

8 STUDIES  
+ LEADER NOTES

1 CORINTHIANS 1-7

# Church Matters



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1 CORINTHIANS 1-7

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*Church Matters*

Pathway Bible Guides: 1 Corinthians 1-7

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# Before you begin

Church can evoke different feelings for different people. For some, church is boring, stifling and full of awkward people. For others, church is wonderful; they can't wait to jump out of bed on a Sunday to be with their church family.

Whatever we may feel about church, it's important that our behaviour and attitudes are shaped by the way God feels about church. 1 Corinthians is a very helpful book because it shows us how precious church is to God and therefore how we should treat it with great care.

At one level, it's a bit strange to be looking at this subject in 1 Corinthians because out of all the first-century churches mentioned in the New Testament, you'd be hard-pressed to find one as troubled as the church at Corinth. It was fractured by factions and divisions. It suffered from elitism and open hostility, with members taking each other to court. The rich looked down on the poor and ignored their needs. People were indulging in sexual immorality, with one congregation member having sex with his stepmother without qualms. There were those who were getting drunk at church meals. There were those who were bickering over spiritual gifts in the church. During meetings, prophets would leap up with a 'word from the Lord' while others would leap up to speak in tongues, much to the irritation of those who weren't into those sort of things. In addition, even though Paul was the founder of their church (Acts 18), the Corinthians didn't seem to think much of him and his 'foolish' message!

Yet despite their flaws and difficulties, Paul still described the

church at Corinth as precious and blessed, for it was no less than the church of God (1:2). The Corinthian Christians have been cleansed, sanctified and justified, enriched with the blessings of God's grace, endowed with every spiritual gift and brought into the fellowship of Jesus Christ. Their new identity as God's people could not help but change the way they relate to one another and the world—particularly as they gathered together before God.

Is this how you view yourself? Is this how you view your church?

In these studies, we'll work through the first seven chapters of 1 Corinthians and take a closer look at all the different 'church matters' that Paul raises with the congregation he fathered. It is my prayer that as you learn more about how God views his church, you will grow in your appreciation of what it means to be part of it, and in turn understand how it is to be valued. For church really does matter!

# 1. God's church

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1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-17



## Getting started

What thoughts, feelings and/or images does the word 'church' produce in you? Why?





## Light from the Word

Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9.

1. Who is this letter written to? Who is it from? How are they each described in verses 1-2?
2. List all the things that God has done for the Corinthian church (vv. 4-9).
3. Do you think these things are true of every church? If so, to what extent?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-12.

4. What problem does Paul describe here?

5. How do you think this problem may have arisen?

6. Do you think this can still be a problem in churches today?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:13-17.

7. What seems to be Paul's main point in these verses?

8. What effect do you think this should have on the divisions and quarrelling in the church?

9. In verses 4-9, Paul reminds the church of the abundant blessings they have in Christ. What effect do you think this should have on the divisions and quarrelling in the church?

10. In the coming studies, we will see that the Corinthian church had lots of problems. Why do you think Paul chose this particular problem to tackle first?



## To finish

Compare your 'Getting started' answer to your answer for question 2. Are there any attitudes or behaviours towards your own church that you need to change?



## Give thanks and pray

Give thanks for the church family which you are a part of. Ask God to protect your church from quarrelling and destructive gossip.