



# Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Community Group Material:

*Bible Reading: John 21:17-25*

“Peter was grieved that [Jesus] asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” “Feed my sheep,” Jesus said. <sup>18</sup> “Truly I tell you... when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry you where you don’t want to go.” <sup>19</sup> He said this to indicate by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. After saying this, he told him, “Follow me.”

<sup>20</sup> So Peter turned around and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them, the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and asked, “Lord, who is the one that’s going to betray you?” <sup>21</sup> When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?”

<sup>22</sup> “If I want him to remain until I come,” Jesus answered, “what is that to you? As for you, follow me.”

<sup>23</sup> So this rumor spread to the brothers and sisters that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not tell him that he would not die, but, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?” <sup>24</sup> This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

<sup>25</sup> And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if every one of them were written down, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written.” (John 21:17b-25)

### SUMMARY:

The final episode of John’s Gospel zeroes in on two pivotal characters: Simon Peter and the ‘Beloved Disciple’ (John himself). Peter, now restored and recommissioned after his threefold denial of Christ,

quickly finds himself embroiled in his old rivalry with John. He asks, "What about him?" Jesus' blunt reply, "None of your business; you follow me!" not only settles their rivalry but also delineates their distinct ministry roles. However, from John's later perspective, Peter and John are also symbolic figures representing the 'Apostolic Church' and the 'Johannine community' respectively. From this angle, Jesus' affirmation validates both as authentic expressions of His Church, challenging the erroneous notion of a single legitimate form of the New Testament Church. Instead, John's Gospel climaxes with Jesus validating the Johannine community. This Gospel offers glimpses of its unique, non-hierarchical, Spirit-led, egalitarian form; delving deeper, we will uncover further facets of John's 'alternative Church' portrayed in his other writings (1-3 John).

### Discussion:

1. Based on this episode, Lloyd J. Ogilvie describes a progression: "*Comparison leads to competition; competition leads to consternation.*"
  - a. Where do you see this in the text regarding Peter & John? How did Jesus deal with this issue?
  - b. What is your experience of comparison, competition, etc.? How has the Lord helped you? Discuss.
2. How does Jesus resolve the issue "rivalry" &/or "competition" in this episode?
3. Jesus told Peter to "shepherding my sheep" (21:16). Now he replied to Peter: "What is that to you?... You, follow me." (21:21). Is John within the scope of Peter's 'shepherding' (leadership)? Discuss.
4. Peter & John were not merely Jesus' disciples or ministry leaders, they are "representative figures." When John wrote there was the "apostolic church" (linked to Peter) & the "Johannine community" (of John).
  - a. What does this episode imply about Jesus' attitude towards these 2 forms of NT Church?
  - b. What does it imply about the relationships/attitudes between them? Discuss.