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"God's church is not a stage for us to perform on but a garden for us to grow in."
[Michael Horton]

ICEBREAKER

What are you grateful for or how have you experienced joy in the past week?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

"Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."
[Colossians 3:16]

BIG IDEA

Once we surrender to God's purpose for the church, we can participate in His purpose and faithfully fulfill our part.

PASSAGE

- Ephesians 1:1-23

DISCUSSION

1. In the sermon we heard, *"However you and I define church, is how you and I will do church."* How have you "done" church in the wrong way or had an un-Christlike attitude toward church in the past? How did that impact your relationship with your church family?
2. What is the significance of Paul's greeting?
3. How does Paul describe the spiritual blessings in Christ (v. 3-14)?
4. What implications does being "in Christ" have for believers' identity and purpose?
5. What does it mean to be "chosen" in Christ? How does this make you feel, knowing that you are "chosen"?
6. What is the significance of being "redeemed" through Christ's blood?
7. In the sermon we heard, *"A church is a community of Christ-followers who live as the on-the-ground expression of the supremacy of Jesus by advancing His gospel in distance and depth through disciple-making."* How does this definition compare to what your idea of the church is/has been?
8. What does Paul pray for the Ephesians in v. 15-23? How could you more consistently and intentionally pray this prayer for your church family?

9. How does Paul describe the power of God at work in believers?

10. How does understanding God's power help us as believers, according to Paul's prayer?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE

What if we made God's definition of church our definition? Based on the Holy Spirit's prompting today, **what is a step of obedience that you can take?** Here are a few questions to consider as we prioritize God's glory and the gospel of Jesus Christ together as the church ...

- How can you pursue the "1" over the "99"?
- How can you practice "one-anothering" in community?
- How can you serve and edify others, building up the church?
- How can you value being a disciple of Jesus more intentionally?
- How can you be more dependent on the Holy Spirit in your everyday life?

PRAYER FOCUS

Off Limits: Relationships

- The way of Christ is always to "consider others as more important than yourselves". Let's pray for the supernatural love of Christ to grow in our hearts towards all people, especially those with whom we struggle the most to love.
- Who are you currently struggling to love like Christ? Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you Jesus' eyes towards that person, and that He will give you the ability to love them well.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE *Optional*

Centering prayer is a practice that leads one into the inner room of the soul and can usher you deeper into prayer, opening yourself up to the transforming power of God's grace more readily!

- [Centering Prayer](https://rockbridge.cc/centering-prayer-2) or rockbridge.cc/centering-prayer-2