



What the New Testament calls for is intimate connection through deep commitment within a covenant community. One that blesses those inside, blesses those on the outside, puts the world on notice and causes the world to take notice. A people who inspire because they have been inspired.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Ice-Breaker idea:

(1) Watch a portion of the 20 minute video "We Are Church Documentary."  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qheANo68eo&ab\\_channel=LetterstotheChurchbyFrancisChan](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qheANo68eo&ab_channel=LetterstotheChurchbyFrancisChan)

**THE NECESSITY OF CHURCH.** (1) Why do most people think of gathering on Sunday, or membership in a church, to be "optional" for Christians? (2) Look up the word "church" in the New Testament. Notice how many times the word refers to a local gathering, not the universal body of Christ. Why is that important? (ex: **Rom 16:16; 2 Thess 1:4; James 5:14; 3 Jn 1:9; Rev 2-3**). (3) Consider this line from Cyprian (4<sup>th</sup> cen): "He can no longer have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother." Discuss.

**CHURCH IN A CONSUMER CULTURE.** How has our consumer mindset affected church life? Francis Chan says that if we treat church as a place to sit and watch, we have as much spiritual connection to others as we do with strangers at the movies. Discuss.

**DEVOTED TO A PERSON (GOD).** How is church primarily about God? Philip Yancey says "Church exists primarily not to provide entertainment or to encourage vulnerability or to build self-esteem or to facilitate friendships but to worship God; if it fails in that, it fails." Discuss.

**DEVOTED TO A PEOPLE.** What does it mean to "love" one another? Consider all the "one another" passages in the New Testament, then remember that we are called to be devoted to one another in love (Romans 12:10). How can we do this? What does it mean to be devoted to "serving the Lord's people" (1 Cor 16:15)? Follow up: What jobs, hobbies, or interests of yours might be fighting for your devotion? How can we avoid syncretism (mixing our worship between God and idols)?

**DEVOTED TO A PLACE.** Why are we so hyper mobile? How many times have you moved or changed jobs? How is this different than generations before us? What is the value of stability? Consider the story from the sermon about the "Apple Tree Community." How does being rooted in one place for a long time bear fruit in ways no other way can? How can we be more devoted to this place?

**DEVOTED TO A PURPOSE.** Describe a true devotee. How are they inspiring? How can we inspire others by being devoted to what church was always meant to be?