

Community Group Discussion Guide

Sunday, October 4, 2020

THE
ESSENTIAL CHURCH
STUDYING THE NATURE & PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

"The local church...observe the biblical ordinances of baptism and communion; give of their finances, time, and abilities; they are unified by the Spirit; disciplined for holiness; and scatter to fulfill the Great Commission as disciple-makers/missionaries to the world for God's glory and their joy."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION *(Use along with Reading: Ante Faciem Dei)*

- What two practices did Jesus give the church as visible signs of his special presence? Why do we call them ordinances rather than sacraments?
- When did Jesus institute communion? What do we confess by our participation in Lord's Supper, and how does it strengthen our faith? What inward reality does baptism communicate?
- What should be the motivation of our financial giving (2 Corinthians 9:11-15)?
- What are spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)? When exercised properly, how do they promote a healthy church? Are you using your Divinely given time and gifts/talents to build the body and advance God's kingdom?
- Discuss the following three ways the Spirit-empowered gospel unifies the church (Ephesians 2:12-16):
 - 1.) We acknowledge our mutual need of God's grace, 2.) rely on the Spirit's sanctifying work of grace, and 3.) proclaim the gospel of grace in the world.
- How does the Holy Spirit use the church to cultivate holiness in its members (Hebrews 3:12-13)? What is the goal of church discipline?
- What is the Great Commission, and how do we fulfill it (Matthew 28:18-20)? How does a person become a follower of Christ? What does it mean to live as missionaries in the world?
- What is God's glory, and how do we display his glory to the world? What is the supreme display of God's glory? Explain how God's glory results in our greatest joy.