

What is church?

Hebrews 10.19-25

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”

Hebrews 10.19-25 (NLT)

Questions:

1. How do *you* define ‘church’? What makes something church? What elements do you need for something to become church?
2. What does entering ‘heaven’s Most holy Place’ look like for you during the week? Do you find it difficult to do? How do you spend time in God’s Presence? Why is it important for the writer to tell us that ‘*our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean*’ when thinking about coming into God’s Presence *boldly*?
3. We are church together. For the writer of Hebrew one of the key parts of our ‘togetherness’ is holding tightly to hope. Are you hopeful? How might the church increase your hope?
4. What motivates you to do difficult things? How, practically, can you ‘*motivate one another to acts of love and good works*’? How could you do this on Sunday mornings, and during the week?
5. Do you ever ‘neglect meeting together’? Why might this be a concern for the writer of Hebrews? What are the benefits of meeting together as God’s people?
6. Church can be described as Plugging in (coming to Sunday gatherings), Charging up (encouraging one another during the week), Living out (getting involved) and Passing it on (sharing the love!). Which of these are easy for you, and which are hard? Why might that be?
7. There are three exhortations here - ‘let us go right into the presence of God’, ‘let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm’ and ‘let us think of ways to motivate one another’. How do we do this at Springfield? What could we do better as a church?
8. Does church feel like something you *get* to be or something you *have* to do?