

The Agile Church - Study Guide
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Suggested Format Outline

- Opening Scripture and prayer (15 min.)
- Key concepts and quotes, lifted up by facilitator and/or participants: What intrigued, confused, bothered, or engaged you? (30 min.)
- Discussion questions from the end of the chapter: making connections to our experience. (30 min.)
- Closing Scripture and prayer (15 min.)

Chapter 1: Agility and Innovation

Many organizations today are recognizing the need for greater flexibility and responsiveness in the face of the accelerated pace of change that characterizes the 21st century.

Focus Scripture: - Exodus 1:8-2:10

Notice how God works through the ordinary, fallible, often uncooperative characters who only dimly grasp their place in God's story.

Closing Scripture: Matthew 13:52

Closing sentence prayers that express what participants treasure about the church.

Chapter 2: Faith and Spirituality in a Fluid and Insecure Age

What does it mean to be church in a culture that is increasingly hostile or indifferent to Christianity?

Focus Scripture: John 9:1-12

A blind man receives sight: Notice how those around the man who has been blind since birth, fixate on the question of whose sin caused his blindness. Consider this story as a framework that helps us refrain from assigning blame for the cultural changes described in this chapter.

Closing Scripture: John 9:24-24

The blind man affirms his faith, that Jesus was sent from God. Prayers that our eyes may be opened to 'insight' that God wants to give us through this book study.

Chapter 3: Forming and Restoring Community In A Nomadic World

At the heart of God's purpose is the creation and restoration of communities of justice and mercy in which all may flourish. God meets us where we are, and the church is led by the Spirit to meet its neighbors where they are in a posture of learning, reciprocity, and vulnerability.

Focus Scripture: Genesis 12:1-4. Read the Scripture and invite participants to tell a story from their lives about leaving home...whether for a short time (a trip, college, etc.) or an extended time (marriage, move). Why did you leave? How did you feel about leaving? What made it possible for you to go?

Closing Scripture: John 1:14. Prayers of thanks for Jesus, who (left home) and came to dwell with us and among us.

Chapter 4: Failing Well, or What the Church Can Learn From Silicon Valley

If it doesn't fail, you don't learn anything. The realities facing the church today are complex and ambiguous, realities for which there are no quick and ready-made solutions. The church has a great deal to learn from organizations that have developed capacity to sustain massive levels of ongoing failure in the service of creativity, innovation, and growth.

Focus Scripture: Luke 10:25-29

Notice how, in the conversation with Jesus, the man's question shifts from 'what must I do to inherit eternal life' to 'who is my neighbor?' As we consider this chapter, what questions would you want to bring to Jesus, today?

Closing Scripture: Luke 10: 30-37

Prayers...that we may be able to notice, listen, and respond to the needs of our neighbors.

Chapter 5: Disciplines Of A Learning Church

Leadership in the agile church is about fostering the spaces in which people can learn, practice, and play.

Focus Scripture: John 4:5-15

Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Read the passage and invite people to notice which words or phrases stand out. What gets your attention? After reading aloud, invite participants to name the words or images that especially spoke to them. Just call out the words/phrases, without comment.

Closing Scripture: John 4:5-15

Read the story again. Offer prayers of intercession for our learning, at Crossroads.

Chapter 6: Organizing for Innovation

Currently, there are a variety of forms of experimental Christian community appearing across various faith traditions. Such experiments are critical to learning our way into a new future. Three basic practices for new initiatives within existing organizations are: *forget, borrow, and learn*.

Focus Scripture: Acts 11:1-18

Read the story and notice how Jewish followers of Jesus worked through an innovation introduced by the Spirit, after Pentecost. What helped them accept the movement of the Spirit to the Gentiles?

Closing Scripture: Acts 11:34-38

Prayers for those completing this book study...for what the Spirit is doing among you and for the witness the Spirit is calling forth from you.