

2. The **CONSTANT THREAT** to the Local Church

- Shepherds protect the flock from wolves **OUTSIDE**.
- Shepherds protect the flock from wolves **INSIDE**.
- Paul had set a good **EXAMPLE** for them for 3 years; now it's their **RESPONSIBILITY**.

3. The **SUFFICIENCY** of God's Word to **BUILD UP** the Local Church

- God's Word is a word of **GRACE**.
- God's Word was the **FOUNDATION** and **CENTER** of all that Paul did.
- God's Word will be the key to their future **HEALTH** and **GROWTH**.
- Shepherds **LEAD** and **FEED** the flock with God's Word.



Charge to the Ephesian Elders

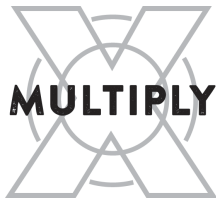
Acts 20

Sunday, October 8, 2017

Acts 20 contains Paul's heartfelt charge to the elders of the church at Ephesus. The charge is simple . . . "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock" . . . but the charge is rooted in 3 unchanging truths that explain why and how:

1. The **INESTIMABLE VALUE** of the Local Church

- The church **BELONGS** to **GOD**.
- The church is **BLOOD-BOUGHT** by **CHRIST**.
- The church's leadership is **APPOINTED** by the **HOLY SPIRIT**.
- For the church, Paul was **SPENDING** his **LIFE**.
- Elders are to **CARE** for the church, because God **CARES** about the church.



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Growth Group Week 2 of 9

Connecting Together (30 min)

Take time in this second week of Fall Growth Groups to connect with one another, share what's happened in your lives over the last week and how you are. You might ask this question, which one of our Growth Groups asked last week: *What's one thing on your "bucket list"?*

Grappling Together (30 min)

1. What was one personal takeaway from the text/message this week?
2. Read Acts 20:17-37. After reading the text, what are some ways you would describe Paul's ministry in Ephesus?
3. We are living in a day and age where those who say they follow Jesus are often pretty uncommitted when it comes to the local church. Why is that?

4. How does Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders, especially in Acts 20:28, challenge this common lack of commitment to the local church? Why did Paul love and care for the local church and why should we?
5. Paul speaks of his own preaching, teaching and declaring of God's Word and truth several places in this text. Can you find them? What does Paul tell the elders about God's Word and what does he call it in Acts 19:32?

Praying Together (30 min)

Be sure to close your time praying for/giving thanks:

- For God's "word of grace which is able to build us up and give us the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."
- Those in your lives who don't know Jesus.
- The growth of your relationships and community in your group.
- Personal needs/requests.