

## What is the Lightbearers Institute?

The Lightbearers Institute is the primary teaching element in the Lightbearers Discipleship Community. It is a classroom setting where over the span of two years, students attend over fifty class sessions and complete two courses: Biblical Survey and Theology and Practice. The Institute seeks to give students Biblical literacy and sound doctrine, equipping them as church members for a lifetime and then stepping away to allow their churches will build upon this introductory foundational knowledge. In addition to participating in the Institute, students in a Lightbearers Discipleship Community live in intentional small groups led by a house leader, meet regularly with a mentor from their local church and are exposed to the work of the body of Christ among the nations. Our prayer is that these commitments connect students for life with Jesus, his people and his plan for the ends of the earth while we use their rental income to fund mission projects in Asia and northern Africa.

Lightbearers is not the church but, rather, exists to serve the local church. This conviction has impact in many areas, including the fact that the Lightbearers Institute is primarily taught by local pastors in order to emphasize to students our ministry's subordinate role and to introduce students to several healthy local churches. Remaining classes are taught by Lightbearers staff members and, in some instances, church laymen and laywomen.

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## Week 20: Ecclesiology 3 - Finding and Serving a Local Church

**Thesis:** The two previous class sessions at the Lightbearers Institute studied the nature, purposes, and practices of the church. If those sessions answer speak to why the church exists and what it does, we have designed this third session on ecclesiology to be more personal and challenge the students with regard to their personal engagement with the church. The Barna Group reports that 59% of twentysomethings with a church background drop out of church after going regularly. In addition, if only 41% attend church, how small is the number of students who serve their church in any way? Scripture, however, teaches that believers need the community of faith around them. College students need the church and the church needs college students. How can we demonstrate that reality and facilitate its practice?

**Primary Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session, students should understand: 1) The importance of participating in a local expression of the body of Christ; 2) The church is not a building, event or spectator sport—individuals should look for opportunities to serve the church and not simply show up on Sunday mornings looking for entertainment or simply a spiritual “pick me up”; and 3) There is legitimate debate between churches on a variety of church practices but debate should not diminish love of the brethren.

**Key Readings:** Acts 12:1-13:3, 1 Corinthians 12-13, Philippians 2, **Titus 2-3**, Hebrews 13

### Things to Remember:

- The Lightbearers Institute aims to teach Biblical literacy and doctrinal soundness. Christian unity and a love of Scripture should be displayed above the ability to win an argument. On potentially contentious doctrines, we primarily want to emphasize to students the bounds of historical evangelical orthodox faith. You are free to outline your particular opinion on these doctrines, but please acknowledge to students where there is notable legitimate debate on an issue.
- Class sessions usually run for 90 minutes and take place in an academic setting (students seated at tables), but please communicate with your local campus staff for exact details and location.
- In an effort to encourage students to engage with Scripture, students have assigned key readings (listed above), so it is wise to reference some of these readings. We do not ensure students have completed the assigned readings but mentioning and/or discussing these readings, particularly the bolded chapter, during class reinforces to students the need to complete these readings.
- Lightbearers Theology and Practice course follows an outline loosely based on Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology. Please note, however, that students have not read Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem.
- Please prepare an outline for students. A sample outline follows, but please note that this material is suggestive rather than prescriptive. Please use this sample to whatever extent is helpful to you, and communicate with local campus staff with any specific questions you have.
- Our most successful instructors consistently do three things: 1. Demonstrate clearly that their teaching and opinions are based in Scripture; 2. Communicate with students in an engaging manner; 3. Have a passion for the Scriptures and the God who inspired them

**POSSIBLE PANEL QUESTIONS**

TOPIC		TIME
<b>I.</b>	<b>The Church</b>	<b>(30 min.)</b>
A.	What is your story with “the church?”	
B.	What role should the church play in a believer’s life?	
C.	What is the biggest misconception about pastors?	
<b>II.</b>	<b>Twentysomethings and the Church</b>	<b>(30 min.)</b>
A.	How should a college student or young adult go about choosing a church?	
B.	What’s the role of a parachurch? What advice would you give students in deciding between church and parachurch?	
C.	Should I become a member of my church?	
D.	What do you say to the college student who says “I get fed by listening to my Piper podcast and my Hillsong Pandora station?”	
E.	How can I be a good member of a church? Where should I get involved?	
<b>III.</b>	<b>The Pastor’s View of the Church</b>	<b>(30 min.)</b>
A.	How do you stay spiritually healthy as a pastor?	
B.	What does a pastor he they could say to people at his church?	
C.	What are the best and hardest parts of your job?	

**Spring Class Sequence**

WEEK	DOCTRINES
(1)	Fall Review
(2-3)	Sanctification
(4)	Disciplemaking
(5-7)	Ecclesiology
(8)	Missions
(9-10)	Church History
(11-12)	Eschatology
(13)	Spring Review

**Resources**

TITLE/AUTHOR	CHAPTERS
Systematic Theology Grudem	(47-51)
Historical Theology Allison	(27-30)
The Christian Faith Horton	(23-24)
Christian Theology Erickson	(53-54)
Classic Christianity Odom	(III:7-8)

**Additional Web Resource**

Capitol Hill Baptist Church
<a href="http://capitolhillbaptist.org/resources/core-seminars">http://capitolhillbaptist.org/resources/core-seminars</a>