

## Session 4: Going to Church and Learning to Tend

### PREP

**Big Idea:** Gathering consistently, forgivingly and patiently with our questions in the body of Christ provides the fertile soil for our faith to grow and Christ to be experienced and loved.

**Group Goal:** Help your group reimagine the power of gathering faithfully as a church for experiencing Christ and loving him well.

**Facilitator Goal:** Select the four questions that will best help your community accomplish the group goal above. You may use the following questions or come up with your own questions. Watch the clock and give adequate time to discuss these, filling in extra time with additional questions.

### LESSON

#### Lesson Questions

#### CHAPTER 5

1. Have you ever considered yourself to be a healing agent in the church when the church is struggling or experiencing some area of brokenness? What would it look like to be a positive agent for change?
2. If we go to church to get “something out of it” are we in danger of conflating a consumerist culture with following Jesus (p. 79 paperback; p. 105 ebook)? Explain.
3. The author writes, “In her book *Almost Christian*, Kenda Creasy Dean identifies two factors that help someone remain a lifelong follower of Christ. First, their parents have walked through their own faith challenges and remained faithful to God through those difficulties. And second, the child has no less than five adult Christians in their life who love them, care, and instill a commitment to Jesus into them” (p. 84

paperback; p. 110 ebook). What will it cost parents and church members to build this kind of honest, community approach to church?

4. Explain the problem with some of the metaphors we have used for church such as “plug into a church,” “the church is a hospital” or “You don’t go to church; you are the church.”
5. Explain these metaphors Scripture uses for the church: “mystery” (Eph. 3:3-6) and “bride of Christ” (Eph 5:25-27). What kind of thoughts, feelings and emotions does this invoke in you?
6. What is something you’d like to be able to forgive the church for?

## CHAPTER 7

7. Salman Rushdie once wrote that “meaning is a shaky edifice we build out of scraps of dogma, childhood injuries, newspaper articles, chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved; perhaps it is because our sense of what is the case is constructed from such inadequate materials that we defend it so fiercely, even to the death”(p. 111 paperback; p. 142 ebook). How can such a hodgepodge of experiences contribute to an inadequate or shaky faith?
8. Proverbs 25:2 says, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.” What might this suggest about the kind of people God wants us to be?
9. Have you ever come to a point in your life after some personal growth or revelation that you were able to handle a truth you would have been too immature to handle before?
10. The author’s son once begged him to take off his shoes. “When your shoes are off, you’ve got somewhere else to be.” he said to him. The author reflected on the moment, saying, “It isn’t merely that we’re distracted. It’s that we privilege everywhere else over right here” (p. 124 paperback; p. 156 ebook). What are some ways we can practice for the presence of God?

## TL;DR

1. What is something you underlined and why?
2. What is an area you feel like you want to grow in?
3. What's a perspective you want to change?

## **Conclusion**

Ask your group members to **read** chapters **8 and 9** before your next meeting.

## **Pray**