

2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

October 3

Pastor Aaron started a new series on the Book of Revelation. A book that can blow away so many of us and overwhelm just as many. Pastor Aaron will spend the next 7 weeks focused on the 7 churches in Revelation as we dig into the message God has for us. Here are just a few primer notes before we dig in:

- The entire book is introduced as the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
- When we talk about the Genre of literature, it is: 1. Letter 2. Prophecy 3. Apocalypse (a well-known form of literature in the Ancient World).
- It is the Exaltation of Jesus' evaluation of the churches.
- There are 7 stars representing 7 angels
- There are 7 lampstands representing 7 churches: Every church has the opportunity to be a lampstand.
- It is a call to radical discipleship, an invitation to wholeheartedly follow Jesus (no matter what), and a reminder for us to worship.

The first message is on the Church of Ephesus.

Community Prayer:

Eternal Father, as we embark on this journey through the Book of Revelation, open our hearts and minds to see Jesus throughout each chapter. As we see Him in different ways may our praise and worship for Him move to a new level as we see Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and the Alpha and Omega; in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Opening Questions

1. When it comes to the Book of Revelation, what is your initial reaction to studying and reading it?
2. Have you read it prior to Pastor Aaron teaching out of it? Talk about your experience and what you were able to take away from it.

EXPLORATION

Read the passages below...what can you learn about what it means to follow Jesus from these passages? (Have someone read from their bible)



2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

Revelation 1:9-11

1. Have you ever felt exiled as a result of being a Follower of Jesus? If so, share your story.
2. What does John mean to be a companion in suffering?

The 7 churches addressed here were actual churches AND ALSO...they represent the types of churches that have been and are present in every age.

The Church or Ephesus has such a rich history and we read about and the leadership legacy throughout the New Testament:

- We can read about it in Acts 18; Priscilla/Aquila, then Apollos powerful teacher joined them
- Ephesians is the Apostle Paul's letter to this church
- Timothy was pastor there for some time
- The Apostle John spent the last decades of his life here, leading this church when he was arrested/exiled to Patmos
- 40-years had passed for this church by the time of the writing of Revelation

Revelation 2:1

3. What about the history of the church at Ephesus and the city do you find most interesting?
4. How is it both challenging and comforting to know that Jesus both holds and walks with His church, meaning with us?

Revelation 2:2-3,6

5. In reading these accolades about Ephesus what is your impression about them so far?
6. Can you find any similarities or differences between our church (or the local church in America) and Ephesus? What are they and why?

Revelation 2:4

7. How do you see love being a struggle for followers of Jesus in our day and age?
8. How do you think it is possible to lose your first love?
9. Is this about love for God, love for others or both? (**Read Luke 10:27**)
10. How can a church like the one in Ephesus continue to do the good things they are commended for and also maintain a loving relationship with God and others?



2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

"A church has no reason for being a church when she has no love within her heart, or when that love grows cold. Lose love, lose all." (**Spurgeon**)

Revelation 2:5

Jesus told this church to do three things:

- **Remember/Consider:** Remembering involved going back, trying to re-capture the wonder and awe of first love.
- **Repent:**
"This is not a command to feel sorry, or really to feel anything. It means to change your direction, to go a different way. It is an urgent appeal for instant change of attitude and conduct, before it was too late" (**Robertson**)
- **Re-Do**
UNLESS YOU DO=
You may continue to operate as an organization and even have services, but the light will not be out and the witness will be lost!

Revelation 2:7

11. What does the term "he who has an ear" mean to you, don't we all have ears? Have there been times in your life when you clearly had ears but did not truly hear? Talk about those times.
12. What are the consequences in your life when you not only listen to God's Word but put His principles into practice?

THE TAKEAWAY

Jesus doesn't write any of these churches off...yet!! There is still hope!

There is still time to do the following:

- **Remember/Consider:** Remembering involved going back, trying to re-capture the wonder and awe of first love.
- **Repent:**
"This is not a command to feel sorry, or really to feel anything. It means to change your direction, to go a different way. It is an urgent appeal for instant change of attitude and conduct, before it was too late" (**Robertson**)



2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

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Parents' Corner

The church in Ephesus was filled with believers who worked hard and persevered in their faith (Rev. 2:2), but somewhere along the line they drifted in their love for God and each other. This can happen not only in the church, but in families as well. The questions this week will focus on evaluating where your family is at in these two areas. As you discuss them be careful not to place blame on your kids, but instead to focus on how you as a parent can direct your family toward a deeper love for God and each other.

Read Ephesians 6:4.

How does this scripture address both love for God and family?

The word in this verse translated "exasperate" (NIV) describes what happens when a parent drives their child to become angry. The NASB translates this as "do not provoke your children to anger".

1. Why is it important that parents don't *cause* children to become angry?
2. What are some things parents might do that unknowingly cause kids to rebel?
3. How can parents discipline without causing anger?

Parents (in this case fathers), are also told to train/teach their children about the Lord. The best training includes both instruction ("Do what I say") and modeling ("Do what I do").

4. What are the most important things you need to teach your children about the Lord?
5. (Some hints... 1 Cor. 15:3-5, Luke 10:27)
6. How can you teach these truths to your kids?
7. How can you (personally) model love for God and others to your kids?



2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

8. How can you do this together as a family?

In closing, spend some time praying for each other about this specifically. Pray that your family would grow in love for Jesus and each other, wisdom to know if changes need to be made, and for the God's grace and strength to accomplish this. Trust that God can accomplish this!

(Eph. 3:20-21)

PRAYER REQUESTS

