

## The Church (Part 2)

We creed concludes with a number of assertions related to the church. It comments in various ways on what the church is and how it functions. In this second part we will focus on a few of the “hallmarks” of the church’s life and hope.

### The Communion of Saints

The word “communion” is the Old English word for “fellowship.” The Creed, thus, affirms that to believe in God’s Church is to be in Christian fellowship with one another.

Being a Christian means being adopted into a family where you are no longer alone. One cannot believe in the church and then go about life as though they are independent of others. Life as God’s people is inherently communal.

### Discuss

Share a few things that you appreciate about or have learned from one another. Or, take some time to address any divisions that need to be addressed.

### The Forgiveness of Sins

Forgiveness is a hallmark of our Christian faith. The basis of our new life in Jesus is the fact that through him we have been forgiven from our sins.

There are two elements to this forgiveness:

1. **Legal Restitution** – relates to a pardon from penalty or a remission from debt. What is rightfully held against us is gracefully removed.
2. **Relational Restoration** – The relational healing required when an offense has taken place. In forgiving us, Jesus restores us to relationship with God.

While God forgives us, he desires that we too forgive one another. As bearers of his image, we are to be like him in the world.

### Discuss

Share a time in your life when either forgiving someone or being forgiven has resulted in freedom.

### The Resurrection of the Body & The Life Everlasting

The Creed concludes by pointing us toward the future that God’s people are headed into. In essence this is the core of our Christian hope: new bodies made fully alive living into God’s eternity.

The creed affirms that the believers’ fate will be the same as that of Jesus: resurrection from the dead.

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” **1**

***Corinthians 15:20-22***

And as we are raised to new life, this new life extends into all eternity.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” ***John 3:16***

### **Everlasting Life is Becoming Fully Alive!**

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” ***John 10:10***

Jesus describes the life he has in store for us as “life in its fullness.” It seems like the life we live now is but a shadow of the life we have in Jesus in eternity. Eternal life is not so much about living forever, though it is that, as it is about truly living, which is living fully alive to God.

### **Amen**

The Creed ends with a single word: Amen. We are reminded that the creed is as much a prayer as it is a statement of faith. We are reminded that the creed brings us face to face with a person, and challenges us to be shaped by him.

Our Amen is not the end of things, but the beginning of living as though we truly believe what we have said.

### **Discuss**

How have you grown in the Lord through the Apostles' Creed?

### **Pray**

Listen to the prayer of blessing as a group. Then end your time together in prayer with one another.