



Organizations not deemed “essential” were forced to close during the pandemic. Most churches rightly decided to suspend their public gatherings as a way to love their neighbors. Many Christians grew accustomed to not meeting regularly with other believers, and perhaps started wondering, “Is my involvement in a church that necessary?” Essential Church is an attempt to answer that question.

**These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.**

**1** Rick began by pointing out that “Christians who gather more consistently seem to scatter more intentionally.” How have you seen that to be true from your experience? Follow up: What is one thing that has resonated with you the most from this series?

**2 THE CHURCH’S MISSION... People need the gospel...** *The gospel is not just good news; it is essential news.* **Read Mark 16:15 and Luke 19:10.** How would your life change if you kept the intent of these verses in front of you every day? Who is someone you know that needs the gospel? Pray for your “Ones” as a group.

**3 THE CHURCH’S MISSION... And the gospel needs a people.** *You may not think you need the church, but Jesus does.* What are some examples of how we as a church have stayed on mission to best be used by God? What are some ways that churches can drift off mission? Follow up: What is one thing you can do to step more into that mission right now?

**4 Read Acts 11:19-26 and 13:1-3.** What things were happening in and through the church in Antioch (some of the “firsts” about this church)? Follow up: If our church were to reflect the spirit of the church in Antioch, what would that look like? What is one thing that might need to change in order for you or our church to be more obedient in these areas?

**5 A CHURCH ON MISSION... preaches a gospel that can save anyone.** *The Christians in Antioch believed people needed Jesus.* **Read Acts 11:21, 24 and 14:11.** How does their example encourage and/or convict you? Follow up: *Church is at her best when she believes the gospel can save the worst.* **Read 1 Timothy 1:15-16.** What’s significant about how Paul describes himself? How does that encourage you to stay on mission?

**6 A CHURCH ON MISSION... practices a gospel that can reconcile everyone.** *A gospel that only makes people right with God is incomplete.* **Read Acts 11:20.** Why was Luke’s description here so critical and radical for them and for us today? Follow up: **Read Ephesians 2:14-16.** What stands out to you the most from these verses? How should it impact our mission as a church (what walls still need to come down in our community)?

**7** Rick closed by reminding us that “It’s not about drawing crowds; it’s about advancing the kingdom. So, we commit to this rhythm of gathering and scattering. And when we get grace in here, we get God out there.” Why is this rhythm so essential? How have you experienced this to be true in your faith journey? Spend some time praying about our mission as a church.

