

# Church as...

## Study 1 Church as the Temple of God

1. What are some of the best experiences of Church life you have experienced?
2. Tell us about enriching Church life experiences you have had that are very different to St Johns.

## Ephesians 2:19-22

3. What is church? And what is not church?
4. For the Ephesian church the challenge to church unity was the divide between Jews and non-Jews. What are some of the challenges to unity in our church today?
5. What does it mean to be 'fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household'? What could you do to help all members feel that they belong equally?
6. In ancient architecture the cornerstone is the essential stone for construction. Why is Jesus and the message of the Apostles (New Testament books) and the Old Testament prophets critical for the building of the church? (See also I Pet 2:4-6)
7. How is Jesus through the Spirit building the church? (See Acts 1:8, Jn 16:13, Eph 4:11-13)
8. Take some time to reflect as a group on how you have been built up spiritually through the gifts of each member in the group.

## Pray together

- Give thanks for each other. Pray for unity of the church and how you might be able to help others feel included.
- Give thanks for the strong foundation we have in Jesus Christ. Pray for your group and for our church that we might, together, be built up by the Spirit in love.
- Ask God to show you how best to use the gifts his Spirit has given you in the challenges and changes we face as a church today.

# Church as...

## Study 2 Church as the Body of Christ

1. What are some of the medical advances that have opened your understanding to the interconnectedness of the parts of the human body?
2. Give some examples of ways you have felt connected to other Christians throughout the Covid pandemic?

### I Cor 12:12-31

3. The Church is said to be the body of Christ. What is the basis for the unity of the church?
4. What does it mean to be 'baptized by the one Spirit' and 'given the one Spirit to drink'? Are there any limitations to the work of the Spirit in the body of Christ? V13
5. Thinking about the church today, name the variety of parts that make up the church today. Which parts sometimes get overlooked?
6. What should our response be to people who feel they don't belong to the church and don't have a part to play? What are some of the specific challenges you have experienced in playing your part during lockdowns?
7. What should our response be to people who feel they don't need other members/parts of the church? How might lockdowns contribute to the false notion that we don't need each other?

### Pray together

- Take some time to pray with those in your group who are suffering and give thanks with those who rejoice.
- Ask God to show each member of your group how to play their part in the body of Christ amidst the challenges and changes we face as a church today.

# Church as...

## Study 3 Church as sent by Christ

8. Who are some of the people who influenced you in becoming a Christian? Most of us have more than one person who was influential in our lives.

### John 17:13-26

9. Christians are sent into the world as Jesus was sent. What was Jesus sent to do? (See also Jn 3:17; 3:34; 9:3-4) What are Christians sent to do?
10. 'Sharing your faith is almost guaranteed to grow your faith.' Do you agree with this statement? How can faith be deepened as we share with others?
11. Why does Jesus pray for our protection from evil? Given that we are warned to expect suffering and persecution (v14, also Jn 15:20-21), what might it mean to be protected from evil as we are sent into the world?
12. Throughout this series we have been reminded of the unity of the church (Eph 2:21-22; I Cor 12:12). What is the purpose of this unity (Jn 17:20-23; see also Jn 13:35)? How can disunity hinder this purpose?
13. What is the basis of our unity and our mission in the world (v26)?
14. What are some of the challenges you face personally fulfilling Jesus' intention for us in sending us into the world? How does God's love for us and our relationship with God the Father and Jesus help us fulfil his mission?

### Pray together

- Take some time to pray for friends and family who don't yet know Jesus.
- Ask God to deepen your relationship with Jesus and his love to fulfil the mission he has given us.