

***Bible Study Book Review of Ephesians: Building a Community in Christ***, by John Stott, published by InterVarsity Press

12 lesson study, paperback, 45 minutes/lesson preparation.

This study is an in-depth look at the book of Ephesians with particular focus of understanding Paul's teaching regarding the Church.

Although the study says it is written by John Stott, I doubt he wrote the study questions, but I would guess an editor wrote the study from John Stott's excellent commentary on Ephesians. This became problematic at times because only one leader had access to the commentary and we were not intending to study a commentary. It was noted that the questions were sometimes written about the commentary notes rather than the Bible text. Participants were sometimes confused by these questions and in two lessons it was noted that the content of the questions was not complete. Upon reviewing the commentary it was revealed that there was indeed more to Stott's comments, but the entire ideas were not communicated through the study questions. Because of this I would qualify recommendation of this study guide. To require additional purchase of the commentary by participants is not the solution. This reviewer has even contemplated contacting InterVarsity Press about some of their questions so obviously coming from the commentary, and at times being incomplete.

The strength of the study was that the group really seemed to come to an understanding and great appreciation of God's plan for the church. Additionally, the content was so thorough that the often controversial marriage passage in Ephesians 5 was celebrated as God's wonderful plan for men and women in marriage. We did not have any controversy. A focus on the Trinity throughout the study, and God's plan of salvation before creation was very strong.