



# WHY CHURCH?

## Week Two

### Opening Prayer

God, we welcome you into our time together. Help us to see how you wired us for community within the church out of your great love for us. Amen.

### Talk It Over

Church is not intended to be a place we go, but rather a collection of all people following Jesus learning to live and love the Jesus way. This series, "Why Church?", is intended to help us better understand why the church is important and relevant to us today. This week we focused on the idea of connecting authentically (bringing and receiving who we are) within in the church.

- Would you describe church as a place where people can be authentic? Why or why not?
- What allows or is required for people to be more authentic with what is happening in their lives?
- Can you see how your upbringing plays a part in your ability to be authentic? If so, share some of those old ideas and thoughts with us and or how you find yourself navigating them.

### Read Romans 12:1 (The Message)

Once we have decided to follow Jesus, he invites us into a transformation journey that lasts our lifetime. Part of that invitation is to become less guarded and more authentic with safe people in our lives. This allows us to expose wounds and be supported by others as we experience more healing and shaping while navigating everyday life as Christ followers.

- Do you have people in your life that you have been able to share some of your deeper thoughts, struggles, and pain with? (While we strive to make groups safe place to process life openly, your answer may be tied back to this group. Whether you pick to share about people from this group or not is totally up to you.)
- Have you been on the receiving end of watching someone be authentically themselves in your life? What was that like?
- What kind of things do we experience when we fail to show up authentically to those who love us?

### Read Romans (The Message)

Living authentically and loving well requires two things from us: one, that we would acknowledge our differences; and two, that we embrace the mess. The church is full of people and people come with different ideas, thoughts, issues, and mess! The church is bound to be diverse. The invitation for us is to hold that tension and embrace people with a love that is deeper than our own.

- How do generally you respond when someone thinks or feels differently than you?

*(Content continued on the next page.)*

- Are messes hard for you? What do you notice about yourself in the midst of messy situations?
- Where do you notice God in the midst of diversity and mess? What is he saying to you about this reality of the church?

**Read Colossians 3: 13-15 (New Revised Standard Version); Romans 12:9 (The Message)**

Few things catapult us forward like connecting authentically; connecting authentically has a way of expanding our whole lives if we let it. It creates a constant stream of opportunities to go beyond where we are today, becoming fuller, truer versions of ourselves. This catapult effect takes us to place of living beyond where I currently am into areas of growth and expansion.

- Have you experienced growth in your life after a season of vulnerability? If you feel comfortable, share about some of that journey with us.
- After hearing the ideas of authentic community in the church, what do you think the invitation from God is for you? What's next in your journey with the church in general?

**Closing Prayer**

God, thank you for using us to create safe spaces for people to just be themselves and receive your love. Help us this week as we are all challenged to evaluate what areas of our life need to be lived with more openness and authenticity. Thank you for the gift of your church.

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**How To Use this Discussion Guide**

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.