

GBC Discipleship RESOURCE



What is the Church? July 25-30, 2022

Week 01 | The Flock of Christ (John 10:1-5)

For a brief overview of why (and how) to engage in each of these practices, you can read the Guideline For Growing on our website.

<https://www.gymeabaptist.org.au/growing/pages/guideline-for-growing>

What is a Discipleship Menu?

A discipleship menu is a selection of discipleship activities to engage in to continue the conversation that begins on Sunday throughout the week. The aim is to extend our interaction as a community of faith around activities that help us follow Jesus every single day. The activities vary from week to week (though there are some standard activities) and you are encouraged to do as many as you find helpful (like a menu; you don't need to eat everything on it!). Do them on your own (God and you), with a couple of friends (you and a few), or in a Life Group (you and a crew). The important thing is to do a few!

GBC Sermon Podcast and The Big 3 Podcast

Don't forget you can review this week's sermon on the GBC Sermon Podcast. The sermon is usually uploaded by Monday afternoon. You can also listen in to the GBC Big Three podcast; a weekly podcast where Matt, Jess, and Marc sit down and continue the conversation by engaging in three big questions raised by the congregation about the sermon. The GBC Big Three comes out on Wednesdays.

Overview

One of the consequences of the pandemic has been that many people have begun asking probing questions about their values, priorities, assumptions, direction, and practices. The so-called "Great Resignation" appears to be a result of this 'deconstruction'. Many believers are deconstructing their ecclesiology (what we believe about the church); asking questions about why we do what we do, what our place is in the community of faith, how we can effectively minister in a changed world, etc. Asking these questions is important and while the answers may take time to become clear we believe that the images used in Scripture to describe the people of God will provides some guidance for us. Over the next five weeks we will be exploring several images used to describe the church. Each of these images are partial; they don't say everything that can or should be said about the church. The first image is of the church as the flock of God.

The shepherd metaphor is used throughout Scripture with an emphasis on the shepherd. The implication is that this image has next to nothing to say about how we interact with each other. Instead, the chief characteristic of the

people of God as the flock is a recognition of the shepherd's voice and a willingness to follow (John 10:4).

We learn to recognise Jesus' voice by becoming familiar with his priorities, values, and practices as revealed in Scripture and by listening to each other's experiences, insights, and knowledge. As we become familiar with Jesus' voice we are more able to respond to his invitation.

It is also worth noting that a shepherd kept sheep, not as pets, but as a livelihood. The sheep were part of a wider purpose and supported the goals and dreams of the shepherd. Our task is not just to be happy and healthy but to follow wherever Jesus might lead

Passages to Read

We believe that the Word of God is living and active and that reading and reflecting on it is one way we encounter God. As you read we encourage people to ask a set of simple questions: What stands out to you? What questions do you have? What is the invitation of God to you? Who can you tell?

This week's readings are examples of the shepherd metaphor:

- Psalm 23
- Psalm 78
- Ezekiel 34
- Zechariah 11:4-17

Questions to Reflect on

These questions can be used as the basis of a small group discussion or as journal questions. As with the rest of this menu, use the questions that are most useful for you or your crew.

1. Read (or re-read) Psalm 23. Identify the various places that the psalmist is led by God? Have you been to these metaphorical places? How were you aware of God's leading in the good times and the bad?
2. Marc finished his sermon by noting that sheep were not pets for a shepherd but served the livelihood of the shepherd. While the purpose of the flock (e.g., economic sustenance) is not a distinct part of the metaphor, how do pets and a flock differ? How are they similar? What light might this shed on the church as the flock of God?
3. What has been most helpful for you to learn to recognise the voice of Jesus?
4. Describe a time when you have heard the voice of Jesus and responded.

A Prayer to Pray

Pray that we might – as individuals and a community – grow in our ability to recognise the voice of Jesus and follow him. Pray also for our Focus Day on September 17 when we will gather to seek to hear the voice of God for our future direction.