



We are **THE CHURCH**

February - March 2021

Overview

2020 was a year that challenged our concept of church. We could no longer come to a building at a particular time or on a particular day. The question that was often asked was, “When will church open again?” But the truth is that the church can never close because the church is not a time or a place but a people. Over four weeks we’re going to explore 4 pictures of the church in Scripture to help us understand what the church is and why that’s important. Most importantly of all, we are going to discover the fundamental truth that we are the church.

Outline

1. The Bride
2. The Family
3. The Body
4. The Temple

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Week 1 • 14 February 2021 • The Bride

1. Read Ephesians 5:25-30.
 - a. What has Christ done (or does he continue to do) for the church?
 - b. What stands out to you and why?

2. Have a look at 2 Corinthians 11:2-4. Marriage is used to help us see the importance of devotion to Jesus above everything else that can be worshipped.
 - a. What are some of the idols that are “worshipped” in our culture (e.g. body-image, wealth, celebrity).
 - b. Where do you feel the most potential for compromise in your devotion to Christ?

3. To what extent do you think our culture's changing value and concept of marriage shapes how we see an exclusive relationship with Jesus?
4. What would our church look like if we were more fully devoted followers of Jesus? What might others notice? How can we encourage one another towards this?

Further Reading:

Genesis 22-24; John 14:1-4; Jude 24-25; Revelation 19:7-8.

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Week 2 • 21 February 2021 • The Family

1. What are the characteristics of a family? What would it be like if the church community looked more like a family than it does now?

2. Describe a time when you did something to help or accommodate for a family member that was way beyond what you would do for someone else. What would this sort of selfless loyalty look like in our church?

3. The phrase “one another” appears many times in the New Testament and demonstrates ways we are to relate in this church family.
 - a. Read the following verses together (Romans 12:10, 14:13; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:32; Hebrews 3:13).

 - b. Which one stands out to you most?

 - c. What would it look like to apply this in your group or wider church family?

4. Perhaps the family responsibility to one another stands out most in 1 John 3:17-18 (see also Acts 4:32-35).
 - a. To what extent do we find talking about this a challenge?
 - b. What are some steps we could take to grow in this area?

Further Reading:

Mark 3:31-35; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:3-11; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 3:1-3.

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Week 3 • 28 February 2021 • The Body

1. In what ways is the analogy of the body helpful in understanding the church? How does it help you think differently?

2. Can you recall a time where you felt like a useless or unwanted part of the church body?
 - a. What actions or truths changed this perception of yourself?

 - b. If the feelings are current, how can this group be supporting and praying for you?

3. According to Ephesians 4:11-16, what are the benefits of the body being built up?

4. God has given every person in the church spiritual gifts which are for the building up of the body (1 Corinthians 12:31; Ephesians 4:12 & 16). In what ways can you be contributing most effectively to the building up of others in this next season?

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Week 4 • 7 March 2021 • The Temple

Each of these questions relates to a different aspect of the church as the temple.

1. Presence. Like the temple was the place for the presence of God, the church is a gathering where God dwells by his Spirit (Ephesians 3:21-22).
 - a. How does this affect your view of Life Group?
 - b. Are there things that may need to change?
2. Given that church is not a time or place but wherever believers are together, how does this broader view of where God's presence dwells encourage you in outreach?
3. Priests - One of the roles of the priest in the Old Testament was to speak to God on behalf of the people.
 - a. Who or what in your world are you bringing before God in prayer at the moment?

- b. Why not share and pray about those things together?
4. In terms of sacrifice, Romans 12 speaks of offering ourselves to God. Have a look below at the way Eugene Peterson interprets this verse in *The Message*.
- a. How does this compare to your view of being a living sacrifice?

“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.” **Romans 12:1 - The Message**

Further Reading: John 4:21-26; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Hebrews 13:15-16.