

# THE CHURCH

**Devotions For Households**



## **HEY BARNEYS!**

Over this next term, we as a church will be looking at what it means to be just that - a church, and a family of God.

This booklet is designed to encourage every Barneys member to spend time during their week thinking through what it means to be church, by spending time reading God's word, thinking through it, and praying from it.

Each week, the Big Question is the same Big Question that will be addressed in the sermon each Sunday. There are two devotions per Sunday - one looks forward to the Sunday to come, and one looks back on the Sunday that's been. For the first week, there's just one looking back, so start this the week after Sunday 3rd May.

This booklet is designed to be used by everyone in our Barneys family, with questions for young kids, primary aged kids, youth, and adults. You can use whatever questions make sense for the people in your home. You can also use them to start a discussion and add on your own questions from there!

We want every Barneys household to get involved - whether that's just one person, a couple, a few housemates, or a family. Whatever your household make up is, this booklet can be used by you!

We hope and pray that these ten weeks thinking about The Church will be helpful, encouraging, and challenging for us all!

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*For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

**TITUS 2:11-14**

# WHY DO WE HAVE CHURCH?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

This part of the Bible says God made a people who were his very own, like a family. What's another name we use for God's family today?

## **PRIMARY:**

What does it mean that salvation is offered to 'all people'?

## **YOUTH:**

What does the grace of God teach us? How is that evident in your own life?

## **ADULTS:**

All of God's action here is to redeem and purify a people. What are they meant to be characterised by and what are they to do? How do you see Barneys being shaped by these things?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God that he has made us, the church, his very own people - his family. Pray that we would be a family that are eager to do what is good.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

God's plan from the beginning was to make a people of his very own, like a family, and that's the church - God's family.



*As [Saul] neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"*

*"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.*

*"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.*

**ACTS 9:3-5**

(Read the whole story in Acts 9:1-22)

# WHERE IS THE CHURCH?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

Saul was travelling around to find people who believed in Jesus. Where in the world do you know people who believe in Jesus today?

## **PRIMARY:**

Persecuting means to treat someone badly because of who they are or what they believe. If Saul was persecuting people in the church, and Jesus was already in heaven, why did Jesus say Saul was persecuting him?

## **YOUTH:**

If you read the full story, Ananias was afraid of going to Saul to restore his sight because he persecuted Christians. How was Ananias able to go and encourage and look after Saul in the end? Who are the Saul's in your life that you don't want to go encourage and look after?

## **ADULTS:**

Jesus says to Saul, all the believers he has persecuted, are in fact persecution of Him. How do we need to rethink the times when we say, "I am going to church"? Where Jesus is, by His Spirit and His word, is the church; how do you need to review what you do as a member of God's church, if we are united to believers WORLDWIDE?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God that his family is a big family, all around the world. Pray for people who are persecuted today for believing in Jesus.



*[Jesus said:] "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

**MATTHEW 18:20**

# WHERE IS THE CHURCH?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

What places can you think of where Christians meet together that aren't on a Sunday at the Barneys building?

## **PRIMARY:**

If the church is God's family and is wherever Jesus is, what does this verse tell us about where the church is?

## **YOUTH:**

Why is it important that when Christians meet, God is there too?

## **ADULTS:**

When you spend time with a few of your Christian friends over a glass of wine, is that church? Is Jesus there? What constitutes church and what doesn't? Why do you answer how you do? How do these verses challenge that?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God that he is always with us when we meet, even in a small group. Pray that we would remember that when we come together with others.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

The church isn't a place, it's a people - wherever God's family meet together all around the world is where the church is!



*And [Jesus] took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

*In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."*

**LUKE 22:19-20**

(Read the whole story: Luke 22:7-23)

## HOW DOES THE CHURCH REMEMBER?

### **YOUNG KIDS:**

Does this meal Jesus is having with his friends remind you of anything we do in a church service?

### **PRIMARY:**

What is Jesus telling his friends to remember here?

### **YOUTH:**

Read Exodus 12:17-28. What was the passover meal about? What are the similarities and differences between the passover meal and the Lord's supper?

