

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better.*

Read I Peter 2:4-12 aloud. You might make sure there is a rock somewhere in the room to point to as an illustration.

How do you explain all the references to rocks in this passage?
v. 6 quotes Isaiah 28:16, a warning to the Israelites that God was about to level their houses of lies and build a new house of faith.
v. 7 quotes Psalm 118:22, a passage that talks about how great it is when God re-builds his house.
v. 8 quotes Isaiah 8:14, which says that both houses of Israel will stumble when they face a holy God.

So how is Jesus like the rocks described in the Old Testament?
See verse 4.

How do Christians relate to Jesus the rock? *See verse 5.*

Our lives are a sign that God reigns

What kind of transformation is taking place in our lives, according to this passage? *See verses 5, 9, & 11*

What do these changes show non-Christians about the reign of God in our lives?

At a practical level, how can people tell that God is our king?

When have you seen someone's life demonstrate that God is in control?

How well does your life proclaim that God reigns? What would increase or improve your testimony?

Our lives are agents and instruments of God's reign

What are some ways that our lives are tools for God's reign, according to this reading? What are we doing to support his reign?
5 – We are his priests
9 – we declare his praises
12 – our good deeds cause others to praise God

Who is the builder of God's house? What is our role in building?
I Peter sounds like we are the raw materials. We are only rocks who make ourselves available for the builder to use at his pleasure.

If God is the builder and we are the stones, why should we invest our time and energy in "church work"? Why is our service needed?

Sometimes we refer to serving God as "building his kingdom." How would it change things if we viewed God's kingdom as a movement we join rather than something we build? How would our attitude be different if we viewed faith as a movement that takes hold of us rather than something we construct?

What is one way you are serving God that is a positive contribution to the kingdom?

Our lives are a foretaste of God's reign

How is the work of God still incomplete in us, according to I Peter?
5 – we are still under construction
12 – friends are not yet glorifying God

What are some ways that our lives show how wonderful it is to honor God as king? *See verse 9-10.*

What are some blessings you enjoy because of Christ? If God were not king of your life, how would you be poorer?

How would your life be different if most of the people around you put God first in all things?

Honoring our king

When can you see God reigning in the world or in your life?

When are some times that it is difficult to tell that God is in charge?

What keeps people from recognizing God's work in the world?

What helps people recognize God's work in the world?
Read John 13:35.

III. Other resources

The point – God is reigning, but not everybody knows it yet. We are invited to play a part in expanding that reign. We will be most fulfilled when we let God rule our lives, and we invite others to do the same.

Prayer

Pray for someone who does not know Christ.

Ask God for open eyes to notice people who are ready to hear the message of Jesus.

Seek a greater influence for God. Ask that your light be brightened.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Bring something the kids can build into a tower or building – rocks, Legos, blocks, Jenga blocks, Hershey bars, 3x5 cards, etc. Divide into two teams and see who can build the tallest tower.

Read I Peter 2:4-5 aloud.

How are we like building blocks in the hand of God?

Read I Peter 2:9-12 aloud.

What are some things God has done to make us more valuable?

What are some ways we act as a result of the ways God has built us?

Who is someone who is not a Christian and might be watching how you live? What kind of example are you setting for them?

“The Church has Left the Building” is a series of Small Group guides written in support of the Missional Church curriculum by David Wray and Chris Benjamin. It is designed around the concept of adults discussing material in Bible class and then processing it in small group meetings during the same week. These guides, as well as the Missional Church curriculum, are based on the book, *Treasure in Clay Jars*, by Lois Barrett and others.

Training tools and study guides are at www.collegehills.org, then Ministries, then LIFE groups.

The Church has Left the Building

I Peter 2 – the reign of God

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **Living as citizens of a new world.**

There is a new sheriff in town – Jesus Christ! Actually, he has always been in charge, but for a long time we did not recognize his reign. Since God redeemed us, we see the whole world in different ways. This discussion guide looks at I Peter 2 to highlight three ways that we honor the king:

- Our lives show changes for the better – godly words and deeds are a sign that God has been at work.
- Our lives are tools in God’s hand.
- Our abundant lives give us and others a foretaste of a better future.

While life in Christ is not the total fulfillment of God’s reign, the lives we enjoy are a taste of how wonderful it will be when all of creation honors God as king.

I Peter was written to encourage persecuted believers to stand strong in their service to God, so there is a hopeful optimism that changed Christian lives make a difference in the world.

Leadership tip: Be sure your life matches the group discussions. Nobody expects you to be perfect, but group members are watching to see if God is really in charge of your life. Let God rule your thoughts, actions, and words.

I. Relate *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ What are some things you do out of concern for the environment?
- ❖ What images come to mind when you think of a king? How does that affect the way you view God as a king?
- ❖ What is your favorite appetizer?