

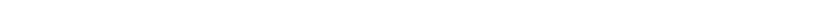
why church?

Study Guide



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Why Church?

Study Guide

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Series Overview

This guide addresses the common thought in our society that church is optional, irrelevant, or counterproductive to a Christian's walk with Christ. We will explore how the Bible explains that it is impossible to live the victorious Christian life without active participation in a local church family.

Using This Guide

You may choose to use this guide:

- for personal and reflection.
- as a discussion guide with any group of people interested in knowing what the Bible says about these topics.

1-A Community in which to Grow

Scripture: [Hebrews 10:22-23, 25](#)

Icebreaker: Growing Pains

Consider some of the challenges you remember relating to growing up. Who was there to help you work through some of your growing pains?

Discussion Questions

- In what ways can assembling as a church help us strengthen our faith ([Heb 10:22-23, 25](#))? In what ways does a building help us be more effective as a church?
- Urging each other to remain close to Christ is a crucial practice for maintaining faithfulness ([Heb 3:13](#)). Give examples of how being part of a church has deepened your commitment to Christ. If there is someone who has been an encouragement to you in your faith, tell them about it.
- Certainly, you can and should pray and read God's Word as part of your daily life. Even if you are faithful in your prayer and Bible reading, being a part of a church is important to your spiritual growth. Consider how a church can be key for the following:
 - Mutual comfort ([Acts 16:40](#))
 - Mutual accountability ([Eph 4:1-3](#))
 - Using your gifts as God intended ([1Pet 4:10-11](#))

Dig a Little Deeper: Stronger Together

Reflect on the ways in which being an active part of a local church makes you stronger and how you can help others in the church become stronger.

- Rooted in Christ ([Col 2:7](#))
- Established in the faith ([Col 2:7](#))
- Encouraged to avoid worldly influences ([Eph 4:14](#))
- Joined for mutual accountability and care ([Eph 4:15-16](#))

Application Exercise: Church and Spiritual Growth

Identify the ways in which the church is most helpful in your spiritual growth. Identify the ways that you can best contribute to the spiritual growth of others. Pray, asking God to continue to grow you and others spiritually.

2-A Community in which to Live Out the 'One Anothers'

Scripture: [John 13:31-35](#)

Icebreaker: Love Chair

Have everyone sit in a circle with one empty chair placed in the middle. Give each person a post-it note pad and a pen. Ask them to each take a turn sitting in the "Love Chair" that is placed in the middle. As each one sits in the chair, ask the group members to write something positive about that person on a post-it. Then ask each one to take a turn by having them read out loud what they wrote, share why they wrote that particular thing, and place the post-it on the person in the Love Chair. The effect will be that each person gets a turn to become covered with positive messages. Some members may want to keep their messages as a remembrance.

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to love other Christ-followers the way that Jesus loves you ([John 13:34](#))? What observable thing could you do that would show that you love someone as Christ loves you?
- Why would demonstrating love for Christ-followers help others know that you are a disciple of Christ ([John 13:35](#))?
- In what way is loving one another the fulfillment of the law ([Rom 13:8-10](#))?
- In what way does loving one another require effort and sacrifice ([Eph 4:2](#), [Col 3:13](#))?

Dig a Little Deeper: Some Other 'One Anothers'

For each "one another" in the table, consider how you might be able to put it into practice at home, in your church, and in your community.

<i>One Another</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>How I Can Practice it</i>
Be kind to	Rom 12:10	
Teach	Col 3:16	
Comfort	1The 4:18	
Pray for	Jas 5:16	
Minister to	1Pet 4:10	

Application Exercise: Pick a 'One-Another'

Pick a "one another" from the table above that you want to demonstrate more fully in the coming week. Evaluate yourself each day regarding how well you demonstrated your chosen "one another."

3-Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

Scripture: [1Corinthians 12](#)

Icebreaker: Unopened Gift

Tell stories about you or someone you know who couldn't resist taking an early peek at a wrapped gift. Why might someone have a wrapped gift that they never open?



Discussion Questions

- Every Christ-follower has at least one spiritual gift ([Eph 4:7-8](#)). Some people have not yet opened their gifts. What does [Romans 12:1-2](#) suggest as reasons they may be having difficulty unwrapping their gifts?

- What does [1Corinthians 12:18-27](#) indicate is the purpose of our spiritual gifts?

- Discuss where you are regarding discovering your spiritual gifts.
 - Exploring what it means to make Jesus my Lord and Savior
 - Asking God to remove any hurdles to me discovering the gifts He gave me
 - Asking God to show me where He wants me to use my gifts
 - Fully using my gifts to serve God and the church

Pray for each person in your group regarding spiritual gifts.