### **ADULTS:**

Jesus has abolished the old covenant and established the new in himself; why is this a significant claim and how does it liberate us, today?

### **PRAYER:**

Thank God for the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. Pray that we would keep remembering what that means for us.



*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26**

# HOW DOES THE CHURCH REMEMBER?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

This was written a long time ago. Why do you think we still do this together on Sundays?

## **PRIMARY:**

Why do we have bread at communion? Why do we have a cup of wine (juice)?

## **YOUTH:**

What does it mean to proclaim the Lord's death until he returns and how is this done through communion?

## **ADULTS:**

Jesus restyles the Passover, we remember Him, instead of remembering that God had saved Israel. In what moments do you personally need to remember this? How do you think, as Barneys, we need to be more clear on this?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God that we can remember together as God's family what Jesus did to save us. Pray for Christians around the world where it's difficult to meet and remember these great things together.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

We remember Jesus and what he did to save us by reminding each other when we meet together with our words and actions.



*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

**ACTS 2:42-47**

# WHAT SHOULD CHURCH LOOK LIKE?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

This group of people do many things together. What are some of the things they did together?

## **PRIMARY:**

How are these things different to activities we do with our friends or at school?

## **YOUTH:**

What's the motivation for these activities? Why should that motivate us to do these kinds of activities?

## **ADULTS:**

Do you think this is descriptive or prescriptive? (i.e. does it describe what a particular thing looked like at that time, or, is it prescribing how something should look at all times?) What other New Testament passages would you go to to help your thinking about this?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God for the early church and the example they are. Pray that we would be people who show our faith with what we do.



*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.*

*Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.*

*Know that the Lord is God.*

*It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

**PSALM 100:1-3**

# WHAT SHOULD CHURCH LOOK LIKE?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

This is a song focusing on praising God with joy for He is with us and is really good to us. What are some things we can do when someone is good to us?

## **PRIMARY:**

What are some things we should do as a church to express how we feel towards God?

## **YOUTH:**

Worship is activities that remind us that Christ is Lord and God. How can you remind yourself and others around you that the Lord is God and so worship Him?

## **ADULTS:**

Psalms 100 starts with a series of instructions; shout, worship and know. How do our gatherings cultivate these things in your heart and life?

## **PRAYER:**

Praise God for who he is! (You might want to write a list of words describing God to pray through). Thank God for his creation, for making us, and for claiming us as his own.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

The church is a group of people worshipping God together, with God there with them.



*You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*

**2 TIMOTHY 2:1-2**

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

**2 TIMOTHY 2:15**

# WHAT SHOULD A CHURCH BELIEVE?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

Timothy worked at a church, and Paul tells him he needs to remember to teach God's grace. Grace is like a gift or present from God. What is one of the best presents you've ever got? What present did God give us?

## **PRIMARY:**

What does it mean to 'be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus' and to 'correctly handle the word of truth'? How can our church do this?

## **YOUTH:**

Paul says "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved", which could sound like we are saved by works, when we know we're saved by grace (as Paul said earlier in the section!). What is Paul saying here about the relationship between grace and works?

## **ADULTS:**

'An unashamed worker' can strike up an image of a fearless and bold evangelist, who takes every opportunity to speak of Jesus. Is that what we are called to? Is that what 'strong in grace' evokes for you also? How does holding these things in tension help us to understand ourselves personally and as a community?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God for the grace and truth we can know as Christians. Pray for church leaders - that they would hold on to these things always.



*Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.*

*Here is a trustworthy saying:*

*If we died with him,*

*we will also live with him;*

*If we endure,*

*we will also reign with him.*

*If we disown him,*

*he will also disown us;*

*If we are faithless,*

*he remains faithful,*

*for he cannot disown himself.*

*Keep reminding God's people of these things.*

# WHAT SHOULD A CHURCH BELIEVE?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

In the very first sentence, what does this say we should remember? Jesus rising from the dead shows us that he is the King and Saviour!

## **PRIMARY:**

What things does Paul tell Timothy to remind the people of? You might need to write a list!

## **YOUTH:**

Remember Jesus Christ. What activities remind you of the gospel? What are some things you can create or place around your house to remind you of the gospel?

