

God's Expectations of His Church

Introduction:

Which is most important for the church to possess: Quality or Quantity?
The Bible, in the book of Acts, gives the answer.

Review: Jesus' Prayer for His Church

Jesus prayed that His church would...

- Sense the Glory of God
- Follow the Word of God
- Be united in the Love of God
- Go forth in the Mission of God
- Experience the Joy of God

Basically, Jesus prayed, "Father, develop a mature church that will carry on what I have already begun in this world."

Three Qualities of a Mature Church from the Upper Room:

1. Love

"A new command I give you: **Love one another**. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." - John 13:34,35

2. Faith

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; **believe also in me**." - John 14:1

3. Hope

"My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am**." - John 14:2,3

Maturity Principles from the Book of Acts:

1. Obedience comes before activity.

"He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised... ⁵ in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." - Acts 1:4,5

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." - Acts 1:8

2. Quality comes before quantity.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴⁷ And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." - Acts 2:42,47

3. Power comes before possessions.

"Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." - Acts 3:6

4. Spiritual ministry comes before temporal service.

"In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and **will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word**." - Acts 6:1-4

Three Qualities of a Mature Church

1. The church in Ephesus possessed Faith, Hope and Love.

"For this reason, ever since I heard about your **faith** in the Lord Jesus and your **love** for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the **hope** to which He has called you..." - Ephesians 1:15-18

2. The church in Colossae possessed Faith, Hope and Love.

"...we have heard of your **faith** in Christ Jesus and of the **love** you have for all God's people—⁵ the **faith** and **love** that spring from the **hope** stored up for you in heaven..." - Colossians 1:4-5

3. The church in Thessalonica possessed Faith, Hope and Love.

"We remember before our God and Father your work produced by **faith**, your labour prompted by **love**, and your endurance inspired by **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ..." - 1 Thessalonians 1:3

- Joy can be lost when one of these qualities is missing.

"...your **faith** is growing more and more, and the **love** all of you have for one another is increasing..." - 2 Thessalonians 1:3

- Love was missing from the church in Corinth.

"If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but **do not have love**, I gain nothing." - 1 Corinthians 13:3

Closing Thought:

- If the Apostle Paul sat down today and wrote a letter to Parkwood Gardens Church, what would he thank God for?
- If he sat down and wrote me a letter, would he sense and express that I possess these three qualities?

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