

Small Group Discussion

Pt 1 - The Church is God's Master Project

... Jesus and the Church

Jesus said he would build "*His church*" (**Matthew.16:18**). The church was Jesus' idea and there is nothing else that He said He would build. The church is His master project and all of His energies are focused on completing it.

What Jesus is really saying is, "*I will build my new community.*" His call was to individuals, but His goal was community. So in its practical sense, "*church*" is a "*community of believers*" who have been brought into relationship with God and others where there is common faith and common purpose.

The church is extremely important to God! The church is described as the body of Christ (*it's part of Him*), the bride of Christ (*it's the love of His life*), God's army (*it's His force in the world*) and God's temple or house (*it's where He chooses to live*).

The church is also very important to the world we live in.
(Matthew5:13-16. Philippians 2:14-16).

Take the community of believers out of the world and there is no light only darkness everywhere. There is no salt to preserve, only decay and perversion. The darkest places in our cities and our world and places where the light of God's community of believers is shining the dimmest. Bill Hybels make this declaration: "*The local church (when it's working properly) is the hope of the world!*" It has been entrusted with the gospel, which is the only power to change or transform the human heart. The church has a completely unique mission to fulfil on planet earth, essential to the well being of society and that no one else can accomplish.

So when you invest your life, your time, your energy and your resources into the church of Jesus Christ, you are making a wise, a strategic and an eternal investment. You are aligning your life's priorities with what is central to the very heart of God. You become a partner, a shareholder and a contributor to the greatest project in the universe - the church, the hope of the world.

Today and always there is only one true church of Jesus Christ made up of all true believers around the world. However, there are and have been many local congregations led by human leaders and made up of people just like you and me. Together we have the responsibility to make our local church something that will please and honour God - **(1 Corinthians3:5-15)**

... What Kind of Church Do You Want?

There are many options today and right here in Geelong there are a 100 or so churches to choose from, most of them doing great work for the kingdom of God.

Small or Large?

WPCC in both location (Belmont and Bannockburn) is a growing church with the potential to make a real difference in our region and beyond. However, we are also seeking to keep growing SMALL through Life Group ministry, so that everyone is cared for and has a sense of belonging.

Traditional or Contemporary?

WPCC is a CONTEMPORARY church seeking to present the never changing message of the gospel in a relevant manner. However, we are also committed to preserving the central TRADITIONS of the orthodox Christian faith.

Evangelical or Pentecostal?

WPCC is a PENTECOSTAL church that embraces the activity of the Holy Spirit. However, WPCC is also an EVANGELICAL church that seeks to build everything strongly on the inspired infallible and authoritative Word of God.

Single or Multiple Focused?

WPCC seeks to be a balanced church through adopting a MULTIPLE FOCUS on key aspects of church life (soul winning, experiencing God, close relationships, teaching and social action). However, we also want to be SINGLE FOCUSED by not trying to do everything.

Inward or Outward Focused?

WPCC is called to be an OUTWARD focused church that has a heart for those who are far from God. However, we also want to have a strong INWARD focus that ensures that we are a warm and caring community of people.

WPCC is a church with a MISSION from God that we are passionate about and totally committed to. WPCC is also committed to MAINTAINING the ground we have taken and in preserving the foundations and values of our church's great heritage.

... Conclusion

What kind of church do you want? God has called our church and given us a unique part in his plan for Australia and beyond. That doesn't make us better than any other church, just different. It's time for us to embrace His call and step forward with fresh passion and commitment to be all God wants us to be at this time of history. Let's work together at *Creating Our Future* today!

... Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about the statement, "*The local church is the hope of the world*"? Is this true? If so, how should it affect the way we live (individually and as a Life Group)?
2. Have you been a part of any other churches? Describe your experience. What were some of their strengths?
3. What do you think are some of the strengths of WPCC? Why do you want to be part of our church?
4. What do you think are some of the areas that need improvement in WPCC? What are some ways these areas could be strengthened?
5. Do you see WPCC as too Traditional, too Contemporary or just right?
6. Do you see WPCC as too Evangelical, too Pentecostal or just right?
7. Do you see WPCC as too Inward Focused, too Outward Focused or just right?