

## Seeking God Through a Relationship with His Church

### Big Idea:

This week we talked about the importance of seeking God, specifically the opportunity we all share to know God more fully through relationship with others who are daily seeking to know Him better as well. To say, “the Church is important,” would be a great understatement. Believers need other believers. As we prepare to head into a new series- “I Am a Church Member”- it is important that we lay a solid foundation, acknowledging the fact that individual believers need the rest of the body (other members of the church) in order to have a deep relationship with Jesus Christ.

### Conversation Starter:

In his 2011 book, “You Lost Me,” David Kinnaman describes a group of individuals who have left behind relationship with other believers- at least as far as deep engagement with a local church body is concerned. Kinnaman is focused mainly on the demographic known as Millennials- those born between 1982 and 2004, but studies have shown that the attitudes he describes are not limited to Millennials alone.

In his research he further divides the group of former/current church-goers into three subcategories that I’ll briefly describe for you. Nomads: those who have left the church but would still strongly contend that they are Christians, regardless of their non-association with other believers. Prodigals: those who have walked away from faith entirely. And finally, Exiles: those who are currently engaged with a local church body, but aren’t necessarily convinced they need the church, or that the church in its current state is all that relevant in the “real world.”

What Kinnaman’s research exposes, is that there is a growing group of people who have had, or currently still have some form of relationship with a church body, who have become disengaged at some point. The reasons for this disengagement can be debated, but the reality can not- nearly half of Millennials with a Christian background believe that church involvement/membership is optional, and that it is possible- some even argue that it is better- to have a relationship with Jesus, without engaging in relationship with His Bride, the Church.

### **THINK and EXAMINE:**

1. Do you think it is possible to have a meaningful relationship with Jesus, yet intentionally avoid relationship with His Church? If so, why? If not, why?
2. Why do you believe God places such value in the church?
3. This week we spent some time in Ephesians Chapter 1. In verse 15&16 Paul says, “ever since I heard about your ***faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people***, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.” Paul doesn’t just commend the Ephesian Christians for their faith in Jesus, he also says he is thankful for the love they have, “for all God’s people.” Why do you think Paul placed such an emphasis on both of these truths?
4. In verses 22 and 23 Paul says some amazing things about the Church. 1<sup>st</sup>, he calls the Church, Christ’s own body. 2<sup>nd</sup>, he calls the Church, “the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” What do you think Paul meant by this statement? (hint: think about the way that God has literally “poured” Himself into the Church)

**THIS WEEK:** This week I encourage you to spend some time thanking God for the church family here at Grace Chapel, and His Body worldwide as well. The Church is not perfect- it’s made up of imperfect people so how could it ever be? While it is true that the church is not perfect, God has placed immense value in the Church He loves. He calls us His body, the Bride of Christ, His Family! Reflect on the blessings of this reality as you prepare your heart for the journey we begin next week to more fully learn what it means to be a church member.