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*Hey leaders! We finished up our “Holy Spirit” series this weekend! Next week we begin a NEW series, “[Sermon On the Mount](#).” Jesus’ most well-known message is a bold invitation to a radically different way of life. In Matthew 5–7, Jesus flips the script on what it means to be blessed, how to treat others, and where true security is found. This series will walk our church family through Jesus’ words with clarity and relevance, challenging us to build our lives on something unshakable—His Kingdom.*

***Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!***

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?  
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or [discipleship@rockbridge.cc](mailto:discipleship@rockbridge.cc)

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**“The Church is where we are reminded that we belong  
not because we’re useful, but because we’re loved.”**

[Tish Harrison Warren]

**LEADER RESOURCES ||** **Leader Note** *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **Passage Summary**
  - Paul teaches about the beautiful new community of God’s people (the church), described in both kingdom and familial terms, and comprised of new creations in Christ. The defining attribute of this community is God’s presence — His indwelling Spirit! For Paul, the implications of this are profound, changing our perspective of who we are, what blessings are ours in Christ, and why we are here.
- **Ephesians Ch. 2 Commentary & The Mystery of the Gospel**
  - Use the commentary and short video/article for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **I Believe In the Holy Spirit**
  - This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

**ENGAGE & CONNECT ||** **Leader Note** *The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.*

What’s something your ‘kingdom heart’ gets excited about when you think of being part of God’s bigger story? This can be anything that gets you excited, motivated, or inspired!

**BEGIN WITH PRAYER ||** **Leader Note** *Begin your time together thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, taking a posture of humility and dependence!*

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

*“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession,*

*that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. "*

*[1 Peter 2:9]*

**BIG IDEA || Leader Note** *Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.*

Why should we "go" to church? To meet with God who is present as His body gathers; to become who I am called to be by being edified; to participate in God's work of building a Kingdom and making a family!

**PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note** *Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!*

1. In the sermon we heard, *"The Holy Spirit does not fully dwell in any one of us; He dwells fully in all of us."* What is your response to this statement? Does it align with or challenge what you were taught about the Holy Spirit?

*Have someone read aloud Ephesians 2:18-22. Have another person read it aloud again, possibly in a different translation.*

2. What does Paul say about access to the Father? Who makes that possible? *Paul says that through Jesus, we both (Jew and Gentile) have access to the Father by one Spirit. This affirms the Trinitarian nature of salvation: Jesus reconciles us and the Holy Spirit ushers us into God's presence.*
3. What metaphors does Paul use to describe the church? What do they signify to us? *Paul uses the images of citizens in a kingdom, members of a household, and stones in a holy temple. These illustrate unity, belonging, and the idea that God is building a spiritual home where He dwells.*
4. According to this passage, what is the Holy Spirit's role in the church? *The Spirit is the one who dwells in the church and builds us together into a dwelling place for God. The Spirit is not just an individual indwelling but is most fully experienced corporately as we are joined together in Christ.*
5. What is the significance of the Holy Spirit creating a "new community" rather than isolated individuals? How does this challenge your way of thinking about the church? *Christianity is not a private religion. The Spirit unites us into a new humanity—a "third race" made of reconciled people. The church is not a collection of individuals but a living temple, a family, and a body, built together in Christ.*
6. How does understanding the church as "God's dwelling place" shift how we should view our church worship gatherings? *Answers will vary: it should move us from consumerism ("What do I get?") to reverence and expectancy ("God is here!"). Church becomes the epicenter of God's presence, not just a religious event.*
7. In what ways have you approached church more like a consumer than a living stone being built into something greater? This is a good opportunity to go first! *Answers will vary: many believers attend passively, seeking benefit without contribution. This mindset neglects the Spirit's intent to form us into a dwelling place, where everyone plays a role in worship, love, and mission.*
8. What would it look like for you to live out your identity as a "citizen," "family member," and "living stone" in the church more fully in the coming weeks? *Answers will vary: citizenship means living by kingdom values; family means deep, accountable relationships; and being a stone means stability, commitment, and mutual support in the spiritual structure.*

9. How can our group practically honor the Holy Spirit's presence among us and remove barriers to His work when we gather? *Answers will vary: by beginning with prayer, listening to one another deeply, confessing sin, engaging in worship, and being expectant—not casual. Intentional spiritual practices invite the Spirit to move freely. We can slow down to listen and linger, forgive one another, and reframe church not as a product but as a privilege. This clears space for transformation and unity.*

**STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note** This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.

Paul unveiled a powerful vision of the church—as a living, Spirit-filled community where God's presence is experienced, His people are built up, and His purposes unfold. The church is the *dwelling place of God by the Spirit*, formed from once-divided people into a holy family and temple. This challenges us to move from casual attendance to Spirit-led participation, from isolation to deep connection, and from religious duty to sacred expectancy.

*As you consider your next step, reflect on:* 1) What part of your current view of church most needs to be reshaped by this passage? 2) Are you building with the Spirit or just attending services?

*Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.*

### Possible Next Steps of Faith

1. Pray before each small group or church gathering: “Holy Spirit, help me to expect and experience your presence today.”
2. Commit to removing one barrier (i.e. rushing, disengagement, bitterness) that hinders your experience of the Spirit with God's people.

**PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note** Be intentional about saving at least 5-7 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. *THIS SUMMER, we will share creative and unique ways for your group to pray together.* Give these a try or simply pray for one another's personal requests!

### Together in His Work

Today, let's prayerfully reflect on seeing church not as a place we attend, but a people we *belong to and build with*, as God's family on mission.

- Ask everyone to quietly reflect on this question: *“God is building His kingdom and His family. What is one small way He might be inviting you to participate?”*
- Then, invite each person to say a short sentence prayer, filling in this prompt: “Lord, use me to help build your kingdom by \_\_\_\_.” OR “Lord, help me love your family by \_\_\_\_.”
  - Let the group go popcorn-style—brief, spontaneous prayers without needing to go in order. Encourage simple and honest responses. Anyone can pass if they prefer.
- End with a prayer spoken aloud together:
  - *“God, thank you for calling us into your family.  
Thank you for giving us a part in your work.  
Build your kingdom through us.  
Grow your family with love.  
Use our church for your glory.  
We are yours. Amen.”*