

# We are the Church

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## Introduction: We Are the Church, Not the Location

Even though our days are numbered in this location and we're moving to a new location, that it doesn't really matter where we are physically, that we as a body of believers, we actually make up the church. Amen. The church isn't about a physical location only, but that it's about the people within the church. We are the church. So this morning I just want to remind us that no matter where we are, that we as a people make up the church. Not our facilities, but we as a people. So shall we pray and then we'll jump in.

And Heavenly Father, we're so grateful for the faithfulness that you've shown this house all these years. We thank you for the faithfulness that you've shown to each one of us individually, the way that you have gone before us, surrounded us, made every crooked path straight. We're so grateful. And so this morning as we remember the purpose for which you call us, help us to be the people that you're calling us to be, Father. Fill my mouth in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. So this morning, even though we are celebrating and also just savoring our time in this location, I want to just remind us that actually we are the church, not just a physical location.

## I. The Church is a Spiritual House, Not Just a Physical Building

And that first and foremost, the church is a spiritual house, not just a physical building. And we know this is the case because Peter describes the church as being living stones.

In 1 Peter, chapter 2, verses 4 through 5, Peter writes, "As you come to him," meaning Jesus, the living stone, "rejected by humans, but chosen by God and precious to him, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

In this passage, Peter reminds us that the church is not just the walls. It's not just the location, but it's the people in the church who are shaped and fitted together by God's grace. This morning, I want you to know that you matter to the church. Your presence matters. Your contribution matters. Your smile, your giftings, your fellowship, it all matters.

You are the church.

This is why we always encourage you, come, come, share what you have, share your heart, share your gifts, share your talents, share what you can. Because who you are, your experiences, your story, your life, your talents, your perspective, it's all needed in this house.

Because collectively, we make up GHA. We're the living stones that are fitted together, and we're a part of this beautiful, larger body of Christ where every member is needed.

We are the church.

It's not just about a physical building. We are so grateful for the new space that we're getting. We're grateful that we're not going to have to tear down and set up, and we're grateful that we're going to have a permanent place where we can do the things that have been in our heart for so long. We're grateful for that space. But more than that space, we are grateful for you. And we want you to know that you being in the new space means a lot.

That the new space doesn't replace the body of Christ. That we need you, that we want you, that who you are helps build up GHA.

So know that the church is not just about a physical building, but it's the people.

## II. The Church is a Family, Not Just a Physical Address

I also want to remind us that the church is a family, not just a physical address. You know, Pastor Rubin talks about us being a family, a family of believers. And this is why it's so important that we come together. You know, there are some parts in the world where believers are not able to openly come together. All right, they're persecuted. It's illegal. They're not allowed to come together. But we have religious freedom in this country. And so it's good for us to exercise our religious freedom and come together because we can worship corporately. We don't have to be isolated as one or two and house churches because we can be a part of the larger body. The church is a family, not just a physical address.

You know, in this discussion back and forth, we have a group of church members that are helping with the new location. And I believe it was Colin who shared once that he's heard about churches who have actually split over the color of carpet or over the color of chairs, where division comes in over things that have to do with a physical location or a physical aesthetic, as opposed to the heart of what a church actually is.

Paul tells us that when we are believers, we become members of God's household.

And the foundation is Jesus Christ himself. In Ephesians 2, 19 to 22, it says, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises

to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit."

Isn't that wonderful? In that description, nowhere does he talk about a physical location, but he says that we are his dwelling place, that we are members of his household. So I just want to remind you that church is about family.

The church is not defined by a building's location, but by relationships and a shared purpose.

You know, years ago, Pastor Rubin used to go to Burma for missions, and there was one trip that he went where he went way up high in the mountains. People have to tell that story. It was quite a rugged trip. But he was so moved by the number of people who traveled days by foot to attend those gatherings.

These people understood the power of family coming together, because many of them were isolated in their villages. They were the one or two only believers. And so when they found out that there was a body of believers coming together and that people from other nations were coming to pour into them, they traveled the distance. It didn't matter that it wasn't around the corner. They traveled for days on foot to get to where the body of Christ was meeting.

Sometimes when we move location, it can be a little bit uncomfortable. It's different. Maybe it's a little bit further than we thought. But remember that when we're a family, we come together no matter what.

Even if the location is different.

We prioritize coming together as a family over convenience, over location, because we understand that we are members of his household.

I'm not a member of the Penang Swimming Club, but I am a member of God's household. And the privileges, I must say, are much better.

So we may not be members of a country club, or a certain association, or a certain club that comes with prestige and membership and access, but we are members of his household, our heavenly Father's household. And with that comes all the privileges we need. Grace, favor, love, joy, peace, every good and perfect thing.

So remember, we're a family, not just a physical address.

### III. The Church is a Mission, Not Just a Meeting Place

Lastly, I want to remind us that we have a mission, that the church is a mission, and it's not just a meeting place. Though we're grateful for a meeting place, but that our mission goes beyond that.

In the early church in Acts chapter 2, verses 42, 47, the early church didn't necessarily have a building like we have today in many conventional churches.

In some countries you can see on every block there's a beautiful church building. The early church didn't have that, but they did have a mission. And guess what?

Our mission is the same mission that GHA has, to love God, to love people, to serve others, to share the gospel. This was the mission of the early church, and this is what we aspire to do as a local body.

In Acts 2, chapter 42, 47, it says, "This early church devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, and to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who are being saved."

In the early church they may not have had a location like Tanden Point, or maybe they didn't have a location like we're going to in Palau-Tikus, but they did meet in homes and they did break bread together and they prayed together and they stayed faithful to the mission, regardless of wherever they were meeting.

This morning I want to remind us that no matter where we're meeting, our mission remains the same.

GHA is committed to loving God, loving people, serving others, and we want to proclaim the good news of the gospel.

Wherever we are located, that is our call.

We understand that as members that we are the church, not just inside this location, but when we go out those doors, we are the church. When we're in the marketplace, we are the church. When we are in our workplace, we are the church. When we're at home, we are the church. When we're in traffic, we are the church. Wherever we go, we represent our Lord. We are his hands, his feet, his mouth, his eyes, his heart, his ears. We are the church.

## Conclusion: Moving Forward with Our Mission

So in moving forward, I want to remind you that regardless of where our location is, our mission remains the same.

That though this is our last family here, and though we just have two more Sundays left and we are grateful for our time together, we also look forward to a beautiful future. This new location is an answer to many, many, many, many years of prayer. And we're so grateful to finally see this prayer come answered.

We want to remind you that each one of you matters. Each one of you matters to GHA. We want to remind you that you have a place in the body of Christ. You have a place in GHA, and that you are a part of the mission of this house. That you are a part of the mission of the body of Christ in this island, in this state, and in this nation. And even though we're moving location, we're so glad that you're a part of who we are. Because we look forward to the new chapter and the new location in seeing what God is going to do. Amen?