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Being 'Church'

Welcome to our new series on Being Church. These studies are intended to follow the weekly preaching at St Marks and St Davids

The tabernacle was the tent predecessor of the temple which the people of Israel carried through their wilderness wanderings in Exodus and Numbers. It continued to be used until Solomon's construction of the first Jerusalem temple in 1 Kings 8.

Discussion Starter:

1. How many different ways can you think of using the word 'church' in a sentence?
2. Complete this sentence:
The thing I like most about Church is

Opening up the message

In the sermon related to this study we heard that the Christian church is the community of people gathered around Jesus Christ. Our local church here at Avalon and Palm Beach is an expression of this everlasting reality.

This reality is often described in the Bible using word pictures or metaphors.

- Did the speaker mention any of those 'word picture's in Sunday's sermon? From throughout the Bible, how many of these 'word pictures' can your group list?

'Temple' and 'Church'

In this study we are going to focus on two particular word pictures. The first is the idea of the temple or tabernacle. To discover the significance of the temple, have some members of your group look up and read out the following passages:

- Ex 40:33-Lev 1:2
- 2 Sam 22:7
- 1 Kings 8:10-13
- Acts 7:44-50
- Heb 9:1-14
- 1 Cor 3:16-17
- 1 Cor 6:19

Living the message today

1. What do you think is the significance of the temple?
2. What does this mean for our life as God's church?
3. How ought this truth shape our weekly gathering?



'Body' and 'Church' [optional—if you have time!]

The 'Body of Christ' is another word picture used in the New Testament to help us understand what it means to be the community gathered to Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus himself associates his body with the temple/tabernacle: in John 2:18-22 he says that his body is to replace the temple. He is the presence of God with his people, physically while he was on earth and by his Holy Spirit after his ascension (see John 14:23).

Paul spells out the implications of our being the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13:3. Read this passage quietly and slowly for yourself. Discuss your answers to these questions:

1. What does this mean for our life as God's church?
2. How ought this truth shape our weekly gathering?

Living the Message today

How would you like your participation in church to be shaped by what you have discussed in this study? Pray for one another in response to your answers to this question.

*“Church isn’t where you meet. Church isn’t a building. Church is what you do. Church is who you are. Church is the human outworking of the person of Jesus Christ. Let’s not go to Church, let’s be the Church.” --
Bridget Willard*