

Lesson 1 Church Matters!

Sharing Question:

Does “church” matter to anybody, anymore? What would you say is the prevailing view of “church” in your community? What are some of the things that have contributed to this image? How do you think these things have impacted your own view of “church?”

Study and Discussion Questions:

1. In contrast to the negative impact of “church” in contemporary society, God presents a very different view in Ephesians 3:20-21. How does He say “church” matters? What important connection is made in this text that contributes to a more positive image of “church?” **Application:** Where have you observed this connection improving the image of the “church?”

2. If “church” really does matter after all, where should we look for evidence of that? Which “church” matters, according to Ephesians 1:22-23? **Application:** In your opinion, how does this identification of “church” compare to contemporary models? What’s the difference?

3. What is the immediate implication of Paul’s identification of the “church” as “the body of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13) How is this identification different from “the First Century Church,” or “The Withamsville Church of Christ?” **Application:** What are the identifying marks of “the body of Christ?”

4. What, according to many church members, makes “church” matter? How would the Pharisees have answered that question? (Matthew 23:1-28) How did Jesus respond to such a view? (23:23) **Application:** When it comes to “church,” what matters to you?

5. How does Ephesians 1:23 identify what matters most as far as “church” is concerned? What does it mean that the church is “the fullness of Christ?” Why is it so hard to think of “church” like this? **Application:** How would such a view of what matters about “church” benefit our judgments of the “church?”

6. According to Ephesians 4:1-16, how will our view of what matters to the church impact our attitude toward, and our participation in, “church?” What did such a view encourage in Paul’s life? (Philippians 3:7-16) **Application:** What commitment have you made in your “church” to make sure that the “fullness of Christ” is on display there?

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The term “church” is a dirty word to many people. It has become the address for a less-than-loving God, some abusive leaders, and a cold and self-absorbed religious institution. What a pity that is, since God has such lofty goals for the church (Ephesians 3:20-21). So, church matters, but its impact, whether negative or positive, depend largely on our response to the following two questions:

1. Which Church?
2. What Matters?

Scripture: Ephesians 3:20-21