

Small Group Guide: Be the Church

Question: Share about a time when someone showed you unexpected kindness or love. How did it impact you?

Key Scripture

Acts 2:42-47 - The early church's example of gathering together

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 - We are God's temple

Hebrews 10:24-25 - Not giving up meeting together

Main Takeaways

1. We ARE the Church (Not Just a Building)

- The building is just a gathering place; believers are the body of Christ
- The Holy Spirit dwells within us everywhere we go
- We don't have to come to a building to experience God's presence

2. Being the Church is a Verb (Action)

- "Be" requires action, not just attendance
- We should leave church different than when we arrived
- It's about participation, not just observation

3. What Happens When We Gather

- **Show Up** - Be present, not just online
- **Small Groups** - Get connected and build relationships
- **Pray** - Both preventative and corrective prayer
- **Serve** - Use your gifts and talents
- **Invite** - Share the gospel and love on people

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Understanding the Church

1. What's the difference between "going to church" and "being the church"? How does this distinction change your perspective?

2. The sermon mentioned that in the Old Testament, people had to go to a building to experience the Holy Spirit, but now the Spirit dwells within us. How should this truth impact our daily lives?
3. Read Acts 2:42-47. What stands out to you about how the early church functioned? What's one thing we could apply from their example?

Section 2: Showing Up & Gathering

4. Be honest: What are some reasons you've missed church or chosen to watch online instead of attending in person? What's the difference between legitimate reasons and habits we've developed?
5. The sermon mentioned coming to church asking God to show you someone who needs a touch from Him. How would this shift in mindset change your church experience?
6. Discuss the difference between being a "giver" and a "taker" in church community. Which tendency do you lean toward, and why?

Section 3: Prayer & Service

7. Pastor Jeremy talked about two types of prayer: preventative and corrective. Which type do you spend more time praying? How could you incorporate more preventative prayer?
8. What gifts, talents, or abilities has God given you that you could use to serve the church? What's holding you back from using them?

Section 4: Being the Church Outside the Walls

9. Summer's testimony showed a three-year journey of loving on a coworker. Why is patience so important in sharing our faith? Have you experienced this in your own life?
10. The sermon asked: "Would people know you're a believer without you saying a word?" How would your coworkers, neighbors, or family members answer this about you?
11. Who is one person in your life that you could intentionally love on and share Christ with? What would that look like practically?

Personal Reflection Questions

(Take 3-5 minutes of quiet time)

- Am I a regular attender or am I truly being the church?
- What excuses have I been making about not serving, not attending, or not inviting others?
- Who has God placed in my life that needs to see Jesus through me?
- What's one specific action I can take this week to "be the church"?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge: Choose One (or More!)

1. **Show Up Intentionally**
 - Come to church next Sunday with the prayer: "God, show me someone I can bless or encourage today."
 - Arrive 10 minutes early and intentionally greet someone you don't know well.
2. **Join or Host a Small Group**
 - If you're not in a small group, commit to joining one this month.
 - Reach out to the church staff for information on available groups.
3. **Pray Preventatively**
 - Create a list of 3-5 people/situations you want to pray for BEFORE problems arise.
 - Set a daily reminder to pray preventative prayers.
4. **Serve Somewhere**
 - Identify your gifts and contact the church about serving opportunities.
 - Commit to serving in one area for the next month.
5. **Love on Someone**
 - Like Summer's story, identify one person in your workplace, neighborhood, or family who needs to experience Christ's love.
 - Commit to praying for them daily and looking for opportunities to serve them.
 - Be patient—remember it took three years!
6. **The Restaurant Challenge**
 - Next time you eat out, ask your server if there's anything you can pray for them about.
 - Leave a generous tip and a note of encouragement.

Action Steps for the Week

Personal Commitment: (Write it down and share with the group)

- I will be the church this week by: _____
- The person I'm going to intentionally love on is: _____
- I will pray preventatively for: _____

Verse for the Week

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Remember: It's not about perfection; it's about being intentional. We change the world one person at a time by being the church everywhere we go!