

## **Sermon Discussion Guide** **August 19, 2007**

**Sermon Title: Fulfilling Christ's Purpose for Fellowship Church**

**Biblical Text: 1 Peter 2:4-12**

**Big Idea:** We cannot understate the significance of what it means to be Christ's Church in this world, nor can we overstate the aversion the world has to the true work of the Church.

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**Approach:** *getting your learners interested/immersed in the topic*

1. Think for a minute about your "dream house". If you were building it today, what would it look like, where would it be located, and what main purpose would it serve for you and your family?
2. Do you ever sometimes wonder about the role church plays in a society that is growing secular? In your opinion, what purposes do the church serve most visibly in your community?

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**Life Exploration:** *helping your learners relate the topic to their lives*

1. How well can you articulate what you feel is God's purpose for your life?
2. How much are you motivated by the work of the church and your potential role in it?
3. How do you typically respond to calls for your involvement at church?

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**Bible Exploration:** *helping your learners build a bridge from their lives to the Scriptures*

1. Two words are repeated in v. 4 and again in v. 6 that indicate how God feels about the corner stone of Christ and the living stones of the church. What are they? What do they imply?
2. Four perspectives are given in v. 9 on the identity of the church: a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people belonging to God. What do each of these mean?
3. How do you feel about such lofty language describing you and something you are a part of?
4. In what ways have these lofty images been tarnished throughout church history? How might they be tarnished today?

5. Notice the vital importance of receiving one particular thing (v. 10) that serves to authenticate our standing as the people of God. What is that? Why is it the authenticating thing?
6. In v. 9 the reason for the church is given as follows: "...that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light..." (ESV). What does this mean to you? How might you be able to "proclaim the excellencies of Him..."?
7. What main reason is given (v. 8) for why some people encounter a stumbling stone instead of a corner stone?
8. How are we instructed to sustain life in the living stone? (v. 11 & 12)
9. Peter's exhortation in v. 11-12 says to "abstain from the passions of the flesh" and to "keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable" – a "don't do" and a "do". Why do you think God wanted to express both as necessary? What might happen if only one part of this was followed through on without the other?

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**Heart Exploration:** *helping your learners build a bridge from the Scriptures to their hearts*

1. How do you see yourself as a believer? As a part of the 'spiritual house' of God?
2. How do you accept or deny the reality of our alien identity in Christ compared to that in the world? What does that mean to you? How do you respond to that reality?
3. What has happened in your heart from those times when God has drawn you from darkness into light? What role did the church play in your life during these times?
4. Is it possible for you or the church to live in the purposes of God without living within the identity He has bestowed upon us? How might you be guilty of doing just that?
5. What do you feel God must do in your life to secure your sense of identity in Him and purpose in the church and the world?

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**Conclusion and Decision:** *helping your learners integrate the Scriptures into their lives this week*

1. What is your main take away from this study about authentic purpose of Christ's church?
2. What do you sense God saying to you as a result of this study regarding the purpose of Fellowship Church and your place in it?