

# What is the Church

## The Departure

### Big Idea:

God desires faith in his people. The journey back to faithfulness is not quick. Growth and maturity require dedication and humility.

### Thought Exercise:

- What would you expect the church to look like if all you had to go on was the New Testament?
- Compare those expectations with your experience. What is consistent? What is different? Are there some of the differences that we should address further?

### Items for discussion:

#### Motivation

- Self-examination and introspection are not healthy exercises when the motivation is hurt. So let's first talk about how we deal with hurt in the church. Matthew 18 lays out a great pattern for dealing with our hurts.
- In 1 Samuel 24 and 26, David has an opportunity to remove King Saul. David's mindset in 1 Samuel 24:6. What motivates a critical mindset? What causes the pattern of thinking? What are some ways in which we can work against critical behavior?

#### Worship

- What is the purpose of our worship?
- How seriously do we take worship? Read Malachi 1:6-14. What are some of the attitudes here that God found displeasing?
- How much we give of ourselves reflects how we view God. How much does worship govern our lives as a whole as opposed to simply being all about showing up on Sunday? What are some weaknesses in our times of worship? How can we address these in a way that motivates those around us to move closer to God's design?

#### Reflection

- The temptation when confronted with something we don't want to do is to reframe the reality or the request. God asks for complete devotion, yet we are often unwilling to devote ourselves completely. What are some of the ways we justify this conflict?
- Examination often creates a sense of defensiveness and protection over the things we have come to know and expect. Confronting those emotions and asking the question of why we feel a certain way is important. We must be willing to be open to whatever the Spirit will lead us through.
- Read Revelation 3:19-21. Jesus stands and knocks on the door of the church that has a lot of issues. What are some responses people might have if Jesus came knocking on our door?

Live in the light of eternity that is coming very soon. We live with a hope and a vision for what the church on earth can be, but we also live with a very real sense of urgency.