*Jesus loves his church and has great plans for us. This is why Paul says these words to the Ephesians: “Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless” (Eph. 5:25-27).*

Colossians 1:18 says this about Jesus: “He is the head of the body, the church.”

**What exactly was Jesus’ idea of “the church?”**

* The first thing to keep in mind is that most people think of a building when they hear this word, but the biblical definition is quite different.
* The Greek word for church is ***ekklesia***. It is the word used to describe a group of men who at times were called out of their homes or places of work to conduct civic business.
* ***Ek*** means “out of” and ***kalien*** means “to call.”
* Jesus gave the word His own meaning. So as members of Christ’s *church* we are those he has called out of a life of sin and gathered together to conduct his Kingdom’s business.

## **The Body of Christ Analogy**

The Bible talks about Christ’s church as the “body of Christ” with Jesus as the head of the body (1 Cor. 12 :12-31).

As members of His body we are therefore connected to each other. We can no longer be separated from the other members as a hand could not exist disconnect from the rest of the body (It would die and start rotting).

1. What does Heb. 10:24-25 say?
2. How are you doing at “assembling” and “meeting together” as a part of the church (committed to a local church & Chi Alpha)?

**Life Groups**

**Jesus** started the whole idea of Life Groups 2000 years ago. He met with a small group of men for 3 years. He led them into His kingdom. He loved them. He taught them. He is still doing it **today** through small groups of believers.

Chi Alpha Life Groups strive to follow Jesus’ pattern. We spend time worshiping, praying, and studying the Bible together. We also spend time outside of Life Group sharing life together. The aim? A group of friends who supports, encourages, and challenges one another as they grow together in Jesus.

*Each Life Group meets weekly, and then joins up with all the other Life Groups at our Monday night meetings, which focus on worship, teaching, and fellowship.*

**An invitation to developing spiritual friendship:**

There are a few things we’ve discovered over the years that can really make a Life Group effective and meaningful. Without them, it is difficult to build solid friendships and to mature together in Christ. Discuss your thoughts about these things as a group:

* Participate faithfully in your weekly Life Group meetings. If you can’t make it or you know you’ll be late, text your Life Group leader. What circumstances seem acceptable for missing a Life Group meeting?
  + As a group, decide what types of circumstances would be disappointing or would hinder the growth of the group if someone skipped a meeting.
* Remember that your conduct impacts the other members of the group (positively 🡪 read 2 Corinthians 3:2-3; negatively 🡪 read Galatians 2:11-13).
* Since Life Group meetings are usually only 1 to 1 ½ hours per week, spending time outside of Life Group will really help your friendships grow. It helps to make it a priority to hang out with each other outside of Life Group and the Plug (go to the Rec Center, play football, eat lunch, go to coffee, or invite each other over for movie or game night). You could even do a service project together.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why is commitment to each other crucial in making our Life Group function? What aspects of the group might be affected by our commitment or our lack of commitment to it?
2. How does the analogy of the body of Christ apply to our connectedness in Life Group and Chi Alpha?
3. How do you personally feel when someone comes late, leaves early, or doesn’t show up?
4. What does Ephesians 4:15-16 have to say about our communication style amongst ourselves?
5. Spend a few minutes silently asking God to give you some vision for what this Life Group could become. Jot down the things that come to mind. Then, share them as a group. Together, pray out loud for your Life Group.