



gathering

This discussion guide includes preparation BEFORE the group and some guidance DURING the group meeting. Preparation before the group will help you, your leader, and your group to engage and respond to the living and active Word of God.

PREPARATION BEFORE THE GROUP MEETS:

The aim of this preparation is to encourage good & prayerful observation of the text of God's word and the joyful experience of discovering its truth.

Pray & read Ephesians 4

What stands out to you from this reading?

Does anything puzzle you about this reading?

How does this reading make you **feel**?

What do you **think** in response to this reading?

What will you **do** in response to this reading?

a taste of theology pre-reading: In *How to walk into church*, [Matthias Media, 2015, p27], Tony Payne writes: "It's the same with church. The very reason God has saved us is so *that* we will be part of his eternal church (his assembly, his congregation), and so he calls us now to **gather** together as his people, as we wait for the time when that great congregation from every nation will be revealed for all to see. Because God has already called us into that heavenly assembly around his throne, we also gather in local assemblies here and now. So what is it that we're walking into, when we walk into church each week? We're walking into a gathering that God himself has called together, as part of his majestic plan to save and gather his people around the Lord Jesus Christ. We're walking into an outpost or foretaste of the great spiritual, heavenly assembly of the people of God."

WHEN THE GROUP MEETS: Pray for your discussion time

our **gathering** core value

We delight in **gathering** as God's family to worship him, hearing and responding to his Word. We gather to encourage one another to grow as followers of Jesus. In our gathering we anticipate the eternal gathering before the throne of God as a great multitude from every tribe, people, language and nation saved by Christ Jesus.

▸ Do you think/feel this core value reflects what really matters to you as an individual and as a member of this church? Why/why not?

1. we gather because God is glorious | read Psalm 95&96; Rev 7.9-17

▸ Why do the people of God gather? What do they do when they gather?

2. we gather because gathering glorifies God | read Eph 4

▸ How much of verses 1-6 apply if you never gather? (vv1-6)

▸ What is the goal of our individual places and roles? (vv7-16)

▸ Why does *community* matter if we are a *new self, created to be like God?* (vv17-24) Take some time to discuss the applications in vv25-32:

3. growing gatherings | In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul finishes with these words: *Therefore, my dear brothers & sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.* **gathering** is a core value because as we collectively stand firm and let nothing move us! It's the collective community nature of Christianity that means **gathering** matters and in addition, our mission of growing new followers of Jesus means that **multiplying** our gatherings matters! **Gathering** can easily become comfortable and introspective. Consider our multiplying core value below and discuss; how it helps us remain on mission, why it is hard, why it is worth it:

our **multiplying** core value



We delight in **multiplying** our gatherings of God's family. We are committed to 'growing big by staying small', planting and nurturing new family gatherings as God's Word and Spirit brings growth. (*Matthew 9.37-38, 1Corinthians 3.6-9, 1Corinthians 9.19-23, Colossians 1.28-29*)

PRAY!

