



Series: A Better Investment (Part 2)

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INTRODUCTION

Last week we learned about the habit of having God Time. The next investment in our lives would be Group Time where we gather weekly in a local church.

God is in the business of making us ONE. God's heart is oneness. Christ saved all of us and we are all citizens in God's kingdom.

We learn to live His way. God put his image in us but to be in his likeness will take time and change. To do that we should gather together to hear his instructions in the same space and time to learn God's way.

We learn to worship together. We are called to gather together to be his holy temple and bring our heart's worship to the Lord. In our corporateness, God shows up.

Let us make the second commitment and choose Gather Time where we are part of something bigger, so we can together experience the fullness of the people of God.

DISCUSSION

1. In your own words, what does the church mean? What has been your experience of 'church'?

2. Read Ephesians 2:11-22.

From verses 11-12

- a. What did Paul ask the church in Ephesus to remember? Who were they before forming the church?

From verses 13-18

- b. Jesus shed His blood so that we can be accepted into God's presence as one. Notice Paul's emphasis on peace. What does this peace look like?
- c. What makes our faith different from the ways of this world?

From verses 19-22

- d. Notice that Paul gives us three pictures of a gathering: (i) citizenship; (ii) household/family; and (iii) temple.
 - i. Recall verse 12. What does it mean to be a citizen (and a family member) in this context?
 - ii. Focusing on verses 20-22, what does it mean to be a holy temple?
- e. Verse 20 describes "the foundation of the apostles and prophets" and Christ Jesus as "the chief cornerstone" (NIV)
 - i. What might it mean for "the apostles and prophets" to be our foundation?
 - ii. The role of Jesus was already described by Paul in verses 13-18. However, the importance of God in our community can also be thought of in terms of (i) *Protection*; (ii) *Provision*; and (iii) *Affection*. Share how you have experienced God in these terms, and how these experiences have built the church.
- f. Notice too that every picture is a collection of parts making up a larger whole.
 - i. Being a part of the whole means (i) *Participation*; (ii) *Submission*; and (iii) *Maturation*. How would you grow in each of the areas mentioned?

3. Reflecting on what has been shared above, what does the church mean? What element of the church has the Ephesians passage touched upon that you have neglected before?

- a. What considerations do you have, therefore, concerning the physical gathering of the church?
 - i. In the absence of a physical gathering, can the functions of the church as described here be carried out? If so, how?
- b. How has COVID-19 affected the way you think and practice the church? How do your priorities relate to the picture of the church as described in the Ephesians passage?

WHAT WILL YOU DO

The church means an assembly of people who come together (*ekklesia*). Let us assemble together whenever possible. Let us build this habit by starting the week right, as Sunday is the beginning of the week.

Perhaps you can make a decision to join the congregation this coming Sunday and if not, when you are next able to.

MEMORY VERSE

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)