

PBCC LifeGroups: *I See a Church!*



Schedule for *I See a Church* on RightNow Media

Week of:

March 6 –

Lesson 1: Why Church?

March 13 –

Lesson 2: I See a Church That Is Marked by the Power and Presence of God

March 20 –

Lesson 3: I See a Church That Grows Smaller as It Grows Larger

March 27 –

Lesson 4: I See a Church That Is Built on the Sacrifices of Many and Not Just the Gifts of a Few

April 3 –

Lesson 5: I See a Church That Cares As Much About Those Who Will Be As Those Who Already Are

April 10 –

Lesson 6: I See a Church That Honors the Past, But Is Willing to Risk It All for the Future

I See a Church – GREG SURRATT, Pastor, Seacoast Church, Mount Pleasant, SC

Description: What do you think of when you hear the word “church”? Stained glass windows, a steeple, organ music, or a choir? The church actually isn't a building or even a service. It's people. God created the Church to be a community of people who know Him. Join us for this series as we learn about becoming the church God created us to be. When God sees PBCC, we don't want him to see a nice building or a great service. We want him to see a church.

Welcome to *I See A Church!* I hope you're excited for this study. Over the next six weeks your group will spend some time talking about what it means to be the Church. Why does the Church exist? What does God expect of us? What should we expect of each other? I want to go past merely studying what “church” is, or why PBCC exists; I want us to imagine what PBCC could be. We will study several passages, including Acts 2, which tells the story of a people who were dedicated to God, each other, and changing their world. I want us to talk about what it looks like for us to build a vibrant, world-changing church in the 21st century.

This study consists of six sessions, each focused on a different aspect of PBCC's vision for what our church can be. We've prepared some teachings for you as well as some questions for reflection and discussion. Don't rush through the sessions! Make sure your group is setting enough time aside for good discussion.

You'll have a chance to learn together, to discuss and share your own stories in a way that focuses on practical, real-life application as you find your story in God's story.

When the apostles and early Christians began meeting together, they did not set out to create a cold, impersonal institution; they created a community. More than anything else, they were concerned about serving and loving people. That is the sort of thing that changes lives. I want PBCC to be so much more than a place for people to go on a Sunday. I want PBCC to be in the business of changing lives and I hope you feel the same way.

I believe that God is going to show up in your group. Are you ready and willing to hear from him? I'm excited to see what God does in and through Powell Butte Christian Church as a result of this study. Let's get started!

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Lesson #1 - Why Church?

Introduction: Each of us has the privilege of knowing God intimately and personally. This is both wonderful and dangerous. That personal, individual relationship may feel like “enough” for us—especially if we run into difficult, needy, exasperating people in our local church. We may think we don’t need to gather with others, that our “walk with God” can be a solo expedition.

But the truth is, God has put you in your church for a reason. Those people who annoy you are actually tools in God’s hands. He is using them to form you into a more patient, loving, gentle person. And he is using you to do the same for them.

God intends for you to experience his love in a variety of ways. We experience him, certainly, in intimate moments of solitude with him. But we also connect with God in a different, but equally important, way in the messy but joyful experience of community. We also experience God’s presence and power when we share the truth of his love with others by inviting them into the body of Christ. Church matters—for our sake, for the sake of others, and for the sake of the gospel.

Focus Verse: Ephesians 2:19-22 (ESV) ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² **In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**

Open it!

1. What are you hoping to get out of this group? What drew you here?

2. What do you love most about your church? What is one thing you wish you could change about your church?

Explore it!

3. Watch the 14-minute video on RightNow Media for this lesson. Jot some notes down as you watch to discuss with your group.

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Reflect on it!

4. Read Ephesians 2:19-22. In the video, we heard about how some people say they've "outgrown" church. How does that idea contrast with what we read in verses 21 and 22?

5. According to this passage, who or what connects people within a church?

6. In the video, Pastor Greg shared three reasons why the church matters. Pick one of these and explain why it's important to you and your faith: **(Church is where we study God's Word. // Church is where we learn to live better lives. // Church is where we become a family.)**

Apply it to your life...

7. Do you ever feel like you've outgrown the church? What do you think that means?

8. Why does church matter to you? Was there ever a time it didn't matter much to you? What changed?

11. This week, how will you grow closer to God? Can you commit to spending time in daily prayer or study of God's word. Tell the group how you plan to follow Jesus this week, and then, at your next meeting, be prepared to talk about your progress and challenges.

Pray for each other within your group...

How can we pray for you this week?

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Going Deeper

READ 1 JOHN 4:11-12

- ✓ What does this passage tell us we must do?
- ✓ What does it say should motivate us?
- ✓ How is God's love made complete, according to verse 12? What does that say about our responsibility within the community of the church?

READ ACTS 17:10-12

- ✓ According to this passage, what was the attitude of the Berean Jews?
- ✓ How does the writer of Acts describe them?
- ✓ What do you think it means to examine the Scriptures together?
- ✓ Why is the "together" part important?

Daily Reflections:

Day 1. READ HEBREWS 10:19-20 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body...

CONSIDER: What does it mean to enter the Most Holy Place? Have you experienced the confidence mentioned in this verse? How can you access it?

Day 2. READ HEBREWS 10:21-22 ...and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

CONSIDER: Who is the great priest? What does it mean that he is "over" the house of God? What's one thing you could do this week to draw near to God?

Day 3. READ HEBREWS 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

CONSIDER: Is it easier to "hold unswervingly" by yourself, or with a community of others who are holding to the same thing?

Day 4. READ HEBREWS 10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds...

CONSIDER: Who is someone who has spurred you on toward love and good deeds? How does that job align with the purposes of the church?

Day 5. READ HEBREWS 10:25 Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

CONSIDER: What does this verse tell us not to do? What does it tell us to do instead? Is this verse telling us to just "show up" or is there more to church than that?

Day 6.

Reflect on any thoughts God has put in your heart and mind about the things we have looked at in this session and during your devotional time this week. You may also want to write down observations or questions that you'd like to share with the group at your next meeting.