

## DISCOVERY 101

### WEEK 3: The Purpose for the Local Church

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God wants each of us to function as individuals and as part of a community. While we are individuals with our own interests, God also wants us as human beings to see the benefits and responsibilities we have as being part of a group. We are individuals with a sphere of family and friends, but we are also part of a neighborhood, a city, a country, and a planet. As believers we are also part of God's worldwide family, the Church, which is made up of thousands of congregations. God wants us to commit to one of those local congregations so we can worship, learn, and connect with others. We believe that you belong to God, and we trust that the Holy Spirit will guide you to where He wants you to be. If God is calling you to The Life Church at Charlotte, we will love and welcome you here.

#### I. JESUS IS THE MASTER PASTOR

Read Ephesians 1:22, 23

Who is the head of the Church?

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Who is the body of the Church?

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Read I Peter 5:1-4

Who is being compared to shepherds?

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Elders, or overseers, were pastors over churches in the New Testament.

Who is the Chief Shepherd?

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## **II. A BODY OF BELIEVERS**

The purpose for the local church is not to replace our individual spiritual development, but to operate as a corporate body of believers.

### **A. TO FEED YOU CORPORATELY**

God will inspire the pastor to give a relevant message with practical applications. These messages should be based on the Word of God and they should encourage you in your faith. The Holy Spirit should be present to take the message and speak to your heart. Every church has the same message, but they don't all have same methods for presenting the Gospel. You need to be in a place where you can take what is presented with the ability to apply it to your life.

However, these teachings are not to replace an individual's personal Bible study. God needs to be able to speak to His people individually as well as corporately.

### **B. TO WORSHIP CORPORATELY**

The music of a local church should come from the heart of God for the people who are called to worship there. Corporate worship gives expression to people in that local church of their heart to God. Whatever the style or culture of the church group, the worship would be heartfelt, open, and relational. Corporate worship should provide an avenue of connecting people with God.

Corporate worship is powerful when we are united in our love for God and one another. However, corporate worship should not replace the worship that we offer to God in our homes and throughout our day. We have a variety of music available today to give us expression of yielding our lives to God.

### **C. TO LEAD YOU CORPORATELY**

A pastor will have direction from God on the vision He has for that local church. Each church shares in the mandate to preach the Gospel and to encourage one another, but how they accomplish that vision will vary between congregations. You want to be in a church where you can participate in the church vision by helping in the church services or serving in one of the ministries.

God has a plan for your life. He has a purpose for you. There are things He will ask you to do individually, and there are ways you can participate corporately in your home church.

#### D. TO ENCOURAGE FRIENDSHIPS

In church we should give people the opportunity to form relationships with one another and to enjoy spending quality time together. We're encouraged when we're around people who share our beliefs and interests. We strengthen and edify each other through our genuine friendships. It's good to know that whatever we face, we're not going to have to go through it alone. We can help encourage one another to keep going forward with what God has called us to do.

Read Hebrews 10:24, 25

According to this scripture, why do you think is valuable to become a part of a local church?

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#### E. TO EXPERIENCE THE CORPORATE ANOINTING

The power of God should be present in church services to refresh and empower us. There is incredible corporate power available when God's people come together in love. Church should be a place where we can pray for one another and support each other through joys and disappointments in life.

#### F. TO CARE FOR NEEDS IN AND OUT OF THE CORPORATE BODY

There are a lot of hurting people around us that God wants to tangibly show His love to. God sometimes speaks to us as individuals to help meet another person's need. There are other times when God uses a local church or a group of churches to reach out and help others. We can accomplish much when we work together in unity.

#### G. TO INSTRUCT CORPORATELY

When you know you are in the right church, you will be able to trust your church leadership. Their position will not be used to manipulate or control, but to love and to serve. When you know your pastor is committed to God, you can trust that he or she will teach you the truth and encourage your liberty in Christ.

You also have the Holy Spirit to guide you personally. He will let you know if you are hearing a doctrine that is in error. He will try to keep you away from temptation and wrongdoing because He loves you and He wants you blessed.