Dig a Little Deeper: Beware of Abusing Gifts

Study these passages to help you beware of abusing spiritual gifts.

- Focusing on the gifts instead of the Giver ([Eph 4:11-12](#))
- Using gifts to control or manipulate others ([1Cor 12:4-7](#))
- Claiming that a believer should have all the gifts ([1Cor 12:11](#))
- Claiming to have the ability to give spiritual gifts to others ([1Cor 12:11](#))
- Comparing your gifts to the gifts of others ([1Cor 12:12-18](#))
- Using the presence of a particular spiritual gift as evidence of salvation or spiritually ([1Cor 12:29-30](#))
- Using your gifts to impress others ([1Cor 13:1-3](#))
- Thinking that spiritual gifts are evidence of spiritual maturity rather than looking for spiritual fruit ([Gal 5:22-23](#))
- Viewing the discovery and development of spiritual gifts as unimportant ([2Cor 5:9-10](#))

Application Exercise: The Gifts God Gave Me

Take this self-assessment to reflect on how you are using the gifts God gave you.

	<i>rarely <-----> always</i>
I am willing to put effort into discovering and developing my spiritual gifts.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
I ask God to guide me in where to use the gifts He gave me.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
I want to use my gifts in a way that honors God.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
I know I didn't earn my gifts, but I am pleased to use them to build up others in the church.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

4-Go Outward

Scripture: [Hebrews 10:24](#), [Philippians 2:1-4](#)

Icebreaker: Commercial

Create a short commercial that you think could get people excited about being outward-focused followers of Jesus.

Discussion Questions

- Give some examples of how other Christians have stimulated your interest in doing good works ([Heb 10:24](#)). What can you do to stimulate others' interest in doing good works?
- God has given us some resources to use as we go outward ([Php 2:1](#)). For each situation below, discuss which of those resources could help you get through that situation so you are ready to go outward.

I am lonely.
I don't think I matter.
My guilt overwhelms me.

- It's difficult to harmonize if no one is willing to play second fiddle ([Php 2:3](#)). Discuss why most people would rather play first fiddle. What advice does Jesus give us in [Luke 9:46-48](#)?
- Tell about some of your experiences participating in outreach activities. Discuss outreach activities that your group might be able to do together. Discuss outreach activities that your family might be able to do together.

Dig a Little Deeper: The Boat

Read the story in [Luke 5:1-11](#).

- ▶ What did Jesus do with the empty boat ([Luke 5:3](#))? How could this picture the importance of first filling yourself with God's Word?
- ▶ What would be the equivalent of you "launching out into the deep" ([Luke 5:4](#))?
- ▶ After making a hugely profitable catch, why did Peter, James, and John leave it all behind ([Luke 5:9-11](#))?

Application Exercise: Am I Outward Focused?

	<i>rarely <-----> always</i>
I ask God to show me who He wants me to reach and how.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
I lift up my eyes from my immediate situation and notice the needs of those around me.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
I seek opportunities to serve others with what God has given me.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

5-Why Grace Church?

Icebreaker: You and Grace

How do you view your relationship with your church?

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to be a **follower of Jesus** [[Luke 14:27](#)]?

Grace Church Vision

*Help everyone become
an outward-focused
follower of Jesus.*

- Describe what an **outward-focused** follower of Jesus looks like [[Php 2:4](#)]. Give some examples of people you know being outward-focused as they follow Jesus.
- What is involved in **helping everyone become** an outward-focused follower of Jesus [[Mat 28:19-20](#)]?
 - ▶ In your relationships with those who are not following Christ, what would be some good ways to help them find Christ?
 - ▶ In your relationships with Christ-followers who are not outward-focused, what practical things could you do to stimulate their interest in being outward-focused?
- In what way are the two great statements in [Matthew 22:36-40](#) and [Matthew 28:18-20](#) the basis of **Love, Learn, Lead**?
- In what way does it take three vital relationships, **God, household,** and **church**, to be outward-focused?

Grace Church Mission

*Love, learn, lead with
God, household, church.*

Dig a Little Deeper: Purpose of the Church

Reflect on the following table. How do you see these purposes in action within your church?

<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Ministry to:</i>	<i>In action within your church</i>
Worship	God Col 3:16 Eph 1:12 Eph 5:16-19	
Spiritual Growth	Christ-Followers Col 1:28 Eph 4:12-13	
Outreach (Evangelism and Mercy)	The world Mat 28:19 Luke 6:35-36	

Application Exercise: My Primary Focus

Although God desires each believer to worship Him, grow spiritually, and reach out, in the context of the church, each believer is specially gifted with a primary focus in one of those areas.

- In what ways has God gifted you?
- Where is your primary focus in serving God and the church?
- How does that unfold in your participation with your church?



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