



## The Church is a Purposefully Unified Temple

The church is described in various ways in the New Testament. One of these metaphors is a temple, a dwelling of God in the Spirit that is described in Ephesians 2:19-22. In verse 19 the church is pictured as a family or community. This partially describes the closeness God intends for His people, but the picture of the church as a building may highlight even more interconnectedness that is God's will for His children.

**Ephesians 2:19-22**, So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,<sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone,<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.<sup>22</sup> In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

In a temple constructed of stone there is a unity between the stones that is even closer than that which exists among members of a community or a family. The members of a family are distinct individuals. They can separate from one another and go their own way, yet still be a family. However, if the stones in a building were to go their own way, the building would no longer exist.

God is constructing the church as a temple so that He may dwell in it. It is "fitly framed together" (KJV) by the Master Builder according to His eternal purposes. The material He is using is comprised of "living stones" (1 Peter 2:4-5), the redeemed, the called out ones.

**1 Peter 2:4-5**, And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,<sup>5</sup> you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The word used to describe the process of fitting the living stones together is used only one other time in the New Testament (Ephesians 4:16) and emphasizes the importance of commitment to face-to-face, heart-to-heart, relational Christianity.

This word, *sunarmologeō*, is a double compound (three words put together to form one new word). The first two words are *sun* and *harmos*.

*Sun* means "with," "together," or "united," and *harmos* means a "joining" or "binding." The word "harmony" is derived from *harmos*. *Harmos* suggests the idea of joined together, and *sun* emphasizes the unity aspect of the church. The idea is not just "together," but "united together."

The final word included in this compound is *legeō*, which means to pick up or choose. It describes the deliberate selection of one thing from among many.

In explaining the meaning of *sunarmologeō*, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said this about the process God uses to construct His temple:

Have you ever watched a mason doing his work? Many times as a boy I did this, and it always fascinated me. He took the stone and then with his various types of hammer he knocked bits off. He trimmed it, he shaped it, he fashioned it, he chipped bits off it. He tried it. Then he took it back again because it was not quite right. He would knock off another piece, perhaps with the chisel and hammer. And so he went on dealing with it until it was just right. Then he put it in, and stood back. Satisfied he put the mortar on, then he took the next stone and did the same to that. Now that is what the apostle means by "fitly framed together."<sup>1</sup>

A definition of the word *sunarmologeō* then would be ... several pieces deliberately chosen from among many, harmoniously united together for a definite purpose. That is up close and personal.

Believers in Christ who are not regularly supporting and interacting with fellow believers are crippled spiritually as much as a body would be crippled physically if its parts were not connected with each other. Similarly, disconnected believers fall short of realizing God's purpose, just as disconnected stones fall short of realizing the glory of the temple. On the other hand, when each part of Christ's body or God's temple functions in harmony with fellow members, the complete entity benefits and those not yet part of God's family have opportunity to see the magnificence of God's plan at work in the world.

Every body part and every temple stone, spiritually speaking, may seem insignificant by itself. Each, however, is vital for the body to function effectively and for the Temple to enlarge proportionately for the glory of God. May each of us be faithful in fulfilling our privileged responsibilities to and with fellow believers—up close and personal—as we anticipate our soon coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> *God's Way of Reconciliation (Studies in Ephesians chapter 2)* by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI; 1972).

[This snippet was excerpted from **Church ... Up Close and Personal** at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Church-Up%20Close%20and%20Personal.pdf>]