



Grace Group Guide



United Purpose: Together we will designate time and place to deepening our desire for God, caring for and urging each other to action!

United Actions: WL Groups...

- Scripture:** Be in the Word together
- Encouragement:** One another each other
- Prayer:** With and for each other and the lost
- Accountability:** Now What? Put it into action!



ICEBREAKER:

- Which of the “pictures of the church” that we’ve looked at so far (the church as the bride of Christ, the body of Christ, the family of God) has stood out to you? And why?

Transition: This week we are finishing our series on ***The Glory of the Church***. Many different images are used to describe the Church in Scripture, and each of them emphasize a unique truth about the Church. As we wrap up this series, we will be looking at Ephesians 2:18-22 and 1 Peter 2:1-12 and consider why it is significant that the Church is called a temple.

-DISCUSSION-

Read 1 Peter 2:4-12 and Ephesians 2:18-22.

Leader Note: In 1 Peter 2:5, the NIV uses the phrase “spiritual house” but the verses that follow clearly show that Peter is referring to the temple. This is why some translations (like the NLT) translate the same phrase as “spiritual **temple**” instead.

- What (or really, who) are we through Christ? Make a list of the various descriptions seen in these two passages.
 - Possible answers:
 - Living stones being built into His spiritual house/temple (1 Pet. 2:5)
 - A holy priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5)
 - His chosen people (1 Pet. 2:9)
 - A royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9)
 - A holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9)
 - God’s special possession (1 Pet. 2:9)
 - The people of God (1 Pet. 2:10)
 - Citizens with the saints (Eph. 2:19)
 - Members of His household (Eph. 2:19) (remember last week’s sermon)
 - A holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:21)
 - What are some common themes that you notice in these descriptions? What do these passages teach us about how God sees us?
 - As a group, drawing from your answers to the previous question, try to summarize what these passages teach us about our relationship to God in one to two sentences.

-REFLECTION-

- Why does Scripture describe the Church using temple language?
 - Possible answers:

- To emphasize our status as holy before God
 - Because we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit
 - To show God's desire to be in and with and us
- What does this tell us about the character of God?
 - Possible answers:
 - He loves us!
 - **Note:** consider reading Ephesians 3:14-19, where Paul extols the incredible love of God in Christ for us.
 - He wants to be with us
 - He wants us to be holy
 - He is merciful to us
- How should this impact the way we live?
 - **Note:** look at 1 Pet. 2:4-12 again... we are called to:
 - To offer spiritual sacrifices to God (v. 5)
 - To declare God's praises (v. 9)
 - To abstain from sinful desires (v. 11)

-APPLICATION-

- We are a temple of the Holy Spirit! The Spirit of God dwells in us! Make it a priority to spend time this week simply reflecting on this truth. Try to find some time/space to pray in silence, away from any distractions.
 - During this time, you can...
 - Pray through a specific passage (like 1 Pet. 2:4-12 or Eph. 2:18-22) and praise God
 - Pray and ask the Spirit to guide your steps this week
 - Pray for others: for your friends and family, for WL Grace, for the global church
- Again, we are a temple of the Holy Spirit! The Spirit of God dwells in us! Therefore, we are to abstain from sinful desires (v. 11). Is there any sin in your life that you need to confess to God and repent of? Bring that to God this morning as well and include it in your prayer life this week too.

-PRAY-

- Take some time to thank God for the Holy Spirit, which He poured out on us because of His great love for us. He wants to have a relationship with us simply because He loves us. That revelation alone should make us stand in awe and worship of Him.
- Pray that this message would never grow old. Make it an emphasis to pray that the wonder of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us would melt our hearts of stone, allowing the Spirit to move freely within us.