



# WHAT MATTERS?

CENTRAL CHURCH VISION SERIES

HOMEGROUP  
DISCUSSION  
GUIDE



## WEEK 1

# THEY MATTER

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### For Starters

Imagine you were sent to a city in another country as a missionary with the goal of evangelising the people and planting a church. You'd have a lot of decisions to make when you first arrived. Discuss these questions in the light of this critical mission:

- Where would you live?
- What would you do for a job?
- What standard of living would you expect?
- What daily activities would you do?
- What would your prayers be like?
- Who would you want to have helping you?

Missionaries have to be very strategic and intentional about all the decisions they make. Their mission is all-consuming, involving all aspects of life. Many of us admire missionaries for their courage and sacrifice, while secretly being a little relieved that we don't have to do the same. Or do we ....?

### From the Word

Read Matthew 9:35-38.

Jesus is moving about the crowds of people. What is Jesus feeling and why?

In verse 37, Jesus paints a word picture. What does he want his disciples to notice?

What does he tell them to do?

Now look at the next chapter and read Matthew 10:5-15. What does Jesus command his 12 disciples to do (particularly verses 6-7)?

Jesus gives a lot of specific instructions to the disciples about this mission, but in particular, what does he say to expect from the people they visit?

As we interpret narrative sections of the gospels which describe events that happened in the ministry of Jesus, we always need to carefully discern if those commands apply equally to us. What conclusion would you make of the section from Matthew 9:35-10:15?

### **For Discussion**

Why is prayer the starting point for any evangelism?

How consistently do you pray:

- 1) That God would raise up people to take the gospel to the lost ones?
- 2) For those who are taking the gospel to the lost ones?
- 3) For the people you know who are lost?

How might you improve your prayerfulness in these areas? Share some ideas.

Have you been called to share the gospel with the lost? Discuss.

What do you find hardest when it comes to talking to people about Jesus? Consider the three concerns raised in the sermon on Sunday. Which is most relevant to you and how does being part of a church help.

- 1) Conviction - being convinced that people need God and are going to hell forever without Jesus.
- 2) Connection - genuine connections with non-Christians
- 3) Confidence - an ability to share

Go back to the opening question. As missionaries here in Ipswich, how should our decisions in each area be shaped by that missional perspective?

What priority do you see Central Church placing on our mission to our city? Is there a clear strategy for this? How could it be improved? Discuss.

### **For Prayer**

Pray that God would raise up workers for the harvest.

Pray for those who are already working in the harvest.

Pray that your whole group would take the challenge seriously to go into the harvest and pray specifically about the things that are stopping you.

Make a list on the next page of specific people each of you want to reach with the gospel (ie. frontline friends and relatives).



## WEEK 2

# WE MATTER

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### For Starters

What object(s), when you see it, would you describe as a thing of wonder?

Some things are literally amazing! Does the church fit that category? Most of us would not naturally think of the church in those terms, but today, we will explore a fascinating passage in Ephesians that might change our minds.

### From the Word

Read Ephesians 3:1-13.

In chapter 2, Paul has just finished explaining how the gospel of Jesus has united Jews and Gentiles and brought them together in the one body, the church. This wonderful news is propelling Paul towards a prayer of praise, but he pauses mid-thought. In verse 1 he begins a thought but goes on a tangent from verses 2-13. He will at last return to the prayer in verse 14.

In verses 1-6, what is the mystery that Paul is talking about?

What special ministry did God give Paul (verses 7-9)?

Read verses 10-11 carefully again. What do these verses say about the church?

What/who are the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places?

So according to these verses, how is God's great wisdom evident and why?

Do you think Paul is talking about the church universal or the local church of believers?

### **For Discussion**

While the gospel brings diverse groups of people together, what reality does Paul go on to address in chapter 4:1-6?

Knowing that the church is the trophy of God's grace, how will that affect the way you approach church this Sunday?

Does your attitude to church mirror what Paul has expressed here? Do you need to repent of devaluing church?

How can you personally work to build greater unity in our church? Are there people you feel distant from? What could you do about this?

Now read the final prayer that Paul was getting to ... **Ephesians 3:14-20**. Meditate on these words, particularly what it says about the church. Then move into a time of prayer using these words as a foundation for prayer.

### **For Prayer**

Repent of any wrong attitudes you may have had to church.

Pray again for people you know who are not Christians (go back to the list from last week).



## WEEK 3

# YOU MATTER

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### For Starters

What is the best team you have been a part of (eg sports team, work team, mission team)?  
What made it so good?

Jesus' church is a rich, diverse and unlikely group of people, called into a community which serves one another and the lost in the community. The beauty of the church is that there are no passengers, because everyone has a place to serve.

### From the Word

Read Philippians 1:1-11.

Paul addresses the believers at Philippi as 'saints in Christ Jesus' (verse 1). Are we all saints?

Paul gives thanks for the people at the church in Philippi because they are in partnership with him. The word Paul uses is the word that sometimes gets translated as *fellowship*. How is the way we think of fellowship different from help all thinks of it (Philippians 1:27 might give you an idea)?

The partnership he mentions is 'in the gospel'. What does this mean?

In Philippians 4:14-18, Paul mentions one specific way the Philippians partnered with him? What is it?

### **For Discussion**

Sometimes we think of Paul the hero Apostle, going off and spreading the gospel all by himself. Alongside this passage, can you think of any other places in the New Testament that would debunk this idea?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of working alongside other people?

Paul indicates that all the believers in Philippi were in partnership with him. Is it realistic to expect all people in a church to be gospel partners in some way?

Discuss what the barriers might be to getting involved in gospel ministry at Central and discuss ways these might be overcome?

Pastor and author Rod Irvine says that our generosity to Kingdom causes is a barometer for how we are going spiritually. Would you agree? Why or why not?

### **For Prayer**

Give thanks that God would use each one of us in his Kingdom work.

Pray that we would be effective as a church in training and supporting all our gospel partners.

Pray that we would reflect the generosity of Jesus in our giving.



