



# Christ Is Prerequisite for Church

## **GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**



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# FORWARD

## *About the Format of this Group Discussion Guide*

This group discussion guide is intended to accompany the reading of the booklet entitled *“Christ is Prerequisite for Church”*. I have intentionally presented this material in both a book (or lecture) format, as well as, in a discussion guide format, because I see in scripture two types of meetings in the New Testament Church which had two different formats:

1) “Equipping Ministry” (a speaker shares his particular gift of the Spirit with an audience for apostolic teaching, prophetic and evangelistic preaching for “equipping the saints”. Ephesians 4:11-12) In this case, it is the apostolic teaching in the booklet, *“Christ is Prerequisite for Church”*.

2) “Body Ministry” (each member of the body shares the gifts of the Spirit for “the body edifying itself in love”. Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 14:26). In this case, it is this guided group discussion.

I have chosen to present this material in a group discussion guide format also for this reason: Through many years of ministry

experience, I have found that personal initiative is essential in authentic discipleship. And in this case, it would be a “group initiative” that is required. In this sense, perhaps James’ admonition of being “doers of the word and not merely hearers” (1:22) can be applied. Indeed, if a disciple is a “follower” of Jesus, “following” requires more than hearing. The “doing” in this case is a group of people taking responsibility to pursue REVELATION of Christ, RELATIONSHIP with Christ and REFLECTION of Christ in His Body, which is the Church. (Colossians 1:18)

Indeed, the goal of authentic apostolic equipping ministry is to “minister the word” in such a way as “they all shall know Him from the least to the greatest” (Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:11) and thus realize the New Covenant. A “New Testament Church” is a “New Covenant People”. A “New Covenant People” are those who know their God”. (Daniel 11:32) And in the case of the Church, it is a matter of pursuing the knowledge and service of God “together”.

Yet another reason why I have chosen to present this material in a group discussion format is because the exercise of that format is preparation for actually functioning as “the Body of Christ, the Church”. (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24)

The format can be referred to as “DIALECTICAL”. “Dialectic” means: ‘the art or practice of examining concepts or ideas logically, often by the method of question and answer’ (Webster). Jesus, as well as most ancient teachers, used this method of instruction because it leads the disciple into REVELATION KNOWLEDGE of a given concept or idea. In the logical progression of questions and answers, the understanding ‘drops from the head into the heart’. So, trust the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you into real heart and life changing revelations as you progress through this guide.

# “Apostolic”

(pp. 4-10 in the booklet)

## READ IN UNISON: I Corinthians 3:9-13

<sup>9</sup> For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

<sup>11</sup> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.<sup>1</sup>

1. What ministry did Jesus give to His disciples?
2. Whose ministry is it to build the Church?
3. What is the essence of apostolic ministry?

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Version* unless otherwise noted.

## READ IN UNISON: 1 Corinthians 12:12

For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

4. What does the phrase “So also is Christ” mean?
5. What is prerequisite to understanding the Church?
6. Discuss: The correlation you see between the story in Genesis 28:10-19 and the story in John 1:45-51.

## READ IN UNISON: 1 Corinthians 2:1a, 2, 5 (Amplified Bible)

“As for myself, brethren, when I came to you, .... I resolved to know nothing (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.... So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”<sup>2</sup>

7. What is the God-given responsibility of apostolic ministers?

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:1a, 2, 5. *The Amplified Bible*

# Christ is **PREREQUISITE** for Church

*(pp. 10-11 in the booklet)*

**READ IN UNISON: 1 Corinthians 11:29 (NKJV)**

**“He who eats and drinks in an unworthy manor eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”**

8. What does it mean to “discern” the Lord’s Body?
9. What distinguishes the Church that Jesus is building from all other Christian groupings?



# Christ is **PREREQUISITE** for Church

## The Head

*(pp. 12-14 in the booklet)*

### **READ IN UNISON: Colossians 1:18**

**He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.**

10. What is prerequisite to discerning the Body?

11. Discuss: The similarity between seeing the Lordship of Christ and the Headship of Christ.

## The Foundation

*(pp.15-16 in the booklet)*

### **READ IN UNISON: I Corinthians 3:10-11**

**“10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”**

12. What did Paul mean by saying he “laid a foundation which already is laid”?

# Christ is **PREREQUISITE** for Church

## The Revelation

*(pp. 17-20 in the booklet)*

### **READ IN UNISON: Matthew 16:13-18**

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

13. Where is the source of revelation of Christ?

14. What is the “rock” (bedrock) of the Church Jesus is building?

15. How does Jesus build His Church?

16. What is the revelation that Jesus requires of His disciples?

## The Relationship

*(pp. 21-23 in the booklet)*

### **READ IN UNISON: LUKE 6:46-48**

“<sup>46</sup> Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? <sup>47</sup> Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: <sup>48</sup> he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.”

17. What tests the quality of the work built?
18. What is the bedrock?
19. What is laid upon the bedrock?
20. What is the foundation?

21. What is the specific revelation and relationship Jesus requires of His disciples?

22. What does everything in the Christian life and the Christian Church life depend upon?

23. What sets the parameters of our relationship with Christ?

## Christ is **PREREQUISITE** for Church

### “Doing Church”

*(pp. 24-26 in the booklet)*

24. How can you summarize the “normal Christian life” and the “normal Christian Church life”?
25. What should we do with our growing revelation of Christ?
26. What were the “Bodily Functions” of the first century Body of Christ?
27. What is the specific goal of all these activities?
28. How can we reflect Christ to one another and the world?
29. What is the simple definition of “Body Ministry”?
30. By what does the Body of Christ live and grow?
31. What is it to “know Christ”?
32. What is it to “make Him known”?
33. What is the specific purpose of all spiritual gifts?

## READ IN UNISON:

### CHRIST IS PREREQUISITE & PREEMINENT

Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church. We cannot *discern the Body* until we first *discern the Head*. We cannot understand the mystery of the Church until we understand the mystery of Christ. Jesus is building His Church through *revelation of Himself*. As we pursue the revelation of Christ, *He builds His Church*.

As disciples of Christ, let us pursue REVELATION of Christ as the Head and the Foundation, having that translated into RELATIONSHIP with Christ, with a view to REFLECTION of Christ. May the Church, which is His Body, be able to say: “**Look, ‘so also is Christ’**”.

# NOTES