

The Church Is – Week 2

September 27, 2015

Learn

Ephesians 2:19-22 - New International Version (NIV)

¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

See also: John 17:20-26

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — ²³ I in them and you in me — so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Main Idea

The Church at its best is not an individual or individuals, but a community. God intended to say something about who He is and what the gospel is through the community that is the Church (In Him the whole building is being joined together...). What can the world see about the character of God when we live well in community? What is at stake for the gospel? What is at stake in our lives when we talk about Christ-centered community?

Think

- In Ephesians 2:19-22, there is a strong emphasis on community as an important aspect of being a Christian. Taken with Jesus' prayer for unity amongst believers, it seems that there is something very important to God in us living out our personal devotion to Him in the context of community. What might God be trying to reveal about His nature in that ideal?
- What might God be trying to accomplish for the world around us in calling us to be together/unified?
- What do I miss in my own understanding of God if I fail to embrace or understand the communal nature of God and the church?

Discuss

- We live in a culture that places huge emphasis on the individual. That emphasis is so strong in fact, that even the value for community is filtered by its impact on the individual. What are some examples of this in your life?
- How is the individualistic culture that we live in a benefit in our living out our faith?
- What are the spiritual challenges we face because of that same cultural priority?
- What is the picture of community that Paul was trying to paint in Ephesians?
- How does that differ from our everyday understanding of community?
- When we look at our faith community (church, Connect group, volunteer team) do we look and function more like our cultural standard for community, or the ideal that Paul was expressing and that Jesus prayed for?
- How, specifically, can we grow into a fuller picture of what Christ-centered community looks like?

Next Steps

Two of the biggest ways we practice community at Summit is through Summit Connect and reGROUP. If you are not a part of one of these ministries, we strongly encourage you to consider one of them as your next step. Call or email us to get started, we'd love to talk with you and help you determine how you can get plugged into community here. If you're already a part of a Connect group or reGROUP, think about who you can invite into the Church.