

# STUDY NOTES

## A LETTER TO THE ROMANS *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

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The following content is based on the message “A Living Sacrifice and the Body of Christ” on 6/11/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://www.newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

## PRAYER

*Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.*

## SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 12:1-8

## PRESENTING OURSELVES

Romans chapter 12 brings a shift in Paul’s letter. He moves from a theological approach to a practical approach. After Paul initiates the turn, he begins to “plead” to us. He longs for this multi-ethnic family of God to embrace the Good News of Jesus with every fiber of their being. The call is to give (or offer, or present) our bodies in response to what God has already given us through Jesus. Such is the way of Jesus, He goes first and then we imitate Him.

**Ultimately we are shaped by what we present ourselves to.**

- *What does “presenting your body” mean to you?*
- *What are you presenting your body to?*

## IMITATING JESUS

Paul is adapting the Old Testament image of sacrifice in a new direction as Jesus followers embrace Christ’s death *even while living*, which is right in line with Jesus’s own teaching of taking up our cross and following Him. When followers of Jesus offer themselves as sacrifices, we are imitating Jesus. We can *daily* offer our bodies as living sacrifices by laying down our lives like Jesus. This is our living sacrifice in action.

- *Think of some specific stories from Jesus’s ministry. To whom were some of the specific people that he sacrificed himself?*
- *How should you be challenged by seeing who Jesus sacrificed himself for?*

## KNOWING GOD’S WILL

If idolatry and immorality are the characteristics of fallen humanity from Romans 1, then worship as a lifestyle and discerning the will of God are the signs of a renewed mind of the community in Christ. And yet, we all know the great pressure we’ve felt “to know God’s will”. A renewed mind is what enables us to know God’s will. God’s will involves how we devote our bodies (or our entire beings) to God’s service.

- *Usually, when you are actively seeking to know God’s will, what are you hoping to know?*
- *How do you respond when God’s will looks different than what you’d hope?*
- *In what ways does every Christian have God’s will clearly given to them?*

## ONE DEVOTED BODY

As followers of Jesus, we are actually just one big sacrificing body. So of course, Paul’s central point, is that each follower of Jesus has something to contribute to the proper functioning of Christ’s body.

**Simply put, we need each in this great multi-ethnic family of God!**

- *How is diversity of all types important for the body of Christ—the Church?*
- *What are some ways that you can step out of your comfort zone to embrace diversity within the body?*
- *What are some ways that our group could become more diverse?*
- *Pray with each other that we, as a Church, would be unified with each other.*