

CAFÉ CHURCH SERMON SERIES

STUDY GUIDE



Theme: 'What is Church?'

Opener: Before listening to the talk, have a think about these questions: -

- a. What do you think 'Church' is?
- b. Has your view on this changed since becoming a Christian?

Background:

Let's begin our study by looking Genesis 12:1-3. We can see from these verses that this is where God reveals himself to Abram (later called Abraham). Later, God promises him the land where he was a nomad for his descendants and 500 years later Abraham's descendants are 12 tribes making a nation. They are trying to take possession of the land; the Promised Land and are a nation coming before God at annual feasts. As well as being a nation and inhabiting the Promised Land, they were to be an example to other nations of how they lived. They were to show how humankind was to interact with God and worship him and to show other nations that God is God Almighty. They were to show that we can have a nation where there is equality and people are caring - looking after other people's interests... caring for the vulnerable... etc.

- c. Studying the passages in Genesis and understanding how God wanted the nation of Israel to be a people of God and an example to others of how to live, does this reveal 'Church' to you?

Bible Readings: Ephesians 4

Reflection:

Unity

Up to Ephesians 4, Paul has been explaining to his readers the eternal purpose of God being worked out in history and how, through Jesus, God is creating something entirely new – a reconciled, united new humanity. We can see that 'Church' is the people of God who are to be an example to others of how to live. In Ephesians 4, Paul moves on to talk about the new standards which is expected, i.e. from doctrine to duty.

- d. Reading the first part of Ephesians 4, there is a list of gifts given by Jesus (v. 11). What is the purpose of these gifts and how do they relate to our own church?

Purity

Looking at Ephesians 4:17-32, we can see that Paul focuses on his church being a holy people and 'cultivating purity'. He further explains that we are not to live as the gentiles do; no longer to live as people who do not belong to Christ. There is to be a difference between a Christian life and those who do not belong to Jesus. This is explained in Ephesians 4:18-21.

- e. Read Romans 12:2. Paul changes from theological to practical teaching to emphasise how we are to live as a Holy people ('Church'). What does it mean 'to be transformed by the

renewing of your mind' and how can we live this out in a practical way?

- f. Read Ephesians 4:25-5:3-4. Identify the six examples Paul gives of how to live a Christian life that demonstrates 'purity'.

Personal Application:

As you have gone through this study on 'What is Church?', think about whether anything has impacted you or whether your views have changed. Reflect and prayerfully consider the six examples that Paul gives and how you can, in practical terms, continue to apply these to your own life.