
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES
Institute in the Foundations of Church Leadership
ITEM Ministries

THE BIBLICAL PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Intro:

The church's primary purpose is towards God. Everything else is secondary. In John 4:23, Jesus told the woman at the well God is seeking worshipers. When God saves a person from their sin, He saves them in order that they would become His worshiper.

I. THE BIBLICAL PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH TOWARDS GOD:

Give glory to God in all things. (Eph. 1:5-6; 1:11-14; 3:21; 1 Cor. 10:31)

- A. God is glorified when we give Him thanks. (Psalm 50:23)
- B. God is glorified when we give a testimony to others (1 Pet. 2:9)
- C. God is glorified when our lives show the fruit of righteousness (Phil. 1:10-11)
- D. God is glorified when we devote ourselves to the ministry He has called us to. (1 Pet. 4:11)
- E. God is glorified when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 15:16)

II. THE BIBLICAL PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH TOWARDS THE (UNSAVED) WORLD:

Lead others to place their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and Lord

- A. This is evident from Christ's instructions, and prayers
 1. This was Christ's final instruction to His followers (Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8)
 2. This was a part of His final requests to His Father (John 20:21)
- B. This task of evangelism is accomplished in the words, and the actions of believers. It is also accomplished by individuals and by believers as a group.
 1. Repentance and forgiveness is to be preached to all nations. (Luke 24:47)
 - This is exactly what happened following Pentecost (Col. 1:5-6)
 - The gospel spread through evangelists, the apostles, and through ordinary Christians as a result of persecution (Acts 8:1, 4)
 - The early church was compelled to speak about Christ, and wouldn't stop even when they were told to stop by the authorities (Acts 4:19-20)
 - They were bold, and did not hide their devotion to Jesus (Acts 4:13, 29, 31; 9:27, 29; 14:3; 18:26)
 2. Their message to the unsaved were the great acts of God's through His Son, Jesus Christ. (The gospel.)

- C. The gospel was presented through their words, and their deeds.
1. Peter demonstrates the effectiveness of the gospel when it is combined with a godly life when he speaks to wives who have unsaved husbands. (1 Pet. 3:1-2)
 - But action alone will not fulfill the great commission. The gospel also needs to be preached. (Rom 10:14-15)
 2. In the book of Acts the witness of the gospel is accomplished both within the church as a whole, and outwardly in the world.
 - a. When Christians show love for one another, the world knows they are Christ's disciples. (John 13:35)
 - b. This love is shown through words and deeds. (1 John 5:16-18)
 - An inter-racial, inter-social, inter-tribal Christian fellowship, whose members truly care for one another, and bear one another's burdens is an tremendous witness, and testimony to the reconciling power of Jesus Christ. (Gal.3:28)
 - c. The church also witnesses as a body to the world when it meets for worship. (1 Cor. 14:24-25)
- D. The witness of the church can only be effective as the church gets involved in the world, not conforming to the world's standards, but by living in the world, and yet not being like the world. (John 17:14-21)
- In the world, not of the world
 - The other extreme from pulling out of the world, it trying to change the world by secular/worldly forms of power; through power politics. In this case the church loses its separateness, and it's holiness.
1. The Christian is called to be salt and light in a dark, sinful world. (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15)
 2. The church is to influence the world by good deeds so that others will end up glorifying God. (Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:1)
 - a. The Christian is to be salt and light in his business life (1 Thes 4:11,12; 1 Tim. 6:1; 1 Pet 2:18)
 - b. The Christian is to be salt and light in his social life (1 Cor. 10:31-33; 1 Pet. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:16)
 - c. The Christian is to be salt and light in his home life (1 Pet. 3:1; 2-7)
 - d. The Christian is to be salt and light in the way he responds to the government (Romans 13:1-4)
- E. The church as the body of Christ, and individual Christians must be willing to die to self, and share the sufferings of Christ to be most effective. (Col. 1:24; John 15:18-20; John 17:14)

III. THE BIBLICAL PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH TOWARDS ITSELF

A. Edification (or “building up”)

1. Quantitative (quantity, numbers, size): This is accomplished through evangelism (see II above).
 2. Qualitative (quality, maturity, spirituality) (Eph. 4:16; Jude 20)
 - a. The goal of edification is the maturity of all believers in Christ (Eph. 4:13-16; 2 Pet. 3:18)
 - b. Edification is accomplished by Jesus through the Holy Spirit
 - 1) The ministries of special leaders who use the Word of God are His primary instruments to being edification. (Eph. 4:11-12)
 - 2) He also wants to use Christians to minister to each other resulting in edification. (Eph. 4:12, 16; 1 Thes. 5:11)
- The ministry of edification in the Scripture is associated with mutual exhortation, and comfort of one believer to another believer. (1 Thes. 5:11, 14)
 - Genuine exhortation can only be accomplished in love (Eph. 4:16), and peace (Rom. 14:19)

B. Purification (or “becoming more holy”)

1. Purifying the church is the work of Christ as is the edifying (building up) of the church. (Eph. 5:25-27)
 - a. Purification is positional. That means Christians are already “holy and blameless” because they are forgiven and cleansed by the blood, the death of Christ. (Eph. 1:4; 5:27)
 - b. Purification is also progressive. That means Christians are becoming more “holy and blameless” in the way they live. This is what we call the process of sanctification. (John 17:17)
 - 1) This process is accomplished by God purging or disciplining the Christian (John 15:2; Heb. 12:5-7; James 1:2-4; Rom. 5:3-5)
- This requires submission to the purging, and discipline of the Lord
 - 2) The process also requires the Christian to be self-disciplined in obedience to the commands for purity that are contained in the Word of God. (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 John 3:3)