



WHY CHURCH?

Week Five

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for allowing us to be here together and for being with us. We trust that you want to use our time today to move us toward you and one another. Help us to say 'yes' to what you have for us. Amen.

Talk It Over

Church is not intended to be a place we go to, but rather a collection of people who are following Jesus and learning to live and love the Jesus way. This series, "Why Church?", is intended to help us better understand why the church is important and relevant to us today. This week we looked at more of what it means for the church to be a key part of Jesus' mission being fulfilled.

- As we close up this series, what important takeaways have you captured?
- Today we are talking about a shared mission. Tell us about some goals you have for your individual life? This can be about any area of your life.
- What actions, steps, or attitudes are you practicing to help meet these goals?

Let's re-read our theme verse, Hebrews 10:24-25 (Voice), for this series.

While it's easy for the church to take on a certain "bunker" mentality, where insiders hide and shelter themselves from the outside world, this verse reminds us of the attractive organic beauty the church is intended to present to the outside world. In other words, when the church functions as a community of people encouraging each other to love and do good in the world, it will not only inspire those who already follow Jesus, it will also draw in people from outside the faith community. This organic attractational beauty is a primary purpose of the church; the church is meant to be a welcoming place that freely dispenses love and extends the Good News to everyone inside and outside.

- Looking at your life and the life of a church community, what do you think motivates us to function in a "bunker" mentality? Why do you think it's so easy for us to shelter ourselves in life? What are we trying to gain?
- With deep consideration for people of varying personalities, needs, fears, and so on, what are some ways we can work towards creating more welcoming environments? What are some ways we can be more welcoming people?
- Have you ever not felt welcome somewhere? Tell what that experience was like.

The mission of EastLake Church is summed up this way:

The EastLake Church Movement is people, helping people, find and follow Jesus.

This value flows out of the belief that people can connect with God, people want to connect with God, and people should be empowered to help others connect with God.

- How empowered do you feel to share God with others?
- How does sharing God with others play out in your everyday life this season?

Read Acts 15:1-11 (NIV) and Acts 15:19 (NIV)

2. The EastLake Church Movement seeks to remove obstacles keeping people from Jesus.

The obstacles, or added rules, we place in the way of people connecting with God may look spiritual and righteous, but when our church culture keeps people from God we're actually working against God.

- What sorts of obstacles have impacted you on your faith journey?
- What are some non-essential obstacles you are quick to treat as crucial, essential elements, even though upon consideration you know they aren't such deal breakers?
- What do you think motivates us, on an individual level and as a community, to implement added steps or obstacles to connecting with Jesus?
- What are some broken habits, hang-ups, or issues God has helped you work through over the course of time?

Read John 1:41-42a (NLT)

3. The EastLake Church Movement believes every member is a minister.

This verse highlights the simplicity of someone meeting Jesus and then turning around and introducing Jesus to others. EastLake Church functions under the belief that every member is a minister, every person is a priest, and every member is invited to live on mission.

- What would it look in your life to live more confident in your capacity to share Jesus with others?
- What is holding you back from walking in more confidence in this area?
- As a follow up to that last question, how can you go about addressing those current limitations? (For example, do you need to talk to someone to gain information or encouragement? Who can you talk to in order to gain what you need?)
- Is there someone in your life currently you desire to share Jesus with?
 - If so, without turning that person into a project or making yourself the hero, why do you want this person to know Jesus? What is your motivation? What steps are you currently taking to share God's love with this person? And what additional steps can you take to sharing God's love with this person?

Closing Prayer

God, help us to live on mission as individuals and as a community. Help us to live open and aware to others. Help us to live helping people find and follow you. Help us to encounter you and to extend your Good News to others in genuine, loving ways. And with respect to the individual people in our lives that we already want to share Jesus with, please work in those people's life and empower us to partner with you. Amen.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.