

What the Church Was Meant to Be – Part 5

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I. The church exists to glorify God.

A. The church does this through the leadership of godly elders.

1. Elders must be holy.
2. Elders must hold out the word of God.

B. In addition to aiming at the glory of God elders must be committed to discipleship.

1. Spiritual maturity is a goal of the church that the saints might do the work of ministry. (Ephesians 4)
2. This is a long range process. (2 Timothy 2:2)
3. Pastors must disciple others.
4. I am a fifth generation pastor.
 - a. I received a legacy from my father.
 - b. I must pass this on to others.
 - c. When my father was dying of cancer I once asked him if there was anything he wanted and he said he wanted to preach one more sermon.
 - d. My grandfather passed on the desire to preach to my father and he to me.
5. Once when I ran a relay race each man ran his best until the third man stopped for no reason.
 - a. He thought only about himself.
 - b. We each need to pass the baton on to others.
 - c. We talk of the finished work of Christ but do we think of the unfinished work?
 - d. Our church is committed to discipleship.

C. A church must also be marked by people involved in ministry.

1. This requires active volunteers.
2. Each person needs to know his or her spiritual gifts and use them.

3. Every man receives a gift that is a unique combination of gifts. (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12)

4. A church must be committed to people and promote those ministering well.

D. A church also needs a spirit of genuine fellowship.

1. There ought to be loving fellowship in the church.

2. We have all experienced aggression and lack of love in our churches.

3. We need to love one another.

4. A regular celebration of the Lord's Table is helpful here.

5. Fellowship is not just coffee and donuts in the fellowship hall.

a. Fellowship is caring for one another.

b. Confessing to one another. (James 5:16)

c. Forgiving one another. (Colossians 3:13)

d. Bearing one another's burdens. (Galatians 6:2)

e. Rebuking one another. (Titus 1)

f. Comforting one another. (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

g. Stimulating one another to good works. (Hebrews 10:25)

h. Edifying one another. (Romans 14:19)

i. Admonishing one another. (Romans 15:14)

j. Praying for one another. (James 5:16)

k. Loving one another. (1 John 4:11)

l. Being kind to one another. (Ephesians 4:32)

6. A church needs to hold one another accountable. (Matthew 18)

7. Playing church is not right.

E. The church needs to be marked by strong evangelistic outreach.

1. The corporate testimony of the church in the community is vital.

2. Our testimony needs to be backed up by good work in the life of the church.

3. Gene Getz says that individuals make the corporate testimony viable.
4. People attend church because how it looks.
 - a. We need to care for our buildings.
 - b. This demonstrates caring.
5. People also attend church because of good parking.
6. People also come to church because of a caring nursery.
7. People come to church fourthly because of the pastor.
8. We offer baptism services where people give testimony and this impacts others.
9. Church members must be built up to reach out to others.

F. The church must focus on the family.

1. We need to be a source of strength for the family.
2. I did a series on the role of women in the family and the ERA picketed us.
3. Our attendance skyrocketed.
4. We teach the fathers how to be family priests.
5. We have a program for engaged couples.

G. The church needs to be willing to change.

1. Seven Last Words of the Church: We've never done it that way before is deadly.
2. One church has a Christmas Eve service but no one ever goes.
3. Jesus told the Pharisees they substituted men's traditions for the ways of God.
(Matthew 15)
4. We've changed with the growth God has sent to us.
5. We don't even print an order of service because we want to surprise people.
6. In the future we may change even more.
7. Some people resist change so don't build the church around them.

H. A church must be marked by great faith.

1. Complaining about lack of money speaks of little faith.

2. We took on a missionary with little money but God gave us more money and we supported more missionaries.
3. We built our sanctuary debt free.
4. Some people have a grasshopper complex, feeling little in the sight of problems.
5. We need to exercise wisdom as well a spirit of sacrifice.
6. The Macedonians gave out of their poverty.

I. A church must focus on worship.

1. In many cases we have lost the meaning of worship, emphasizing the practical aspect of ministry.
2. Many services today have no worship, preoccupied with their programs.
3. Many churches are preoccupied with their theology.
 - a. Some focus on the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Some focus on salvations.

II. Questions.

A. What is worship?

1. Worship is a focus on God to exalt him.
2. Obedience is the purest worship.
3. Teaching is a stimulus for worship.
4. Good preaching is the heart of worship.
5. Expression of praise and thanksgiving is also worship.
6. Silent reverence of God is also worship.
7. The soul needs to meditate on the presence of God.

B. How do you regulate your services?

1. We have changed according to the growth of the congregation.
2. We have fellowship groups, graded by age.
3. Our flocks met on Friday nights, which are regulated by geography.
4. On Sunday nights we teach through books of the Bible.

5. A church is like a smorgasbord, people plug in where they like.

- a. We have a seminary.
- b. We have a missions training program.
- c. We have a Foundations of the Faith program.
- d. We have a semi-pro baseball team.
- e. We have bowling leagues.
- f. We have divorce recovery groups.

C. How long do you hang in with a church that is not doing what it's supposed to do?

1. Only God knows that.
2. You are responsible to grow spiritually and you are accountable for your growth.
3. If after some real wrestling over the direction of your church you may need to change.

D. How do you handle children during your Flock times?

1. Some of the kids are old enough to participate.
2. Some need special attention.

E. How do you change things that need to be addressed?

1. Be prayerful.
2. Don't give people more than they can handle.
3. Churches can be difficult and people will get angry at you.
4. Think through your concerns and pray and then be willing to be part of the solution.

F. How do you recognize a false prophet in the church?

1. I just did a series on false prophets. (Matthew 5:15-20)
2. Listen to this and you will identify names.