

GROWING A SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY CHURCH

1 Corinthians 3:1-2

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: There is a truth that many churches and church leaders, including pastors, are not aware of and that is that a church will never mature, never be more spiritual than its pastor and leaders. A primary objective of every pastor and church leader should be that of developing, growing the church family into a healthy, spiritually active church family. Just how can the pastor and church leaders accomplish this great need?

I. HELP EACH MEMBER ASSESS HIS/HER SPIRITUAL MATURITY LEVEL

1. Before starting any "growth" plans, the level of spiritual maturity of the people needs to be found.
2. Every member is at a different stage/level and therefore will need to have different means of help.
3. Some suggested areas to evaluate are:
 - Frequency of Bible studies
 - Putting God first
 - Helping others
 - Telling others about Jesus
 - Living by faith and not one's own personal strength.
 - Loving God more than anything/anyone else.
 - Friendships
 - Not being shy in living the Christian life (imitating the Lord Jesus Christ).

II. EMPHASIZE WHAT THE CHURCH REALLY IS ALL ABOUT

1. The Church is the visible, representation of the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The whole church, not just the pastor and leaders are to represent Jesus in their community.
3. The pastor and church leaders should be the guides for the church family in how to act like Jesus in their community.

III. MEMBERS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO STUDY GOD'S WORD

1. Members should not only do daily devotions but should be encouraged to get deep into God's Word as often as they can.
2. A church-wide Bible study program is one way to get everybody studying the same scriptures and then there can be better mutual sharing of what has been studied.
3. Spending time in God's Word brings spiritual maturity.

IV. EVERYBODY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO PRAY FOR THE SAME THINGS

1. Not only should members pray for the same things, but spend time praying TOGETHER.
2. There is a time for one to draw aside and pray privately, but there is also the need to pray with others.

3. Joint prayer is a means of everyone being united in praying for the same things, therefore spiritual maturity and more answered prayers will occur.

V. MAKE SURE EACH CHURCH MEMBER IS ENCOURAGED TO GROW SPIRITUALLY

1. Often pastors and church leaders "scatter-shoot" or focus on the "congregation" as a whole and do not focus on one member at a time.
2. Each member should be personally encouraged to become involved in becoming more like what the Lord Jesus Christ wants him/her to be, therefore focusing on every single church member.
3. Church leaders should, themselves, set the example of wanting to grow spiritually and to live like the Lord Jesus Christ wants everyone to live.

VI. DON'T BE IN A HURRY, DON'T PUT TIME LIMITS ON GROWING A HEALTHY CHURCH

1. It takes time to grow, to develop, to mature in just about everything and so it is in growing a healthy church family.
2. There is much to draw one's attention away from studying the Bible, in attending worship services, in attending Sunday School, in joining a prayer session, in witnessing and even in living as the Lord Jesus wants one to live.
3. Growing spiritually is never quick and exact.
4. Church pastors and leaders must "walk" alongside each member guiding and helping each member grow, remembering that each member grows in different ways and takes different amounts of time.

CONCLUSION:

1. Pastors and church leaders are the role models, the examples of spiritual maturity. As the pastor and church leaders are spiritually, so will the church family be also.
2. As church members grow and mature spiritually, they will gradually become involved in outreach, missions and evangelism in their own communities and the rest of the world.
3. Every Christian has been called by the Lord Jesus to be like Him in every way. It is the responsibility of the Pastor to see that they have every opportunity to be just what Jesus wants them to be.