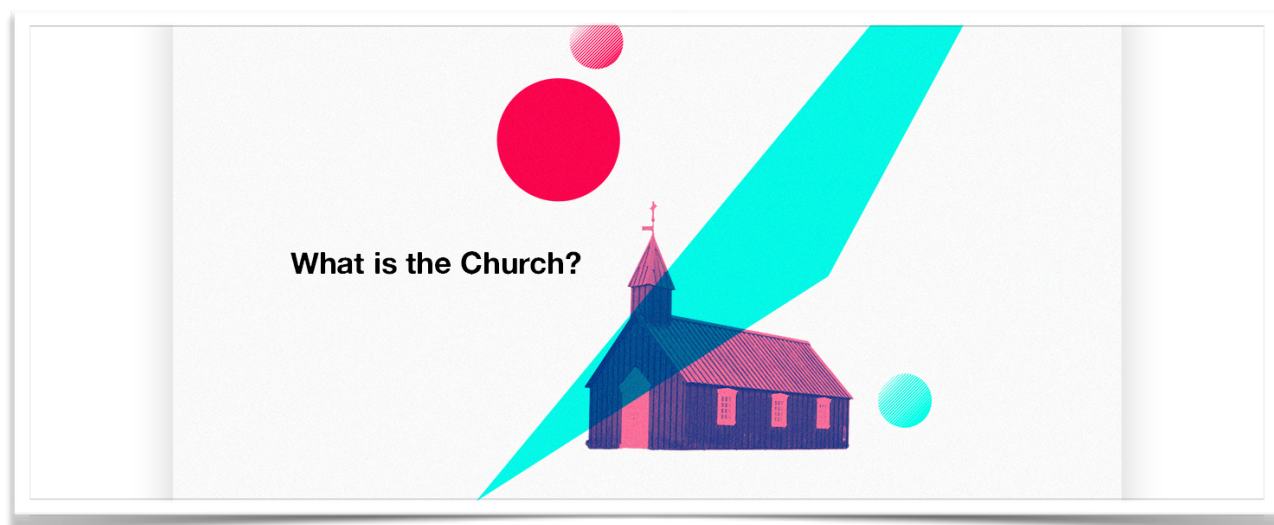


## GBC Discipleship RESOURCE



# What is the Church? Aug 14-20, 2022

## Week 04 | The Family of God (Galatians 3:23-4:7)

*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.gyneaabaptist.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 we 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.

NOTE: The Big Three is on a brief hiatus during this series.

## 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 provide some guidance for us. In this series 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.

This week's image is the family of God.

Nearly every book of the New Testament is filled with familial language to describe the people of God. Everything from the describing God as our Father (which is not very common in the Old Testament), to the striking

image of being 'born again' or being adopted, to the description of our fellow disciples as sisters and brothers; there is something about 'family' that informs our understanding of the church.

Our experiences of family are varied and there are some differences between our contemporary understanding of family and that of antiquity (namely, that family in the ancient world incorporated more people than mum, dad, and the kids) but regardless of our family experience and our modern context we can see a few points of application.

First, the family image is a challenge to our individualism and, more specifically, the emphasis on our ability to choose. You are probably familiar with the proverb, "You can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family." If, as a church, we are family, then the question of who we are related to is more than a choice we make. We may have people in our community of faith who we get along with better than others, but the family image reminds us that we have obligations to everyone who is included in our family

Second, there is a responsibility implied in family. In antiquity, it was shameful to shirk your familial responsibilities. While this may have changed a bit we still feel a sense of obligation to support, encourage, and relate to family. We are in a family – the family of God – and all of us play a role in caring for our brothers and sisters.

## DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITIES

### 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 focus on family.

Galatians 3:23-4:7

John 3:1-8

Matthew 18:15-20

Ephesians 3:14-21

## 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. What are the challenges to being a "family"?
2. What is one thing you can do to embody the family image this week?
3. What were the responsibilities you have toward your family? What are the implications for our life together?
4. How can we invite and welcome others into our family?
5. Each of these images are partial. What is the central truth of the family image to you?

## A Prayer to Pray

Pray for our unity as a community of faith that we might be a bit more of a family.

# 40 Days of Prayer

We are also encouraging our community of faith to pray for the 40 days prior to our Day of Discernment on Saturday September 17. Below are the prayer points and scriptures for this week (Week Two: August 15-21)

Prayer Focus	Scriptural Reflection	Additional, Optional Activities
<b><i>This week we call on the Holy Spirit to lead us to what he is doing in the areas identified by the Discernment Group:</i></b>	<b><i>August 15-21 (Days 8-14)</i></b>	<b><i>Read the report of the Discernment Group (on GBC Links). This will provide you with aspects of each area to pray about.</i></b>
The area of spiritual journey; that our community of faith would be attentive to the Spirit and rooted in the Word.	Ephesians 5:18b	
The area of local community; that our neighbours would know the love of Jesus through our welcome and service.	Matthew 22:39	Walk around your neighbourhood, apartment block, villa, etc. and pray for those who live there.
The area of culture building; that we might be unified in the mission Jesus has given us and that we would engage in that mission with a sensitivity to the needs and circumstances of those we serve.	1 Corinthians 12:27	
The area of inclusion; that those we encounter would feel warmly welcomed and intentionally included.	Matthew 25:37-40	
The area of family; that our relationships with one another would embody our identity as the body of Christ.	Galatians 6:10	Fast for part of the day and use that time to pray.
The area of restoration; that the Lord would breath fresh breath into the dry bones of our lives and our church.	Ezekiel 37:11-13	
That we would be led to the right ministries to facilitate the priorities.	Acts 16:6-10	