

Marks of a Great Church (3)

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Introduction: Local churches are part of God's plan to save men.

- A. Each of us should be concerned about the condition of local churches and how each of us play a part in the direction a church is moving.
 - 1. We are facing a time where men are turning to the world for guidance instead of our Lord.
 - 2. There is only one way a local church is to be directed and built up. (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor 3:11-14)
 - 3. The church cannot prosper when men do not care or seek to be involved in God's work of building up men.
- B. So far we have examined six characteristics of a great church.
 - 1. A Determination to Please God.
 - 2. A Concern for the Lost
 - 3. A Strong Stand for the Truth
 - 4. Members Who Serve Others
 - 5. Mutual Love and Respect among its Members
 - 6. Spiritual Growth on the Part of Every Person

I. A Great Church is characterized by a Spirit of Cooperation.

- A. A great church is one where everyone does their part.
 - 1. Consider the chart of J.D. Tant.
 - 2. Is your attitude like this: "If it is a Bible work, you can count on me!"?
 - 3. Consider the opportunities here. What if you only attend 1 service?
- B. Let us be sure it is a Bible work. **(2 Tim 3:16-17)**
 - 1. We cannot ask others to be a part of that which has no Bible basis.
 - 2. In fact we all should know without question what the Bible authorizes. **(Col 3:17)**
- C. Consider the spirit of cooperation in the early church.
 - 1. They all worked together. Notice the "sincerity of heart" (ASV) **(Acts 2:42-44, 46)**
 - 2. These Christians were of "one heart and one soul". **(Acts 4:32-35)**
- D. Consider how this church faced its problems. **(Acts 6:1-6)**
 - 1. They did not say: "We are doing the best we can. If you do not like the way we are doing it then get somebody else."
 - 2. These brethren **saw** the problem, **acknowledged** the problem, and **worked out** the problem.
 - 3. Some churches have the same characteristics of a dysfunctional family. They are taught to ignore problems for fear of division.
 - 4. These brethren did not say: "You have not done us right so we are going to stop and not take part anymore."
 - 5. Rather than split or have some withdraw into bitterness this church worked out its problems! The end result was growth! **(Acts 6:7)**

- E. Consider several passages that exhort us to cooperate.
 - 1. Let each of us do that which we are capable of. **(Rom 12:4-8)**
 - 2. Can you imagine jealousy and division in your body? **(1 Cor 12:14-22)**
 - 3. To some division is preferred. They would rather fuss than work! Where is your heart? **(Jas 3:17)**
- F. Some common objections to cooperation.
 - 1. "This will not do any good. I will not waste my time."
 - a. How do you know?
 - b. Did you pray for God's help?
 - 2. "We did it in the past and it did not do any good."
 - a. Again, how do you know?
 - b. Often the problem lies within us. Do we believe? **(2 Cor 4:13-14)**
 - 3. Are you one who will say: "Count on me"?

II. A Great Church is Characterized by a Hatred of Sin which leads to proper correction and discipline among its members.

- A. We must point out sin. **(2 Tim 4:2-4)**
 - 1. This needs to be a prominent part of the preaching, the Bible classes and our individual conversations.
 - 2. When we teach we must teach in a way that **reasons are given** as to why it is sin.
- B. Those that fall into sin must be corrected with love, longsuffering and patience but with firmness.
 - 1. They need to know that when they are corrected they have been corrected!
 - 2. We need meekness with the intent of restoration. **(Gal 6:1)**
 - 3. Again we show longsuffering while rebuking and exhorting. **(2 Tim 4:2)**
 - 4. In meekness but we must deal with the sin! **(2 Tim 2:24-26)**
- C. If a person will not repent then we must publicly mark and then withdraw our company from them.
 - 1. What did God want this church to do with this man? **(1 Cor 5:1)**
 - 2. Will we follow this command? **(1 Cor 5:4-5)**
 - 3. This will involve every Christian here. **(1 Cor 5:9-11)**
 - 4. This is what a great church does when one falls into sin. **(2 Thess 3:6, 14)**

III. A Great Church is Characterized by a Desire to Correct its Mistakes.

- A. The nation of Israel had a tragic attitude. **(Isa 30:8-11)**
- B. The church at Corinth with all its faults has a willingness to correct its mistakes. **(2 Cor 7:10-11)**
 - 1. This church mourned over its sins and made changes.
 - 2. Review the 9 marks we studied. Where are changes needed?

Conclusion: Let each of us make the University church great in the sight of God.