

Leader's Guide

Small Group Questions – God's Plan for the World: the Church

Sept. 29, 2019

Read Ephesians 4:1-16.

1. What are some of the different ways that people think about or talk about the church's place in the world?

In the sermon Peter suggested that God's plan to bring all things together in Christ puts the church right in the middle of the world. How might this shape the way we think about our place in God's mission to the world? And how can the hope that God is working to draw all things (all peoples) together under Christ challenge and encourage us?

2. In chapter 4 Ephesians begins by speaking of our calling with a strong emphasis on our learning to live together. How does the emphasis on our maintaining the unity of the Spirit rather than creating unity challenge us in some of the conflicts we find at church?

This is not something that we are to do on our own but is rooted in what God has done for us in Jesus. God has reconciled us in Christ and the Spirit is the one unites us to each other.

3. In Ephesians 4 the focus is not so much on mature individuals as it is a church that is functioning properly - with each part working as it is intended to work. How does this challenge the way we often think about the church?

4. Central to the calling to grow up together as the body of Christ are the gifts which God gives to the church. In Ephesians we are told that God gives different people to the Church. How should this impact the way we think about one another in the church?

5. Read 1 Corinthians 12. Here we are told that the gifts of the Spirit have been poured out on the church. Everyone has received something. What gifts do you think the Spirit has given to you and what might this mean in terms of your responsibility to use those gifts for the whole church?

The emphasis is on the gifts being given to the church rather than to individuals. How might this challenge the way in which we tend to think about 'gifted' individuals?