

What Makes a Church Successful?

January 29, 2017

Ephesians 2:21-22 NASB

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,
22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Matthew 18:20 NASB

20 "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

Acts 13:1-2 NASB

1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

1 Thessalonians 2:1-13 - *The character and environment of the church.*

1 Thess 2:1 - For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,

What makes a church a success in the eyes of God? What qualities make a church to be "not in vain."

1 Thess 2:13 - For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

ENDURING COMMITMENT & COURAGE

1 Thess 2:2 - but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.

The pastor is not a hireling who runs away and abandons the congregation when trouble or problems arise.

John 10:12-13 NASB

12 "He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

13 "He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

Acts 14:19-22 NASB

19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city [Lystra], supposing him to be dead.

20 But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

"Listen to me: A ministry that lasts is a ministry that relentlessly perseveres through periods of enormous persecution. It is not fickle. It does not need the applause of people. It rejects being enshrined as a god. Authentic ministry delivers the truth of God, no matter how jagged the edges or perilous the threats. The ministry of Paul and Barnabas dripped with that kind of determination. Does yours?" -- Chuck Swindoll

1 Corinthians 15:58 NASB

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Romans 12:10 NASB

10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.

DOCTRINAL PURITY

1 Thess 2:3 - For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit;

The pastor takes great care and study to accurately represent the full counsel and balance of God's Word.

2 Timothy 2:15 NASB

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

1 Corinthians 2:13 NASB

13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

NO MAN-PLEASING

1 Thess 2:4 - but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.

The pastor will not compromise or alter the Truth to gain man's favor.

"That very church which the world likes best is sure to be that which God abhors." — Charles H. Spurgeon

2 Timothy 4:3-4 NASB

*3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,
4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.*

NO MANIPULATION BY FLATTERY

1 Thess 2:5 - For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed--God is witness--

The pastor always encourages but never flatters. Flattery always has a hook of manipulation. Flattery is false affirmation for selfish gain.

Proverbs 28:23 NASB

23 He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor Than he who flatters with the tongue.

Proverbs 29:5 NASB

5 A man who flatters his neighbor Is spreading a net for his steps.

NO LORDING OVER

1 Thess 2:6 - nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.

The pastor never uses his position to feed his ego or lord over (over-lord, micro-manage, control) lives.

2 Corinthians 1:24 NASB

24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.

2 Corinthians 10:8 ESV

8 For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed.

1 Peter 5:2-3 NASB

2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

3 nor yet as lording it over (katakaryieuo - to bring under one's power, subdue, exercise dominion over, hold in subjection) those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

GENTLE AS A NURSING MOTHER

1 Thess 2:7 - But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

The pastor never uses his position nor the pulpit to embarrass, shame, intimidate or coerce.

Matthew 20:25-28 NASB

25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.

26 "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The pastor is very sensitive and in tune with the needs, weaknesses and wounds of the congregation.

Hebrews 4:15-16 NASB

15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize (sympatheo - to suffer with, touched with, affected with the same feeling) with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

"Christ was also chosen out of the people that He might know our wants and sympathize with us. "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." In all our sorrows we have His sympathy. Temptation, pain, disappointment, weakness, weariness, poverty - He knows them all, for He has felt all. Remember this, Christian, and let it comfort thee. However difficult and painful thy road, it is marked by the footsteps of thy Saviour; and even when thou reachest the dark valley of the shadow of death, and the deep waters of the swelling Jordan, thou wilt find His footprints there. In all places whithersoever we go, He has been our forerunner; each burden we have to carry, has once been laid on the shoulders of Immanuel." --

Charles Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, 1/23/2017

Ephesians 4:32 NASB

32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

GENUINE AFFECTION

1 Thess 2:8 - Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

The pastor genuinely loves and cares about the people; it's a calling, not a job, not a career path.

Romans 12:9 NASB

9 Let love be without hypocrisy.

2 Corinthians 12:15 NASB

15 I will most gladly spend and be expended (*ekdapanaō* - to exhaust, use up, wholly spend) for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

PLACING NO UNDUE BURDEN OR HARDSHIP

1 Thess 2:9 - For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

The pastor will never place undue or unnecessary burden and hardship on the congregation. He will take the responsibility and burden on himself FIRST. He seeks to relieve, not increase, burdens.

Acts 18:1-4 NASB

1 After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth.

2 And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,

3 and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers.

4 And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

Acts 20:33-35 NASB

33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes.

34 "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me.

35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Matthew 11:28-30 NASB

28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Matthew 23:4 NASB

4 "They [Scribes and Pharisees] tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger."

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

1 Thess 2:10 - You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

The pastor leads by example. Leading by example is the ONLY method of leadership he employs. He never leads by force, coercion, legislation or double-standards.

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 NASB

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you,

8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;

9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.

ENCOURAGES AS A FATHER

1 Thess 2:11 - just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,

Hebrews 3:12-14 NASB

12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.

Galatians 6:9 NASB

9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

HOLINESS REQUIRED

1 Thess 2:12 - so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

The pastor requires holiness in the church. He guards against sins of rebellion and false doctrine.

Titus 2:14-15 NASB

14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

1 Peter 4:8 NASB

8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Thess 2:13 - For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.