

2

GRACE COMMITMENTS 4

4

The Local Church, Part 4: An Equipping Station for Kingdom People

ASSIGNMENTS

- Check JG member's progress on **21 Day Personal Worship**. Celebrate small victories and progress.
- **EQUIPPING** – Continue memorizing the books of the New Testament. Review the illustration and the "right column" (Non-Pauline Letters).
- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to begin the Mission section early in the week. Their assignment this week is to go on a prayer walk and journal about the experience.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week and discuss how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- Any remaining JG members should recite the books of the New Testament for this meeting.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – The focus this week is on calling your JG to a grace-motivated commitment to their biblical roles and responsibilities in the ministry of your local church. Leaders (staff/elders) should be committed to being leader-equippers. Members should be committed to being ministers (i.e. those who meet needs through service), and attenders should be challenged to become member-ministers. You might open the discussion with a challenging question about who should be responsible in a local church to care for the grieving when a loved one dies, or win the lost through personal evangelism. You may choose to discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions, but don't feel that you must cover each one. Here are some tips that will help you:
 - **EPHESIANS 4:11-16** – This passage clearly delineates the main responsibility of spiritual leaders to *equip*. The original Greek word used here means *to come alongside, to guide*. And contrary to the traditional view of ministry, the *saints* (i.e. the laity) are responsible to do the work of ministry. God's purposes in this is to build up a body of believers that is like Christ in every way – in truth,

in love, in spiritual maturity and unity. For this material you needn't get into a discussion of the various leadership roles Paul mentions. But, do be aware that the roles of *shepherds* (some translations read *pastors*) and *teachers* may be best understood in combination as one role – *pastor-teacher*.

- **HEBREWS 13:17-21** – This passage mirrors Ephesians 4 except that God is pictured here as the master-equipper. The agent of His equipping work is Jesus as you can tell by the phrase “...through Jesus Christ” in verse 21. So then, the power of God to equip His people for ministry is made available through Christ, and manifest in the equipping activities of God-ordained leadership in local congregations. Note that the focus of God’s equipping work in this passage is the glory of Christ, whereas the focus in Ephesians 4 is the spiritual growth of the local church.

- **TRUTH** – The focus this week is on making a grace-motivated commitment to one’s role in the local church. Here are some primary discussion points from Unit 4:
 - Review that the local church is endowed with God’s authority to be the doorway of the kingdom, and is intended to function as a safe home away from home for His people, and as a mission to non-kingdom people.
 - In order to function as a safe home and effective mission, a lot of ministry must get done. Ministry is simply service that meets a need.
 - The biblical model for how ministry gets done (in order for a church to become a safe home and effective mission) is the leader-equipper, member-minister model.
 - Members are the primary ministers in a church, not the spiritual leadership.
 - Spiritual leaders are the primary vision setters, goal setters, and equippers.

- **EQUIPPING** – Use the self-evaluation chart to help launch a discussion of attitudes toward membership, ministry and equipping. The goal of this discussion should be to help your JG members think about where they are, and where they should be in terms of their commitment to the biblical model for ministry.

- **MISSION** – Discuss the prayer walking experience. Ask one of two people to share what they wrote about the experience.