

May 22, 2022 -

Ephesians 4:7-21

- Expectations of Church Members.

Introduction: Characteristics of a mature church

On June 6, 1995 in Seoul, South Korea 502 people died another 937 were injured—all those killed and injured were the victims of negligence and extreme contempt to ethical engineering practices leading to the most devastating building collapse in the history of South Korea and one of the worst in the history of the world. We have seen our fair share of major contractor being cited for sub-standard material right here in the good ole USA. Less than a year ago a building in Surfside, Florida collapsed due to careless and reckless construction efforts. Champlain Towers South, a 12-story beachfront condominium, partially collapsed and ninety-eight people died. Four people were rescued from the rubble, but one died of injuries shortly after arriving at the hospital. Shoddy work and materials were used to construct the building. In CT. a few years ago right here close to home a building was condemned due to faulty wiring.

Hey, the plumber did a great job, the carpentry was just fine but the electrician well he ruin the whole building. You know the Bible speaks to the fact that we are God's building in First Corinthians 3:9: **For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.** God expects mature Christian to grow His building that is His kingdom, His Church. We can do that with mature believers. The church has been changing and not all for the better. The pandemic and social unrest has affected churches and pastors.

Barna Research president David Kinnaman, shared some changes that reflect their findings. "For too many of us, church is a service at a [specific] time with a certain expected product; that's produced a consumer driven [church], and what we've got is a lot of customers when we really need a lot of co-laborers."

He continues, "I think some people stepped up, stood out and stood in the gap in the last two years and wanted to be co-laborers. We need to help the rest of the congregation move into that co-laboring space and then ultimately labor together on the mission into the world."

The Bible teaches that all members are asked to give a proper attitude of worship, to protect the unity of the church, third to...

III. Members should participate in the Ministry of the Church vv. 7, 11&12

1. Attending the services of your church. Every time you attend a church service your presence encourages other members. We should never be guilty of **forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.** Hebrews 10:25 gives us this command of regular fellowship that is part and parcel of one prating their faith.

2. Barna Research surveyed discovered that just one in four Americans is a practicing Christian. In essence, the segment of practicing Christians has nearly dropped in half since the year 2000. Practicing Christians identify as Christian, they agree strongly that faith is very important in their lives and have attended church within the past month. The first and perhaps

most significant change is that practicing Christians are now a much smaller sector of the entire population. In 2000; 45 percent of all those sampled qualified as practicing Christians, that share has consistently declined over the last 19 years. Now, just one in four Americans (25%) is a practicing Christian...

Some believers start drifting spiritually when they begin missing Bible study and worship services...They never intended to become spiritual drifters. However, after missing a Sunday here and there, their spiritual anchors soon lift, and they begin to drift off course spiritually.

2. Invite unchurched people graciously. A good place to start is with **F.R.A.N.**, an acrostic for friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors. Inviting others graciously means with respect and gentleness, as opposed to being obnoxious or acting "holier-than-thou." During the period from 2005 to 2010, weekly church attendance edged upward, with the highwater mark occurring in 2009 when nearly half Americans (48%) indicated weekly attendance.

Recently, however, Barna's data showed a declining trend. Especially after 2012, weekly attendance declined significantly and has been hovering around three out of 10 adults attending since then. We need to funnel folks back to the church and one way to keep them is by...

3. Help make your church friendlier. The number one reason a visitor returns to a church is feeling welcome. Research reveals that for visitors to feel welcome they must have had their hands shaken at least five times by different people. One of the most important ministries of our church is making people feel welcome--Greet one another" (16:16). The Bible teaches that all members are asked to give a proper attitude of worship, to protect the unity of the church, to participate in the ministry of your church and then last...

IV. Pursue your God's given Gift for the Church vv.7, 10

1. The apostle Paul stresses here the perfecting of the saints in verse 12. The word "perfecting" comes from a Greek root word that means "complete furnishing or equipping". God gave spiritual leaders to teach and mature His saints to do the work of the ministry. Leadership is to equip and the saints who are to do the work of ministry. The apostle Paul amplifies this truth in his letter to the Church at Corinth.

2. Every saint and if you are "born again" you are a saint and you need to seek out your gift and use it. Indifference toward your duties as a member can harm your church and weaken its' influence. Every believer has at least one spiritual gift, which is not a ready-made ability but a supernatural enablement that must be developed. You developed it by working it out not by staying out.

3. God has a plan for each of our lives, and finding that purpose is the only way our lives will ever have real meaning and significance. Nothing can make the Christian life more exciting and fulfilling than discovering God's very important purpose for our lives. God has always had a purpose for you. To prepare you for His purpose God has allowed you to have certain experiences. These include vocational, educational, cultural, family, and sometimes even

painful experiences. God desires us to be good stewards of our pain. Sometimes our greatest opportunities for ministry come as a result of our pain, failure, or mistakes. --- Romans 8:28

4. To prepare you for His purpose God has given each believer special endowments of the Holy Spirit. We call these spiritual gifts. In the spiritual body of Christ believers have gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us (Romans 12:6a). Every believer has at least one spiritual gift, which is not a ready-made ability but a supernatural enablement that must be developed. indifference to the duties of members will kill your church. **James 1:22 describes it for us...**

Conclusion:

A true story illustrates this point: It took place at the University of California at Berkeley. The University had a termite problem so they order information to be given to the maintenance department. They were shoved into a closet and never distribute. A maintenance man went into a storage room and found this stack of pamphlets called "Control of Termites". He discovered that termites had eaten through the stacks of pamphlets. The university knew how to solve the problem of termites, but they didn't act on the knowledge they had. That's the way it is with us believers all too often. We know what the Word of God says but we always don't act on that knowledge.