



Living New | Week 7

The Church: Thriving as a Servant

Ask your group members to share something that especially stood out to them, that especially encouraged them, or that they found especially helpful from the message or FONL study material this week. If your group is large, you may only have time for four or five responses.

Ask your group members to report on what they learned from asking the 2-3 worldview questions. Open in prayer by praying for the people to whom the questions were asked.

Read the paragraph “Disconnected Christ-followers?” (found in Week 7, Day 1). As a group, brainstorm some common criticisms of the church as reasons why people disconnect from the church. Write the criticisms on a Post-it and then brainstorm possible answers to these reasons people choose to disconnect.

Have each person reread the section in Week 7, Day 1 under “Why loving the church is also loving Christ.” Ask, “What do you like about these illustrations? What are some implications/insights about the church being the body of Christ? The bride of Christ?”

Create a Post-it with the “one anothers” listed in Week 7, Day 1. Ask each person to do a self-evaluation: What grade would you give yourself in each category? (Note: The list of 10 is actually a list of 20. For example, “care for” and “be cared for” are two qualities to grade, not one.) Pick a few categories and ask the group members to share their grade and why they gave themselves that grade.

Hand out a blank piece of paper to each group member. Ask them to consider the following images of the church: a family, a bride, a body, a building, a flock. Ask each person to draw a picture of the image of the church that has had the most positive benefit on his/her life in the past year. Ask members to explain why that image/function of the church has had the most impact on their life recently.

On a Post-it, write the “Four Major Purposes of the Church” (found in Week 7, Days 3 and 4). Brainstorm synonyms for each function. Write the synonyms on the Post-it. Think of a word that might describe a church that worships well, but doesn’t do the other 3 purposes well. Think of a word that might describe a church that witnesses well, but doesn’t do the other 3 purposes well. Think of a word that might describe a church that nurtures well, but doesn’t do the other 3 purposes well. Think of a word that might describe a church that restores well, but doesn’t do the other 3 purposes well. Make the point that the church must go 4 for 4.

Consider the five images/word pictures of the church listed in Week 7, Day 2. Create a Post-it with the heading “Images of the Church.” For each image, leave a blank before the noun, i.e., write “A _____ Family.” Leave space under each image for brainstorming. Ask your group to come up with adjectives that should describe a healthy church. Then, ask your group members to rate your church on a scale of 1-10 AND to rate themselves as to how well they themselves are doing to help the church become more healthy. How might they behave differently in the church to be the change they want to see?

Print out a copy of the section “Gospel-based LifeGroups” (found in Week 7, Day 5). End your session by reading the section together. Create a Post-it and brainstorm other life-giving statements that need to occur in LifeGroups, like the ones in the paragraph that begins with “A LifeGroup is a place where we can be reminded over and over by a spiritual friend . . .” Write down the statements your group came up with. Then ask who needs to hear these truths from your group members.

Close in prayer and challenge your group members to write a handwritten note to encourage someone today with the gospel.