

# TAKEAWAY

## Look Up, Look Out

### Part Two: Committing to the Family

#### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- To see that we have an unchangeable spiritual identity as God's family
- To be encouraged to be family to one another in practice.

#### SHARE

- Who is your favourite fictional family and why?
- Have you experienced church as *family*? In what ways?
- Have you ever found church to be *dissatisfying* as a family? In what ways?

#### INTRODUCTION

In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul shares that because followers of Jesus are now connected to the Father, through what he did on the cross, we are also inextricably connected with each other. This passage gives a vision for what church should look like – and it looks and functions more like a family than simply a building that Christians go to once a week.

#### READ Ephesians 2:18-22

#### DISCUSS

What stands out to you in this passage? How would you express the truths of this passage in your own words? What does God say about us? What does it say about Him?

Paul shares a vision for how the church should look and be using a few images and terms common at the time. What do they teach us about how Christians are supposed to function together and relate to others?

Jews used to be able to meet God in the Temple at Jerusalem. Gentiles (non Jews) were excluded. Where does God now dwell (verse 21-22)? What does this have to say about God's family and our attitude to outsiders?

What do you think Jesus intended committing to a local church (ie, a gathered expression of God's people) to look like?

#### QUOTE

In his book, *Letters to the church*, Francis Chan writes: *'We live in a time when people go to a building on Sunday mornings, attend an hour-long service, and call themselves members of the Church. Does that sound shocking to you? Of course not. This is perfectly normal. It's what we grew up with. We all know good Christians go to church. But have you ever read the New Testament? Do you find anything in Scripture that is even remotely close to the pattern we have created? Do you find anyone who "went" to church?'*

#### EXPLAIN

Paul uses imagery and terms that were common to political life in ancient cities like Ephesus. Strangers and Foreigners had no rights and limited privileges under Roman rule, only citizens had full protections and rights in the city.

The concept of the household would include more than just the physical structure of a home; it includes the family members and all who dwell within it, often extending to servants, guests and extended family members.

The temple in Jerusalem was where God's presence dwelt. Within the grounds, there was a stone wall and on it a notice forbidding any non-Jew to enter – the penalty was death. A Gentile could not even go into the house of a Jew or eat with him. Access to God was limited to Jews.

How does this change your attitude and view of church?

What obstacles get in the way of committing to God's people, and how can they be overcome?

If people at Maybridge lived like the family God calls us to be, what do you think that would look like? Is there anything we'd need to do differently? How about you personally?

What can the group actively do to address some of the things discussed over the next few weeks?

### **TRY OUT**

*Ask the group how they might live out what you've learned and discussed. Here are a few ideas:*

- Who, in your orbit, could you care for as a family member this week? (Even in something small). Commit to do it this week. Check in with the group next week to see how you're getting on.

### **PRAY**