







## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week 3

January 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012

### Ice Breaker:

The NFL playoffs are in full swing. Are you a fan? If not, what do you do for fun and relaxation?

### Opening Prayer:

Father God, thank you for sending Jesus, who opened the door to a relationship with you for “the rest of us.”

### For Discussion:

#### Read Acts 15:1-21

This passage describes how the early church was struggling to wrap their minds around the idea that God was calling not only the Jews, but also Gentiles (referring to all non-Jews) into a relationship with himself. This was a radical, transformational shift in thinking. Because of what Jesus did for us, our relationship with God is no longer based on our outward behavior, but on our inward belief. The people of God were now being called to throw the doors open to welcome anyone and everyone to come explore the claims of Christ.

- Describe your earliest memory of wrestling with the claims of Christ.
- Did you have access to a church that helped you process your doubts and questions?
- Do you currently have access to people who can help you process your doubts and questions?

The problem is that after a while, churches often shift toward having a closed door or “bunker” mentality. They want to distance themselves from our culture in order to protect themselves from being hurt or influenced by it.

#### Read John 17:15-18

This passage is a clear reminder that Jesus has sent us into the world, but it also reminds us that God’s Word keeps us sanctified or set apart for God’s purposes.

- On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being lowest, how are you doing at spending time reading God’s Word?
- Does anything in your schedule need to change in order for you to make time for God’s Word?

This weekend, Pastor Mike pointed out three levels of connecting to a local church:

1. I come to church because I get something out of it.
2. I’m willing to participate when it is convenient.
3. I’m committed to the mission of Christ and will participate in it.

At what level are you currently participating?

Are you ready to fully participate?

What next right step does that mean for you?

Committing to membership? Baptism? Serving in a ministry? Joining a growth group? Leading a growth group? Serving the local or global community through giving and going?

### Closing Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for establishing “church for the rest of us.” We want to make a commitment to extending grace and hope to those around us by fully participating in your mission. Help us to open our hearts to you and to those around us this week.

