. The Worship-Centered Church

Focus: The primary purpose of the church is to glorify God in worship and sacraments.

Key Scripture: *John 4:23–24; Psalm 95:6.*

Strength: Keeps God at the center.

Risk: May become ritualistic or detached from daily mission.

4. The Family or Community Church

Focus: The church exists as a spiritual family where people belong, love, and are cared for.

Key Scripture: *Acts 2:42–47; Galatians 6:10.*

Strength: Builds authentic relationships and pastoral care.

Risk: Can turn inward and resist new people or change.

5. The Cultural Influence Church

Focus: The church is to shape and transform society—art, politics, education, law—according to biblical principles.

Key Scripture: *Matthew 5:13–16; Jeremiah 29:7.*

Strength: Engages the public square and moral issues.

Risk: Can drift into political or ideological activism.

6. The Social Justice or Compassion Church

Focus: The church’s calling is to stand with the poor, oppressed, and marginalized, working for justice and mercy.

Key Scripture: *Micah 6:8; Luke 4:18–19; James 1:27.*

Strength: Embodies Christ’s compassion.

Risk: Can replace the Gospel of salvation with social causes.

7. The Revival or Renewal Church

Focus: The church exists to bring spiritual awakening, repentance, and the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit.

Key Scripture: *Acts 2; 2 Chronicles 7:14.*

Strength: Renewed passion and prayer.

Risk: Can become emotionalism or experience-driven.

8. The Teaching or Truth Church

Focus: The church is the pillar and ground of truth; its job is to teach sound doctrine and guard orthodoxy.

Key Scripture: *1 Timothy 3:15; Titus 2:1.*

Strength: Preserves the faith and sound theology.

Risk: Can become intellectual and lack love or mission.

9. The Fellowship or Relationship Church

Focus: The church's life is centered on fellowship—sharing life, meals, and burdens together.

Key Scripture: *Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:7.*

Strength: Builds unity and care.

Risk: Can prioritize comfort over calling.

10. The Kingdom or Transformational Church

Focus: The church exists to advance the Kingdom of God in all areas—spiritual, social, and cosmic renewal.

Key Scripture: *Matthew 6:10; Colossians 1:13–20.*

Strength: Broad, integrated vision of God's rule.

Risk: Can blur the line between the church's spiritual mission and temporal change.

11. The Inner Piety or Emotional Renewal Church

Focus: The church's purpose is to change the *inner life* — to cultivate heartfelt devotion, repentance, and emotional experience of faith. This may include personal holiness, prayer, emotional healing, or intimacy with God.

Key Scripture: *Psalms 51:10–12; Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 12:2; Philippians 3:8–10.*

Strength: Promotes genuine repentance and warmth of faith rather than mere formalism.

Risk: Can reduce faith to feelings or private spirituality, losing sight of the communal and sacramental nature of the church.

This emphasis often shows up in:

Pietism (Lutheran or Reformed contexts), which stressed conversion of the heart and personal devotion.

Holiness and Revivalist movements, where inner transformation and emotional response are central.

Modern “spiritual formation” or “inner healing” ministries, which focus on the heart rather than doctrine or mission.