

BIG IDEA

We believe the church is God's Kingdom community, joined together in allegiance to King Jesus and called to live out shared practices that help more and more people find their way back to God.

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:19-22, Revelation 21:3, Acts 2:41-47, Exodus 40:34, Matthew 1:23

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. One of the primary theological themes for this week is God's presence among God's people. The following David Fitch statement may be helpful to you and the group. "The fundamental answer to the 'Why church' question is: Presence is the way God works. Therefore, for God to work the way he chooses to work, requires a people for God to be present to, and to make space for God to be made known in the world."
2. As you look at Ephesians chapter 2, notice a status change for those who are now a part of the Jesus Community. They are no longer foreigners or strangers. There is a reciprocal "knowing" that happens when we become a part of God's Kingdom. We know God, and we know one another, and there is a kind of communal knowing of God, and God is made known to others through the church. The text also says we have become part of the same household; we are family. That image is not just a romantic idea; family comes with joys and challenges. Notice the image of the church being built up together with a foundation and a cornerstone. To what degree are we being built up on that foundation as individuals and as a small group? The temple is the place God dwells. That means through his people, others will come to know God and find their way back to God.
3. The idea that God wants to live with, work among, and through God's people is not an idea tacked on to the end of the Bible. That message comes through loud and clear through the entire story of God's people. George F. MacLeod once said, "The Bible is all about community: from the Garden of Eden to the City at the end." God is fundamentally relational, so it only makes sense that God would bring his rule to earth through his people.
4. A professor from the University of Kansas named Jeffrey Hall published research showing the number of hours it takes to develop friendships. He found that it takes 50 hours to go from acquaintance to casual friend; 90 hours to become a "friend"; and 200 hours to become a "close friend." He also found that the more hours spent in "striving" conversation focused on what was "really happening in each others lives" brought people into friendship in a greater way than conversation focused on sports and TV shows. The more we open up and connect, the closer we resemble the family God wants us to be.
5. If you would like to take your group through our brand new, B.L.E.S.S. small group material, please reach out to your Community Pastor or Small Group Director.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Where do you see God at work in your life right now?

What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?

Have you considered getting baptized? Visit communitychristian.org/baptism/

Who have you been able to B.L.E.S.S.?