
TURNING A BIBLE STUDY INTO A HOUSE CHURCH

A Bible study is not too far removed from a house church—it’s just missing some components, including the psychological matter of people thinking about the meeting as “church.”

Since the people in a Bible study already gather for the purpose of perusing Scripture, the best transition to a house church model happens through purposeful Bible study about “church.” Simply decide that the next thing the group will study is the concept of “church” in the New Testament.

The following lists of Scriptures and related questions can be divided up however you like, according to your normal schedule and how talkative the people in your group are. You can complete them all in one meeting or spread it over two or three meetings. Feel free to modify them into your regular meeting schedule and routines of prayer, fellowship, etc.

Section 1: What is a Church?

Scriptures to read:

- Matthew 18:20
- John 4:1–2
- Romans 16:3–5
- 1 Corinthians 5:9–13

Questions to ask:

- What is the minimum requirement for a “church” meeting place?
- How many people are necessary before a meeting can be considered a valid church meeting?
- What sort of people are qualified to be part of a biblical church?
- Who is allowed to baptize people?
- Was there anything in our reading that surprised you?

Section 2: Who Leads a Church?

Scriptures to read:

- Ephesians 4:11–16
- 1 Timothy 3:1–7
- Titus 1:5–9
- 1 Peter 5:1–5

Questions to ask:

- Recognizing that “overseers” are called to “be shepherds of God’s flock” (1 Pet. 5:2), and recognizing that the word “pastor” literally means “shepherd”: What sort of person is qualified to be a pastor / shepherd / overseer of a church?
- If we start seeing ourselves as a church, what would be expected of me as an overseer?
- What would be different about my role pastoring this group and the role we most commonly think of as a “pastor” in a big church?
- What things would I need to change or do differently than I already do in order to shepherd our group in a biblical way?
- Was there anything in our reading that surprised you?

Note for Women in Ministry: If the person leading the group is female, it may be necessary to also study together the biblical argumentation for women in ministry. We recommend studying the Assemblies of God position paper on women in ministry, which is available at <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/The-Role-of-Women-in-Ministry>. Additional material is also available in the Roots School of Ministry notes.

Section 3: How Does a Church Meet?

Scriptures to read:

- Acts 2:42–47
- Hebrews 10:24–25
- 1 Corinthians 14:26–33

Questions to ask:

- What is supposed to happen when Christians gather together?
- What specific activities are expected in a biblical church meeting?
- What things *must* happen in order for a church meeting to be healthy and biblical?
- Was there anything in our reading that surprised you?
- Is there any aspect of a biblical church meeting that you’ve never experienced?
- How much of what we already do in our Bible study fits the definition of a church?
- What components would we need to add to our regular meetings in order for this to be a complete, biblical church?
- What things could we do practically to add those things into our meetings?
- If we are a church, what would be biblically expected of you as a participant?

Homework for next week:

- In the light of 1 Corinthians 14:26-33, everyone plan to come next week with something to share. This could be a scripture, a song, something the Lord is teaching you, a question for us to investigate together, a prophetic word, etc.

Following Week: Practicing Biblical Church

Host a house church meeting:

- Open in prayer and ask everyone what they brought for the group.
- Take time to discuss or respond to each person's contribution.
- Share your own brief teaching (try to keep it highly interactive and under 20 minutes).
- See if you can identify any common theme that might exist in what everyone shared. If so, decide together how best to respond to what Jesus is teaching.
- Take communion together.

When finished with the above:

- Ask the group if we qualify as a biblical church yet.
 - If **no**: Ask what components are still missing.
 - Implement them next time and ask again.
 - If **yes**: Welcome to church!
 - What things do you like about this week's meeting?
 - What things do you miss about the way we met previously?
 - Are any of the things you miss incompatible with "church"? Is there a way to add them back into our weekly experience without compromising the nature of this being a "church"?
 - Shall we continue developing as a house church or go back to being a Bible study?

Finish by taking time to pray with and for each other.