



## Growth Group Discussion Questions

### 1. The Church at Ephesus

#### Read Revelation 2:1-7

The Christ is described

1. Read verse 1. ***Discuss what this description of Jesus is meant to convey about Jesus' attitude to His church? What Old Testament type is being alluded to and what does this tell us about Jesus? What effect should this have on us?***

The Church is commended

2. Read verse 2-3. ***What is the church at Ephesus commended for? Discuss whether you think it is wrong to expose people who call themselves apostles and are not. Apply these commendations to NCC: how do you think we are doing in these areas?***

The Church is condemned

3. Read verse 1,4-5. ***How is the church described in verse 1 and what do these two descriptions tell us about the role of the church? In essence, what is the main thing lacking in the church at Ephesus? How does 'love for Jesus' and 'witness to Jesus' go together? E.g. see Psalm 45:1-3. What are examples of where we can love something else more than Jesus so much so that it prevents us from speaking about Jesus?***

The Concluding promise

4. Read verse 7. ***Who is the warning to Ephesus actually for? In essence what is Jesus promising to the person who listens to Him, changes, and does what He asks? What would you say to someone who says, "So basically Jesus is saying that if you witness to Him you will earn your place in heaven?"***
5. ***Discuss how we are doing at NCC in the light of what Jesus says to the church at Ephesus. Where can we improve and obey Jesus more? What are some of the ways you can partner with NCC in its role to bear witness to Jesus Christ in Perth – and beyond?***

## Leaders Notes

1. Its really hard not to see that Jesus cares deeply for His church. There He is, holding the church in His right hand, walking among the lampstands. “Where two or three are gathered, there am I in their midst.” The OT type is that of the High Priest shuffling around in the Temple ensuring that the candles never go out. All of this makes us take such comfort that Jesus Christ is our High Priest tenderly caring for us not letting the church die out. Very encouraging indeed!
2. This is a fairly straightforward question. The point in getting the GG to discuss this is that we are letting God’s people soberly assess themselves in the light of the Words of Jesus. There is no model answer and each contribution will be helpful for discussion.
3. The church is described as a star shining in a dark place and a lampstand. This all speaks of the church’s role as being a witness to Christ in the world. Verse 4-5 is really the heart of the issue: the church at Ephesus has lost its love for Jesus and has stopped being a witness to Him. Love for Jesus and witness to Jesus are related. We always witness to what we love. If we truly love something we will witness to it. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Psalm 45 is a wonderful example of the writer being so in love with the King that he can’t stop himself speaking of the beauty of the King and the royal marriage. For example, lets say we are too afraid of what people think to witness to Jesus. This proves that we love what people think of us more than we love Jesus. Sadly, some people even love doctrine more than they love Jesus. They are happy to study the Bible but not happy to partner in evangelism which shows that they love being doctrinally correct more than they love Jesus Himself.
4. Even though the letter to Ephesus is for them directly, the formula ‘whoever has an ear’ (which is what Jesus also uses in His parables) shows that everyone should listen. This phrase is similar to the English phrase, ‘if the hat fits wear it’ which means, if this applies to you listen and obey! Typical of the book of Revelation, the promise is couched in word-pictures that are drawn from the Old Testament. In this case the obvious reference is to the garden of Eden. Jesus is promising life in paradise to whoever obeys Him instruction and does not give up being a witness to Him. The purpose of this last question is to allow GG members an opportunity to encourage each other with the gospel – we witness to Jesus not in order to get into heaven, but we witness to Jesus because His death and resurrection have guaranteed us heaven. The motivation for witness and love to Jesus is because of what He has already done for us – if we had to earn heaven there wouldn’t be much of a message for us to witness to! Actually, we’d probably end up witnesses to ourselves, after all, we’re earning our way to heaven anyway.
5. Up to the Growth Group.