



# **\*ASSEMBLY REQUIRED**

Sunday Message

Banning Liebscher





# Teaching Text:



## **(NIV) Matthew 16:18**

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

*recap.*

## **(NIV) Colossians 1:17-18**

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church

## **(NIV) Matthew 18:17**

If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

This week Banning Liebscher launches a new series focusing on the theology and necessity of the local church. Many of us grew up going to church every Sunday and it is something that has just been a part of our lives. As such, many of us get in the habit of church without actually understanding the theology of church. But there is a theology of church, a reason why we do what we do and a Biblical view of what church is supposed to be. The pandemic has brought this conversation to the forefront and has caused many Christians to reexamine what they believe about church and the purpose it serves.

Many Christians are missing out on the fullness of what God has for them because they don't accurately see the church for what God intended it to be. Jesus is the head of the church and He is building His church. It is important to understand that the church is not a representative democracy and Jesus was not elected. We don't get to define what church is and Jesus is not taking a poll on what we would like it to be. We must look to Scripture to see what Jesus meant when He refers to His church.

Definitions matter and how we define "church" makes a difference on how we interact with it. Webster's dictionary of the word "church" defines it as: a building that is used for Christian religious services; religious services held in a church; a particular Christian group. But this is not how "church" is translated in the Bible. Scripture uses the Greek word "Ekklesia" to describe church. Ekklesia is in fact a word which means assembly. An assembly is a group of people gathered together for a common purpose.

The church is God's assembly of the "called out ones." As followers of Christ, we have all been called out of the world for a specific purpose. The universal church manifests in the assembly of local "called out ones." The universal church

manifests in the local community who is called out and gathers together. When Jesus says "I will build my church" that is worked out in a local context, this is what we see throughout the New Testament.

Church is more than just the Sunday gathering but we cannot neglect the importance of assembling together on a weekly basis. God calls us to gather together and Christianity was meant to flourish and operate within the context of community. This is why the future of the church is not online. Virtual church services have their place and online gatherings can be helpful in reaching people, and in being a supplement to our spiritual growth and connection.

There are just things that we are missing when we neglect to gather with other believers. God releases something unique when we are in the same room with one another. The fruit that comes for the online world is just not good or healthy. Relationships that are formed solely online tend to be shallow in nature. The church does not need to catch up to where the world is going.



# Discussion Guide

## Emotional Health Check In:

Take a few minutes to do an emotional health check in with your Life on Life group, creating space for each person to answer the question below:

**What was a highlight from the past week?  
What was a challenge?**

If the need arises, spend a few minutes praying for one another, asking God to meet needs and help each person carry what feels heavy right now.

## ENGAGE

**What is your history with the church? Was going to church part of your normal routine growing up?**

**In what ways has the global pandemic affected your view of the church?**

**What have you gained from gathering with other believers on a Sunday? What feels hard about a Sunday gathering?**

## ENCOUNTER

Spend a few minutes in stillness and quiet (you may want to play soaking music) in your group and ask the Holy Spirit the following question:

**Holy Spirit, are there any places of pain or wounding in regards to how I view the church? Where did that pain/lie originate? Please reveal your Truth and tell me how you see the church.**

If time permits, allow those who want to, to share what God spoke to them during the encounter time.

## EQUIP

Commit to attending a Sunday gathering for an entire month. Take note of the interactions that take place and how you are affected by gathering with other believers each week.



