



CHUCK KNOWS CHURCH

The Committee: The Vote

This group study is designed for a 45-60 minute discussion after viewing the film.

All Chuck Knows Church videos can be viewed and downloaded at:

www.ChuckKnowsChurch.com

Introduction:

The Committee is a humorous and poignant online series that examines the struggles congregations face as they look toward a preferred future. Using real-world topics, *The Committee* is sure to open discussion in your congregation.

The series follows Park Grove Community Church, a make-believe urban U.S. congregation, that has lost its pastor and is closing its doors unless it reinvents itself. Park Grove is faced with a difficult decision. It seemingly has tried everything humanly possible. Should it close? Things are so bad that a retired pastor didn't show up to help decide the congregation's future – so it's up to the last remaining members to discover it for themselves.

Although some of the characters and situations are simplified to accommodate the format, they may feel familiar. Your congregation may not be facing closure, may have a wonderful pastor, and be a vital and growing church. However, all congregations face the issues addressed in *The Committee* at some point.

Have an open conversation about the issues covered in the series.

Chuck Knows Church Resources

Website: www.ChuckKnowsChurch.com

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Suggest ways on Twitter to save Park Grove. Use this Hashtag **#SaveParkGrove**

> Watch *The Committee: The Vote* (15 minutes)

> Starters (15 minutes)

In this episode, Park Grove has reached a critical time of decision, what are they going to do about their future? In one scene Mr. Riley prays in the sanctuary. Some of the phrases he uses are:

“Give up.”

“Surrender.”

“I give up.”

“What are we supposed to do?”

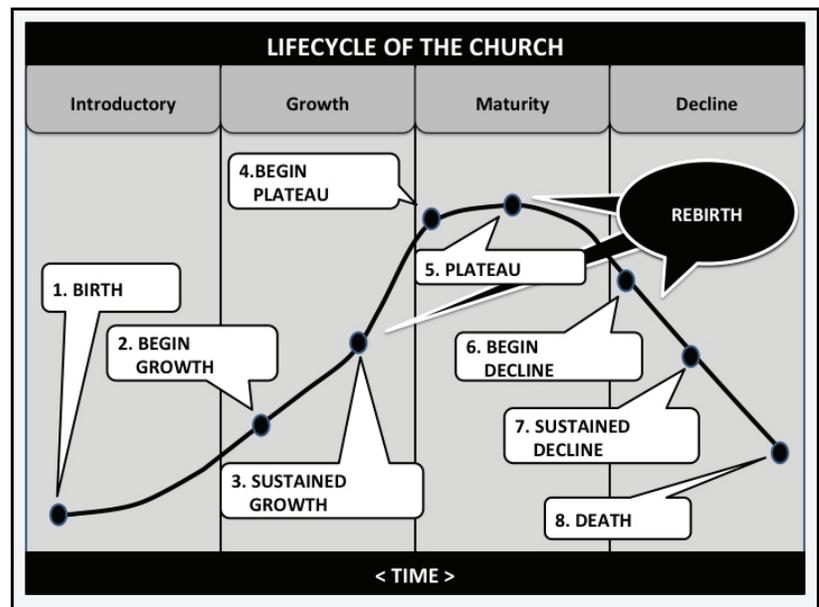
“I’m listening.”

Discuss with one or two people:

- In what ways does Mr. Riley’s prayer speak to you?
- What is the difference between “I” and “We”?
- What does this say about your church’s ministry?

> Lifecycle of the Church (15 minutes)

Churches go through lifecycles. In the *Introductory* stage, *Birth* happens when a new vision for a church connects with the people who are in the community. There is high energy because they are attracted to the big idea – the reason the church is being started. Next is the *Growth* state, where new ministries are added like small groups, worship experiences, and outreach ministries. As each ministry is added new people participate. They are energized because the ministries are closely tied to the big idea.



At *Maturity* churches *Plateau*. There are still a lot of activities, but people don’t remember why the church exists. They have forgotten the big idea. Or they need a new big idea that connects to community that has probably changed since the church was started. At *Decline*, people in the church have little energy and have lost

their connection to the community, especially to new people who have moved into the neighborhoods since the church was founded. The good news is *Rebirth* can happen at any stage of the process, when a church discovers its reason for being in this place and time and lives out a new big idea (go to Lifecycle of the Church for a full description).

Discuss with three or four people, and then share with the whole group:

- Where is your church in the Lifecycle?
- Which ministries and activities bring the most excitement?
- In which ones are people just going through the motions?
- Where do you see signs of rebirth? What is your big idea?

> Reflection on the Bible (20 minutes)

Ask a member of your group to read aloud the following passages from 2 Kings 2:11-13 and Matthew 9:16-17. Ask another person to read the Background.

As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, 'Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?' When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over. 2 Kings 2:11-13

No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.' Matthew 9:16-17

Background:

Elijah, one of the great prophets of Israel, was accompanied by Elisha, one of his most trusted followers on Elijah's last day on earth. As they left Bethel they came to the Jordan River. Elisha took his mantle that symbolized his prophetic leadership and struck the water. Echoing Moses' action of crossing the Red Sea, the water parted and went across to the other side. Later as Elijah is taken to heaven, Elisha is blessed to witness Elijah's transformation. But what was he to do? As he looks around him he sees Elijah's mantle has been left to him. With great respect and hopefulness he strikes the river Jordan with the mantle and it parts giving him safe passage. As he goes back towards Bethel and the land of Israel, he takes up the mantle of leadership given to him by God.

Jesus makes a very practical comment that everyone in 1st Century Israel would know. If you put new wine in an old wineskin as it fermented it would burst the skin and the wine would pour out on the ground. You always put new wine in a new wineskin.

Questions for Discussion:

If your group has more than seven members, divide into groups of four to discuss the Scripture passage.

- What does it mean to carry the mantle of leadership?
- How do people know its time to pass on leadership to a new group of people?
- In the sacrament of communion, we drink the wine of the new covenant as we are reminded of Jesus' sacrifice and love for us. How are we made new through our faith in Christ?

> Making it Personal

As the Compass Committee prepared for its fateful decision, they reflected on the work they had done together. They learned about hospitality, focused on reflecting the community, identified purpose, looked at evangelism, talked about the who, designed a discipleship system, concentrated on innovation, started small groups, opened themselves up to children and families, recommitted to stewardship, reflected on being a more effective committee, shared about legacy, and wrestled with how to pass on leadership to a younger generation. The decision about whether to stay open or close was based on the nature of their relationships which had grown over time and a renewed understanding of what it meant to be part of a faith community that welcomed people in the name of Jesus Christ. The words of Mr. Riley sums it all up for us:

“Well, it’s time, isn’t it? Make way for younger leadership. Some of that right here in our committee. Daniel, Hannah? What do you guys think? Or from your Bible study. A foundation to build on. I’m happy to help answer questions; I’m still on the team, but more on the sidelines. I promise I won’t be in your way...For everything there is a season. A time to be born, and a time to die. I think we’re ready. I’m ready. A new pastor to shepherd us, point us in the right direction, vision with us.”

- What does this say about the ministry of your church?
- In what way is God speaking to you this day?