

This midweek study will explore what it means for Christians to be the people of God. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: People of God

Scripture describes the church as the people of God (2 Cor. 6:16). The church is created by God through the atoning death of Christ and is made up of both Jews and Gentiles. The term church is used in two senses. Church refers to individual local churches composed of people who have united together under the lordship of Christ and the universal church composed of all believers in Christ in all times. As the people of God, the church seeks to live under God's ruling care while He protects and cares for us.

1 The story of the entire Bible is about God making a people to enjoy Him (Isa. 43:7,21; John 17:24).

- ▶ How would you summarize the entire Bible into a sentence or two?
 - ▶ What's so great about having your sins forgiven? What good does justification ultimately provide?
- Ask students to look up as many of these verses. I suggest one verse per student:
- Exodus 6:7; Leviticus 26:12; Deuteronomy 29:13; 1 Chronicles 17:22; Jeremiah 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:1,33; Ezekiel 11:20; 14:11; 34:30-31; 36:28, 37:23,27; Hosea 2:23; Zechariah 8:8; 13:9; and Revelation 21:3.
- ▶ What common phrase or theme do you hear?
 - ▶ What does it mean for God to be our God? How is this good news (Isa. 52:7)?
 - ▶ What does it mean for us to be His people? How is this good news?
 - ▶ Why did God make us in the first place?

Read Isaiah 43:7,21.

- ▶ According to Isaiah, why did God make us? How can we be "for his glory"? Where does our happiness fit in?

Read John 17:24.

- ▶ What was Jesus' request in His high priestly prayer? How will we feel when we finally behold His glory?

2 All Christians are intimately connected to the lineage of the people of God

(Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 10:1; Eph. 4:25; Heb. 2:11-12).

- ▶ To whom do you feel closest? Why do you feel so close those people?
- ▶ What are some common bonds that draw people together?
- ▶ What do you think could be the closest bond between a group of people? Race? Background? Culture? Love of particular artist, band, or sports team? Explain.

Read Romans 12:4-5.

- ▶ According to Romans, how are we connected to one another? Can you think of a bond that be closer than this bond?

Read Ephesians 4:25.

- ▶ What was Paul's reasoning for why we should be honest to one another? What happens if the parts of your physical body aren't honest to one another (e.g., your mind tells your right hand to scratch your knee, when your knee actually has a big bruise)?

Read Hebrews 2:11-12.

- ▶ What is our relationship to Jesus? How does Jesus feel toward us?
- ▶ How should we feel toward one another? What should we do together?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1.

- ▶ What is the relationship between Christians and Old Testament saints? How does this passage show that we are connected to saints across both time and space as the people of God?

3 All Christians should be connected to a local congregation of the people of God (Ps. 16:3; Heb. 10:24-25).

- ▶ If you could join any group of people in the world, what group would you join? Why?
- ▶ How do you feel about being part of the people of God? Proud? Ashamed? Indifferent? Excited? Hopeful? Depressed?

Read Psalm 16:3.

- ▶ How did David feel about the people of God? How should we feel about them? If we aren't delighted in God's people, who can we ask to change our hearts?

Read Hebrews 10:24-25.

- ▶ What does Hebrews say we should not neglect? Why should we gather together (v. 24)?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ How will you view and treat fellow Christians this week? Be specific!