



# pursuing the presence of **GOD**

## **GOD'S DWELLING PLACE ON EARTH**

**Main text:** Eph. 2:19-22; Matt. 18:20

**Supporting texts:** 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 John 4:12

This weekend, Pastor Jonathan spoke about how God still dwells in a temple, but a different kind of temple than the days of old. Now the temple is us in 3 ways: us as individuals (1 Cor. 6:19–20), us as a local church (1 Cor. 3:16), and us as the church universal all over the world (Eph. 2:19-22). Jesus says that when his followers gather, he is there with us (Matt. 18:20). This presents a rich picture of the presence of God dwelling in our individual and communal selves. It's interesting that several of the texts about God's presence in community show up in contexts of community conflict (Matt. 18:20 & Eph 2:19-20).

### **Questions:**

- When the scriptures describe the dwelling of God as being in us as individuals and collectively together as the church, what are some implications for our spiritual lives?
- Do you experience God's presence more in your private, individual self or in the communal relationships of the church?
- In the book *Life Together*, German pastor, author, and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer says: "Let him who cannot be alone beware of community... let him who is not in community beware of being alone." Talk about the paradox of this statement and why we need both parts of aloneness and togetherness.
- When Jesus says the famous statement: "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them", the context of that statement is a discussion of conflict, sin, and forgiveness in the church. Read the larger passage of Matthew 18:15-35. Why do you think Jesus chose that moment to talk about his presence with us when 2 or 3 are gathered?
- Jonathan ended with the analogy of nosocomial infections, which are infections that you get at the hospital, the place you went to for healing. The church can be like this where we end up harmed by the very place we went to for healing. But just as we shouldn't reject medical science and hospitals because of nosocomial infections, so we should not reject the church because of the harm done by people in the church. How can we better rely on God's presence to help and heal us in the midst of a broken church?