

## Westfield Sermon notes

**Title:** Church called together to learn

**Readings:** Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 4:12

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This sermon can be found at: <http://www.westfieldurc.org/worship/sermons/>

### Sermon Notes / Comments:

- We finished the last session (before Easter) with the conclusion that we need to be people of learning and the church needs to be a teaching church, a discipling church, a growing and encouraging to be more like Jesus church.
- When we bring in Col 3:16 we see that this is a corporate thing. We are all responsible for this learning / teaching. It is not about leaders teaching and everyone learning. We are in this together.
- Paul tells us we are one body, a body working together to grow, to learn, to become more like and in love with Jesus
- If one of us fails we all lose out!
- Again when we look at Eph 4:12 we see it is about unity, about the body.
- One of the most important things about Christianity is that it is built on relationships. Relationship with God and relationship with each other (and actually a relationship with the world around us too) and like any relationship – it needs to be worked at! So the church is here so we ALL “reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ”
- This is not a goal for a few. Special Spiritual elite
- This is not easy - People often say to me, “I don’t have to go to church to be a Christian”, actually I want to shout ‘yes you do!’
- This growing in faith, in likeness of Jesus - it is not easy - It really does take effort and thought and trial. You have to put time, energy and effort in.
- It is especially hard as the world we live in is so alien to the understandings of the gospel. Alien to what we are supposed to be.
- We live and have grown up in a world so different in culture from our Christian one. Even if we have been in and part of church all our lives the world influences on us is far greater than we think or imagine.
- And this world view greatly influences our Christian view.
- There is nothing new here. It was the same in Jesus’ day. Have a look at Mat 15:21-29, does this shock you? Well it is supposed to. Jesus wanted to shock the disciples to help them understand the wrong understandings of women within their culture.

- This is the same today and the more that we are influenced by the culture around us the less voice we have to speak into that culture / society. This is also something we have to work at. We opened with Psalm 27, what a wonderful psalm. At the end of the Psalm it says, “*be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD*”. The problem is in our society we so often we have the wrong understanding of the word ‘wait’. We think of it as negatively – like we have to wait for the bus, our results, our holidays etc. However that is not the Biblical view. The Biblical view is that we have time, over this period to prepare. It is a time of action. So our passage could read:

*Be strong, take heart and serve as you wait for him to return.*

- You know as church and as Christians we need to be people of learning, of growing, of developing - becoming more like Jesus But we have to put time and effort and desire in to this. It is not easy and the world can and does influence us too much! We have to counteract that.
- You know our education system has got it completely wrong, for it is about passing exams and tests, putting in assignments and achieving results. What it should be about is changing hearts, changing souls, changing minds and growing in love and passion.
- And that is what the church is all about – Teaching people to be like Christ. Both those in it and those outside; teaching to be more like that wonderful hero of ours! That is the church called to teach.

### Questions / thoughts and areas for discussion

- Read through the two passages and note the differences.
- Can you think of the things that we see in everyday life that has negative influences on our faith?
- Can you think of any positive influences from culture?
- How do you learn and grow best?
- How have you done over the last year in growing in faith?
- Have you had the opportunity to help others grow?
- Why not ask God to help you identify someone else who you can support and help grow in their faith over the months and years ahead?
- Isn’t this exciting?