## **ADULTS:**

Remember Jesus. Keep reminding God's people of these things. At what moments do you need to remember these things the most?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God for Jesus, his death and resurrection. Pray that we would remember Jesus.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

The church should believe in God's grace to us in Jesus Christ and the truth taught in the Bible.



*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction.*

**2 TIMOTHY 3:16-4:2**

# THERE'S LOTS OF CHURCHES, HOW DO I KNOW WHERE TO GO?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

'Scripture' and 'the word' are other names for the Bible. What does this say churches need to be doing with the Bible? (You may need to first work out together what some of the big words in this passage mean!)

## **PRIMARY:**

What does it look like for Christians to correct, rebuke, and encourage each other? (You may need to look up definitions for each of these first!)

## **YOUTH:**

What does this say about scripture, and what place does scripture have in our personal lives and in the life of the church? Why?

## **ADULTS:**

You walk into a new church for the first time. How might you determine whether it is a good church to go to? What would you look for and how do you quantify it? Is it just sermons from the bible? What does the culture look and feel like?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God for his word, the Bible. Ask God that at Barneys we will always teach the Bible and be people who correct, rebuke, and encourage each other.



*Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

**2 TIMOTHY 4:2-4**

# THERE'S LOTS OF CHURCHES, HOW DO I KNOW WHERE TO GO?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

'Preach the word' means to teach things that are in the Bible. What are some of the stories and true things you know we can find in the Bible? (You might like to look some up in the Bible together!)

## **PRIMARY:**

Our church leaders need to be 'preaching the word', not 'turning aside to myths'. How do we know if our church leaders are preaching the word?

## **YOUTH:**

What is the gospel and why is it important that it is the core of our teaching? What does gospel centred teaching look like?

## **ADULTS:**

When you think or say, "That was a really great sermon!", what are you thinking about? (Clarity, brevity, complexity, stories, exciting, etc?) What are the things that you value when it comes to teaching? (Tip: be critical of your own heart here!)

## **PRAYER:**

Pray for church leaders, that they will always preach the word. Pray that we as a church would hold fast to the truth and not turn away to myths.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

A church needs to teach what's in the Bible about God's loving salvation story for the whole world, and show God's love to others.



*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-6**

# HOW DO CHURCHES LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND OTHER PEOPLE?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

Together, write down the words (and draw pictures!) that explain what love looks like. Make it into a poster to hang up in your house!

## **PRIMARY:**

People often read this bit of the Bible at weddings, but Paul is actually writing about loving others in God's family and in the world. Choose three ways love is described and talk about how you could show love like this at home, school, or in your community.

## **YOUTH:**

From this list, what comes easily? What is hard? Why? How can you work on those you are not so good at, and why do you think it's important to do so?

## **ADULTS:**

It's difficult not to tune out a bit when we read this list. Pick a few of these descriptions of love, and reflect on how you personally do with them, and then furthermore how our church does as a family. Are there any things we need to repent of? Are there any things you are very thankful for?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank and praise God for his great love! Pray that we would be a church family that love one another and others.



*[Jesus said] “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”*

**JOHN 13:14-15**

(Read the whole story: John 13:1-17)

# HOW DO CHURCHES LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND OTHER PEOPLE?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

Jesus tells us to follow his example of serving others to love them. 'Serving' is a bit like helping. How can you help at home this week to show people you love them?

## **PRIMARY:**

Jesus washed his disciples feet as a way to love them by serving them. We don't really wash our feet like this these days, but what are some other ways we can serve others as a way of showing them love?

## **YOUTH:**

Jesus humbled himself by serving his disciples in this way. In what areas do you need to humble yourself to serve others?

## **ADULTS:**

John 13:1 says, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. This is how we are loved, how does that make you feel? This is also the kind of love we are called to have for all people, how does this make you feel?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God for the example of love and service he gave us. Pray that we would be humble in service to others.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

The church loves and serves each other and other people by helping them, caring for them, and doing what needs doing.



