GATHERED

The Empowered Presence of God's People

STUDENT GUIDE

SESSION FIVE: The Nature of the Church

a Study on the Church by

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► Session Five ► The Nature of the Church

Now that we have looked carefully at the church's intimate association with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, we will turn our attention to the nature of the church. Specifically, it is important for Christians of every age to remember the standards of the church set forth by God. Since we are his people and exist by his will and for his purposes, we must always consider our existence, practices, and mission only in the light of God's eternal person.

Take a few days this week to sit down with your Bible and a pen so that you can read and study God's Word in a personal way so that you can live it out in the community of saints to which he has given you.

DAY 1

Read Ezekiel 36:22-38. Make a list of every action the Lord says he will do. (Hint: it's a lot!)

What problem does God describe in the text above? For what purpose does he intend to act. Focus on vv. 22-24.

How are God's stated intentions similar to his promises given to his people today? Can you think of any verses from the New Testament that say something similar to the church?

In contrast to God's actions in this text, what are the actions of Israel? What is the difference between their past actions and what God intends to do with them?



DAY 2

Read 1 Peter 1:13-21. What is the central theme of the passage?

Write some observations about God's people from the description in this passage.

A change in God's people is described in this text. What is the primary difference? From whom did we inherit our "futile ways"? Through whom are we "believers in God"?

Read 1 Peter 2:4-10. For what purpose is God working in the people of God? How does Peter contrast the unbelieving world with the redeemed people of God?

DAY 3

In John 17, Jesus prays to the Father on behalf of his apostles and for the believers that follow their teaching. Whose word do later followers of Christ believe? Where do we find their words today?

Read Ephesians 2:19-22. How does this text describe us before we came to God? What implications does this have for our lives before Christ?

On what foundation was "the household of God" built? What does this mean? What are the characteristics of this "structure" in verses 21 and 22?

Read Ephesians 4:3-6. Write out the central message of these verses in your own words. According to this, what is one primary goal of the church? What is this goal based on?

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