

Week 5 – Commitment

January 31, 2021

Group Discussion Guide



(~90 minutes needed)

Begin with 5 minutes of silence + prayer (7-10 minutes)

As you begin this week talking about following Jesus, start out with five minutes of prayerful silence.

[Why silence? Our world is so busy, distracted, and bee-like, with technology filling in any gaps in between. With all that moving, it can be hard to hear others and hear the voice of God. As we gather together, let's press pause and enter into a moment of quiet so that we can hear what God is saying to us and through others.]

Once you're finished with a few moments of quiet centering, have a specified person in the group pray this prayer from Thomas Merton; be sure to also pray for your group time together.

My Lord God, we have no idea where we're going. We do not see the road ahead of us. We cannot know for certain where it will end, nor do we really know ourselves, and the fact that we think we're following Your will does not mean that we are actually doing so. But we believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And we hope that we have that desire in all that we are doing. We hope that we'll never do anything apart from that desire. And we know that if we do this, You will lead us by the right road, though we may know nothing about it. Therefore, we will trust You always, even though we may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. We will not fear, for You are always with us, and You will never leave us to face our perils alone. Amen.

Read this overview (1 minute)

We know everyone here is at a different place in their faith and growth looks very different on a case-by-case basis. What does it look like, though, to grow from wherever we are now to continually making disciples? What's Next will help us to unpack and highlight possible next steps.

This week, we're looking at committing to a local church.

Jesus is building His church (**Matthew 16:18**) and there's no ifs about it. It's going to happen. And Jesus loves His Church so much that He was willing to pay the ultimate price to purchase it with His blood (**Acts 20:28**).

If Jesus was willing to battle for, die for, and commit Himself to His church, then our disposition should be the same as His followers. We want to be a people that are passionate not just about Jesus, but we want to be passionate about what Jesus *Himself* was passionate about. This means we've got to do some serious thinking about how we view the local church and our commitment to it.

Scripture + Debrief in small groups (30 minutes)

Split your group into triads to read the following Scriptures and debrief the sermon together.

- When you hear the word "commitment," what feelings or tensions does that raise in you?
- When you think about committing to a local church like The Creek, how does that change make you feel (e.g. excited, hesitant, fearful, expectant)? Explain.
- Imagine you moved to a new city and now you're on the lookout for a new church. What would be the things you'd look for? What would your expectations of that church be? List out 5-10 and share with the group.
- Are your expectations in line with how the Bible talks about the church and what it should be? Where are there similarities? Where are there dissimilarities?
- Split up the following Scriptures (**Matthew 16:13-19; Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 3:9-17; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:1-22**) and have individuals read one of them to themselves. Have each person then read the Scripture given to them out loud for the group and share the main takeaway of that passage with everyone. What do these passages tell you about the church?
- How has committing to a local church been beneficial for your own faith journey?

Transition back to one large group for recap and this week's practice on committing to the church (30 minutes)

- What were some insights that came from your smaller group discussions?

Partnership Covenant: As a group, go over The Creek's partnership covenant. You view the covenant by copying and pasting this link into your browser → <https://www.thecreek.org/page/1160>. This covenant is just a way to externalize our heart's desire to commit ourselves to the church just as God commits Himself to His church.

As you look over that covenant, here are some questions to guide you. Go around in a circle and have each person share their thoughts and feelings on the questions below:

- Which one of the expectations on The Creek's side of the partnership do you most strongly agree with? Which one are you hesitant about? Why?

- Which of the expectations The Creek asks of you do you most strongly resonate with? Which one do you find most challenging? Why?
- What tensions/feelings do you have when it comes to committing to a local church? What might those be rooted in?

Close with Prayer (10 minutes)

Finish your group session with prayer. You might want to ask someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Close your time together by praying in your triads. Thank God for the forgiveness He's already given you and spend time interceding for the requests that were shared.