*Sing to the Lord a new song;  
sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
Sing to the Lord, praise his name;  
proclaim his salvation day after day.  
Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvellous deeds among all peoples.*

**PSALM 96:1-3**

## WHAT MUST A CHURCH DO?

### **YOUNG KIDS:**

What does this passage say we should be doing? Think of a song you could sing to praise God and sing it together now!

### **PRIMARY:**

What does it mean to 'declare God's glory' and 'his marvellous deeds'? How can you do that today?

### **YOUTH:**

Proclaiming his salvation day after day can get tiresome. Why should we proclaim this day after day? What helps us to do this?

### **ADULTS:**

Do you consider 'proclaiming his salvation' to our world a joy or a burden? What are you thinking of when you give your answer? Do you think this psalmist is simplifying how we should feel about being God's people here?

### **PRAYER:**

Praise God for his salvation and for all that he has done - in your life and in the world. Spend time praising and thanking God.



*Then Jesus came to [the disciples] and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

**MATTHEW 28:18-20**

# WHAT MUST A CHURCH DO?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

Work out together what it means to 'make disciples of all nations'. How can you tell your friends about Jesus?

## **PRIMARY:**

The church are Jesus' disciples now, so what does this mean the church should be doing? What can you do at school or in your community to 'make disciples of all nations'?

## **YOUTH:**

What is intimidating about being told to make disciples of all nations? Why? Where in this passage can we draw comfort?

## **ADULTS:**

Jesus begins the great commission by reminding his disciples that he has all authority on heaven and earth. If they, and we, were convinced of this, how do you think it might inform how we hear the rest of these verses and act in response?

## **PRAYER:**

Write a list of 3 people who don't know Jesus in your life. Ask God to be at work in them and to give you opportunities and confidence to talk to them.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

The church should praise and worship God, and tell others about him and his salvation!



*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

**EPHESIANS 4:11-13**

# HOW DOES A CHURCH GROW?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

This is talking about Jesus giving people different things they are good at to serve God's people. What are some different jobs and ways of helping you've seen people doing at church?

## **PRIMARY:**

The church is often called 'the body of Christ'. What do you think this means? Why is the church called it?

## **YOUTH:**

What are we being built up to? Why are these important? What are some concrete ways this happens?

## **ADULTS:**

What do you think unity in the faith looks like for the church? What about 'attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ'?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God for the body of Christ and for different people being given different gifts. Pray that we at Barneys would be a community that builds each other up into maturity.



*Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

**EPHESIANS 4:15-16**

# HOW DOES A CHURCH GROW?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

This is talking about the church being like a body, where every different bone and muscle has a different job to do. Every person in the church has a job to do to help the church grow and love others. What could your job be?

## **PRIMARY:**

What does it mean to speak the truth in love? What about building the church up in love?

## **YOUTH:**

What does it mean to have Christ as the head of the body? How do live in a way that shows that Christ is the head?

## **ADULTS:**

Mature in Jesus. Can you think of people, interactions or moments that you might describe like this? Where do you think Barneys is the most like Jesus as a community? Where do you think we have the most room to grow? How do you, either positively or negatively, contribute to these things?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank God for the church and the different people in the church. Pray for different people in the different roles they play at church. Pray that all of us would grow and build each other up in love.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

The church grows by every person playing a part in the body of Christ, to grow it in maturity together in love.



*Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

**REVELATION 21:1-5**

# WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE CHURCH IN THE FUTURE?

## **YOUNG KIDS:**

A 'dwelling place' is where someone lives. Where does this say God will live? How does it feel to know God will live with his people in heaven?

## **PRIMARY:**

This tells us about some of what heaven will be like. What stands out to you from how it's described? Does anything here make you excited?

## **YOUTH:**

How are the people of God described here? What illustration tells us about the relationship between God and His people?

## **ADULTS:**

This is a moving and rousing passage; this is our future and our hope! How do you rest in this personally? What parts of your life do you need to review in light of this picture?

## **PRAYER:**

Thank and praise God for his plan for the world. Thank God that the church will join with him as a big family in heaven. Ask God that you would rest in this.

## **THE BIG ANSWER:**

God's family - the church - will join together with God in heaven!

**NOTES:**



