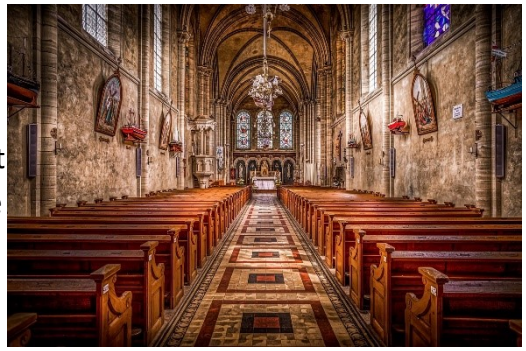
Cornerstone Elim Church, Silverdale DORIS DOODLES **A 'proper' church** **07.11.2026**



When one of my relatives came to visit me, we popped across the road to our little Elim church here in Silverdale. After the visit one of the things that she said was that when she went on holiday she enjoyed going inside a 'proper' church. She was referring to the large C. of E. and Catholic buildings. She is not a church-goer, but enjoyed going inside those large ornate buildings and having a look round at all of the stained glass windows, statues and other things that were there. There is often a lovely altar with candles and sometimes the opportunity to light a candle in memory of a loved one. She then sits down on one of the pews to enjoy the silence and awesomeness of the building away from all of the noise and bustle of the outside world.





Silverdale Elim

My relative obviously did not regard our little church as a 'proper' church. It is a fairly modern building that includes a kitchen and a Luncheon Club area. The individual chairs are moveable allowing for a variety of activities to take place. They are left in rows facing the front for services, moved round the perimeter of the room to allow for a mid-week 'Parent and Toddler' group or set around tables for a 'Quiz and Curry Night'. The large buildings with the fixed pews are not so versatile and were built for the sole intention of worship and prayer with other activities often taking place in a nearby church hall. They are often very expensive to heat, whilst in contrast, the more modern buildings such as ours, are usually nice and warm.

The comment about visiting a 'proper' church set me thinking – 'What is a 'proper' church'? A church is a building. The buildings can be of various ages, sizes, shapes and lay-outs. A **'PROPER' C**hurch is a group of people meeting together to worship, pray and support each other. Throughout the New Testament the word 'church' is used only to refer to a group of people, never to a building. The idea of a '**C**hurch' is not that people meet for a service and then go straight home, but that they interact with each other. It is a '**C**hurch Family' where there is concern for the well-being and life of every individual. There is support for those who are going through tough times and a sharing of interests and family situations.



What is the main aim of the **C**hurch? It is to help others to come to know Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. Yes, there is support; yes, there is encouragement; yes, there is sharing, but over and above everything else it is to preach the gospel of Jesus - This is why the **C**hurch exists. Our goal is to help people to receive salvation. All of the other activities that take place are opportunities to share the love that Jesus has for each one of us. Regardless of whether the meeting places are large cathedrals, small

modern churches, community centres or homes and regardless of denominations, at the centre of everything is Jesus.



The various activities that take place in churches are designed to draw others into the **C**hurch. There are people who will come into the building for a 'Quiz and Curry Night' who might never attend a service. They may only come for the Pastor's excellent (and hot!) curry, but as they sit next to us we can share the gospel with them.



In a 'Parent and Toddler' group there may be an opportunity to invite someone to a service, especially on occasions such as Christmas, Easter, Harvest or when other children are taking part. It may sound rather a silly statement to make, but people come in for food! It is not that they are hungry, but there is something about food that is communal and draws people together. I think too that there are times when folk are interested in coming into a church, but do not like to take that step and food gives them the opportunity.

##########

Here are some of the functions of Church that we can read about in the Bible:-

Praying for others. Acts 12:5. *'So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the Church.'*

Caring for others. Acts 4: 34. *'There was not a needy person among the , for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and distribution was made to each as any had need.'*

Meeting together. Hebrews 10:24. '*Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, encouraging one another.'*

Prayer outside. Acts 16:13. *On the Sabbath we went outside the gate to the riverside, where there was a place of prayer.'*

Evangelistic. Acts 16:5. *'The **C**hurches were strengthened in their faith and they increased in numbers daily.'*

Unity. Acts 1:14. *'All with one accord devoted themselves to prayer.'*

Preaching the gospel. Romans 10:17. *'Faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.'*

Mark 16:15. *'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.'*