

CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Revelation Readiness.
Preparing today for an uncertain tomorrow.

Is the Church ready?

The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are

the seven spirits[a] before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful



Encourage the group to take turns reading and answering questions. It is best to ask the questions as they appear instead of waiting till the end

TOPIC : Is the Church ready?

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TIME TO PONDER:

Last week we learnt that Jesus is ready for the end times. The question today is: Is the church ready for all that could come?

When reading through Revelation 2 & 3. We read about seven churches. Some believe the seven churches represent different ages

through church history. Others believe the letters were only meant for those specific churches and the problems they faced.

Another explanation is that the number seven in the Bible represents completeness and wholeness and as such the seven churches could represent the full scope of different churches and issues any church could be facing at any time.

There is a pattern to the way Jesus addresses the seven churches:

First Jesus reveals himself to the church. The revelation of who Jesus is holds the key to breakthrough for the churches.

Then there is approval for what the church has done right.

Then there is the accusation, where the church has fallen short and a calling for repentance.

Then there is advice, a promise and assurance if corrective action is taken.

Jesus knew the church was going to go through a period of persecution and wanted to prepare and equip the church for that persecution.

We can simplify and summarise the corrective actions Jesus gave the churches into seven pillars which are crucial for a church to be ready to face an uncertain future and come through victorious.

- A church that is ready is **passionate** about Jesus.
- A church that is ready has saints who know how to **persevere**.
- A church that is ready safeguards the **purity** of the Gospel.
- A church that is ready is a church that **prioritises** the Kingdom of God.

Question 1: If you were to personalise the challenge to the churches which one describes where you are currently at?

TIME TO REFLECT:

To better understand the letter, let's take the first letter to the Ephesians as an example of **PASSION for Jesus:**

Revelation 2:1-7

*“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:
These are the words of him who holds the
seven stars in his right hand and walks among
the seven golden lampstands. I know your
deeds, your hard work and your
perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate
wicked people, that you have tested those
who claim to be apostles but are not, and
have found them false. You have persevered
and have endured hardships for my name,
and have not grown weary.*

*Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken
the love you had at first. Consider how far you
have fallen! Repent and do the things you did
at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you
and remove your lampstand from its place.
But you have this in your favour: You hate the
practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God

This church was powering for God. Working hard for the Kingdom of God. An authentic church. Persevering hardship. **Acts 19:18-20**

They were a radical church, but they had lost their passion for Jesus. They had shifted from loving the Lord of the work to the work of the Lord.

Mark 12:28-31

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Our love for Jesus must be more important than our work for the Lord. Or we too will be led astray into insignificance.

Romans 12:11

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.

The second pillar is a call to always PERSEVERE in our faith. Then we will see the victory. The perseverance will be through persecution and the testing of our faith, but if we are pursuing Jesus we will triumph in the end.

Revelation 2:10

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.

Perseverance is critical to following Jesus.

We need to believe in the word of God unswervingly. God is faithful. He will come through for us.

James 1:2-4

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,
whenever you face trials of many kinds,
because you know that the testing of your
faith produces perseverance. Let
perseverance finish its work so that you may
be mature and complete, not lacking
anything.*

Revelation 12:11

*They triumphed over him by the blood of the
Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they
did not love their lives so much as to shrink
from death.*

We need to learn not to be afraid of suffering. But assured that God is with us. Our strength is in Him.

Question 2: How fully persuaded are you that God is with you? That He will never leave you nor forsake you no matter how difficult things get.

TIME TO DISCUSS:

The next pillar is the need to keep the PURITY to the Gospel we believe.

Revelation 2:14-16 and 20-23

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate

food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Any 'gospel' that waters down sin to be politically correct or popular, or is focused more on man's glory than God's glory, or on money more than Jesus is a false gospel!

The best solution is to make sure we are so used to handling the truth that the counterfeit is obvious.

1 Tim 1:3-4

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false

doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith.

Steer clear of false doctrines that can cause you to go astray.

The last pillar is to be a church that PRIORITISES the Kingdom of God.

Revelation 3:15-17

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am

rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Question 3: Are you pursuing your own desires, flesh and wealth or are you focused on purity and extending the Kingdom of God?

ACTION STEP

Let's make it personal:

1. Do you have a PASSION for Jesus and love Him more now than ever before?
2. Are you drawing strength and courage to PERSEVERE even when things get tough?
3. Are you pursuing the PURITY of the whole Word of God? And making changes so your life lines up to the Gospel.
4. Are you PRIORITISING the Kingdom of God in all your decisions and lifestyle?

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