

MATTHEW 16:13-20 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? - ([SERMON MP3](#))

In (Matthew 16:13-20) we learn that Christ will build his church, and he'll use disciples to do it as they proclaim the gospel message. His building project cannot fail.

- ☀ *Christ is passionate about his church. Do you share his heartbeat? In your experience, who has been an example of what a passionate life investment into the church looks like? Share how they've impacted you with the group.*

- ☀ *Christ will use disciples in the building project who know who he is, and are willing to follow him. Who is Jesus to you? Are you really following him?*

- ☀ *The church will be built by the spread of the gospel. Are you a witness for Christ? Are you opening the doors of heaven through the proclamation of the good news? List two people that you want to share the gospel with, and ask your group to pray for opportunities with you.*

- ☀ *The church's ultimate success is guaranteed. The score is set and the victory has already been won. If you believe that, will you invest? See if you can find some Biblical examples of people who invested in the church. What did they do? What can you do?*

Name	Prayer Need
Galkin family and For the Gospel Team	<i>Leaving SLC to travel around the country for the next 8 months to help others churches be a little more healthy</i>

The church was not the invention of man. It was not as though 2000 years ago some salty Jewish fishermen got together and said, "Okay let's start a new institution – we're tired of the synagogue stuff. The pagan temple stuff is dumb. We'll start a brand new thing and we'll call it the 'church.'" That's not how it happened. The church was not the result of human conjuring or conniving. It wasn't the scheme of man. According to (Ephesians 3:3-11), the church was God's idea and God's plan.

- ☀ *If the church is God's plan, what are some implications for our lives?*

- ☀ *According to (Ephesians 2:19), the church was God's plan to bring people into community with one another? What are some of the "one another" responsibilities Christians have as they live in community? See if you can find some references and share them with the group.*

- ☀ *According to (Ephesians 2:20-22), the church was God's plan to bring people into communion with him. What imagery does he use in those verses? Compare and contrast the old physical temple with the new spiritual temple known as the church.*

According to (Ephesians 5:25), husbands are supposed to love their wives as a symbol or shadow of how Christ loves his _____. You know, passions in marriage sometimes flourish but at other times they fail. They go through seasons of vibrancy but sometimes hit seasons of stagnation. Christ's passion for his church however, hasn't faded or diminished. He still calls it his "bride." It is the object of his love.

✿ *John Stott once said, "If the church is central to God's purpose as seen in both history and the gospel, it must surely also be central to our lives. How can we take lightly what God takes so seriously? How dare we push to the circumference what God has placed at the center." Jesus loves the church – do you? What are some of the greatest obstacles people face when contemplating loving the church? What holds some people back from pouring themselves into the body of Christ?*

✿ *Write out a profile of a person who loves the church (remember the church is the people, not the building, and not the Sunday event at 10:30 AM). Does that profile describe you? What steps could you take to demonstrate greater commitment or love for the church?*

In (Ephesians 1:22-23), Paul uses the metaphor of the _____ to describe the church. In this word picture, Christ is the _____ and believers within the church are the _____ (see 1Cor. 12; Rom. 12 for the same imagery). God designed Christians to be interconnected. God never intended our spiritual journey to be traveled alone.

✿ *A Christian without connection to a church is like a finger without connection to a _____. If you are saved, you need the church.*

✿ *Some people today don't view the church as a "need." Instead some act like consumers, shopping for the best deal for the price of their hour on Sunday. If we want to avoid that mentality, what kind of mind shift is needed? How should we view the church?*