



JULY 19, 2020

WHAT IS A HEALTHY CHURCH?

Ephesians 4:11-16

The Big Idea: What is a healthy church? The Biblical answer will surprise and challenge you. Here's the bottom line – a healthy church is one in which every member is functioning properly.

1. What is a healthy Christ follower? A healthy Christian leader:

- Knows God and depends on God (Christ)
- Was formed and lives in supportive and accountable community (Community)
- Has integrity (Character)
- Knows the purpose of God and presents it with credibility, clarity and passion (Calling)
- Has the necessary thinking and acting capacities to lead the people in the accomplishment of this purpose (Competencies)
- Is continually growing in all of the above areas

Special thanks to Robert Walter for this teaching from LeaderSource

2. What is a healthy church?

- Should a church be considered “healthy” when it is doing well financially?
- How about when a large number of people fill the church?
- Is a church healthy when it has a strong mission and local outreach program?
- Is an effective children’s ministry or youth program one of the key elements for “health”?
- Perhaps a LifeGroup program is a core characteristic?
- Or inspiring worship times, need-oriented evangelism, or loving relationships?
- Maybe it is when the church engages well with the culture, when we look like our community.

If we adopt these models, we will need to run after many separate programs trying to get these different things going and, in the end, they may not work well together. And, they usually don't. Moreover, our vision for the church will be reduced to a long list of things we need to do and programs we must initiate and maintain.

3. Q: What is in the center of a healthy church? A: Christ.

Q: What is the next important factor of a healthy church? A: Every member functioning.

Union with Christ is the fundamental reality of the healthy church. Everyone must be directly and intimately connected to Him – not just once at salvation, but daily.

4. Who builds up the Body of Christ?

Clue #1 – It's not paid religious professionals. What? Yes.

5. Seriously, who does the work?

- Leaders equip the people.**
- People do the work of the ministry.**
- The Body of Christ is built up.**

Paul's words in verses 11-12, "And He gave the [leaders] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ." In too many churches, this has been understood as, "the leaders equip the people, do the work of the ministry, and build up the Body of Christ. It is not the leaders who should build up the Body of Christ, it is the people. The Church will only be built and come to maturity when the people function properly – when the people act.

6. What is your role personally in the church? Is it Biblical?

LifeGroup Worksheet

JULY 19, 2020

This sheet is to be completed DURING your LifeGroup session

Scripture Reference – **Ephesians 4:11-16** (+ the lessons below)

1. Reflect- *How has God been working in your life? How has He provided, comforted, answered, reconciled, or guided you? Be open to sharing both your successes and struggles.*

2. Read- **Ephesians 4:11-16** carefully several times, *both with your group and alone.*

3. Engage and Explore- *What do you think God was communicating to his people when this was first written? Try to answer at least one questions below.*

- a. In Ephesians 4:12, Paul shows us that a primary role of a leader is to equip the people to function properly. **Up to this point, how have you understood the meaning of “equip”?**
- b. Too often, the nature of equipping is understood very simply as “teaching”. This has lead to leaders endlessly teaching the people in one-way sermons or classes (and often involving a lot of theoretical information) and then, of course, most of the people remain passive and the leaders continue to do all the work, while simultaneously trying to build up the church.
The word “equip” is very broad. Its meaning can include teaching, but it’s far bigger than that. To equip means to make someone completely adequate or sufficient for something – “to make adequate, to furnish completely, to cause to be fully qualified, adequacy.” It’s a word that was used in the New Testament times to describe setting a bone, furnishing a guest chamber, stowing or folding something, fitting things together, supplying an army with provisions, or outfitting a ship with everything it needs to sail. **Why is “equip” an important word to understand?**
- c. Essentially the word “equip” means “to do whatever is necessary to prepare something to fulfill its intended purpose.” **What is your purpose in the body? Have you ever thought about it?**

4. Connect- *how this passage applies to you and your relationship to Jesus and others. How is the Holy Spirit speaking to you through this passage? Try to answer at least one question.*

- a. What is the purpose of people who are paid to work in the church? Seriously, how is Pastor Tom doing, and based on scripture (Ephesians 4), build your case. What is his responsibility and what is yours? How are you doing?
- b. Discuss – It is not the leaders who build up the Body of Christ, it is the people. The Church will only be built and come to maturity when the people function properly – when the people act.
- c. What did you learn about the church that conflicts with today’s teaching? Was it Biblical?
- d. Share what you need to change in your life in reference to the church. What do you need to adjust? When will you? How will you?

5. Silent Meditation- *You may want to move away from the group to a quiet spot. Silently read the scripture several more times. Write down the words/passage you want to focus on this week and how you plan to apply God’s truth to your life.*

6. Share- *Key insights with your group from question #5.*

7. Close in Prayer- *Try using different prayer models found in the LifeGroup Leader Handbook.*