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THE CHURCH

A mini-series explaining why church is important and how it should be done.

PRETORIA NORTH BAPTIST CHURCH



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Part 1: Defining The Church

“Nothing in the world is dearer to God's heart than his church; therefore, being his, let us also belong to it, that by our prayers, our gifts, and our labours, we may support and strengthen it.” - Charles Spurgeon

“The church is precious for many reasons, but first and foremost because Jesus died on her behalf (Eph 5:25)” - John MacArthur

Introduction

Our word *church* is received from the Greek word *ekklesia* which means *“those who are called out”*. In the ancient world this word referred to any gathering of people, whether it be a trial, political assemblies or a community gathering for combat against aggressors. John MacArthur points out that it is in this way that Stephen uses the word in Acts 7:38.

The word however when used in the New Testament context refers to the community of those called out by God (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13; 1 Thess 2:14; 2 Thess 1:4; Rom 16:16). The church is not a building, nor an institution, and not a political or social movement. *“The church is the assembly of the redeemed”* (John 6:37; 10:29; 17:6, 9, 24; Col 1:13; Phil 3:20; 1 Pet 2:11).

The birth of the church happened on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-47 after having been purchased by the crucified and risen Christ (Acts 20:28; Col 3:1-4; Eph 1:22).

Jesus' seven principles for building his church

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus makes clear how he intends to and goes about to build his church. *“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* - ESV

1st Principle: A Permanent Foundation.

Christ was focused on the eternal not temporal. His usage of the word *'rock'* does not refer to Peter as many might presume. Peter's name in Greek is Petros and the basic meaning of Petros and Cephas is a movable, detachable bolder, in contrast to the *'rock'* Jesus mentions in the verse (*petra*) which is a reference to bedrock or mass of rock as used by the wise builder in Matthew 7:24-25.

The Old Testament pictures God as the rock (1 Sam 2:2; Ps 18:2; Ps 18:31) Paul identifies Christ as the rock in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:4) and mentions that no other foundation can be laid apart from Christ in 1 Corinthians 3:11. Paul mentions that he laid Christ as the foundation one verse earlier in 3:10 through his preaching of Christ.

Some would claim that the rock in Matthew 16:18 refers to Peter's declaration in Matthew 16:16 about Christ, but just as Paul laid the foundation by preaching Christ and Peter's declaration about Christ could be taken to be the *'rock'* on which the church is built, it is impossible to separate the

message and declaration of Christ from Jesus Christ, we can therefore conclude that the rock is Christ himself on which the church is built.

2nd Principle: Personal Involvement.

"I will build my church". We are not left to complete the task of church building on our own. Christ is the primary builder and the provider for his church (Rev 1:12-20; Col 1:27; 1 Cor 3:9). "How comforting to know that he built the church throughout its history and will continue to build it throughout its future" - John MacArthur.

3rd Principle: A Positive Expectation.

"I **will** build my church". Christ is not participating in wishful thinking. He is making a guarantee. This is a promise that should lift our spirits in times of difficulty. The church will never be destroyed, only ever be built and strengthened.

4th Principle: A Powerful Advance.

"I will **build** my church". Jesus is not leaving the church to chance or the decisions of men. He is actively involved. The church started with 3000 members being added on the first day (*Acts 2:41, 47*) and by the end of the New Testament there were churches in the Middle East all the way to Italy and moving to Spain. At this very hour, Christ is building his church.

5th Principle: A 'Paid-In-Full' Ownership.

"I will build **my** church". Jesus bought the church with his blood. Christ is our master and we are his slaves (2 Cor 4:5).

6th Principle: A People-Centred Priority.

"I will build my **church**". The church is an assembly of people who believe in Jesus (*Acts 4:32*). The church is built from all peoples of all nations and races and languages.

7th Principle: A Promise of SUCCESS.

"I will build my church, and the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it*". The church is on the offensive! We are not being attacked, we are attacking! The walls and gates of hell shall not withstand the forces of heaven, the battalion of the church and the regiment of all believers. We will conquer death and hell and destroy and occupy both!

Application

If the church is so important and valuable to Christ, it should be important and valuable to us. Christ loves the church, universal and local. Christ desires and expects of us to function and cooperate as his bride and the only way we can do this is by being involved in each other's lives and letting others into our lives. The church should be your excuse to miss other events and priorities, not the other way around. Christ gave his life for his bride, the least we can do is forfeit our comfort and desires, not to mention other areas of importance for our Groom.

Part 2: The Purposes of The Church

Introduction

The church of Jesus has three main purposes, *exalting God, edifying believers and evangelizing the lost*. John MacArthur summed it up perfectly in the following two paragraphs:

“When viewed from the standpoint of salvation history, the church exists to display the wisdom and mercy of God in this age (Eph. 3:10; Rom. 9:23-24; 11:33; 1 Cor. 1:20-31) by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Pet 2:9), so that sinners from every ethnic background (Rev. 5:9-10) might be rescued from the domain of darkness and ushered into the kingdom of God (Col. 1:12-13), and so that unbelieving Israel might be provoked to jealousy and repentance (Rom. 10:19; 11:11). Looking to the future, the New Testament also promises that the church will one day reign with Christ in Glory (1 Cor.6:2; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; Rev. 20:4-6).

From the standpoint of how the church relates to its members, its purpose might be stated as follows: the church exists to glorify God (Eph. 1:5-6, 12-14; 3:20-21; 2 Thess. 1:12) by actively building its members up in the faith (Eph. 4:12-16) faithfully teaching the Word (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17), regularly observing the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), proactively fostering fellowship among believers (Acts 2:42-47; 1 John 1:3), and boldly communicating the truth of the gospel to the lost (Matt. 28:19-20).”

Exalting God

God is jealous for his own glory and because of this, we should be zealous for his glory. We should be eager to obey his commands and follow his instructions simply because it glorifies God. God's actions throughout history has always been aimed at what gives him the most glory (*Isa. 48:9-11; Isa. 43:6-7; 49:3; 1 Cor. 10:31; 6:20*).

Although churches are for people and focused on reaching people, the church is not man-centered. It is God-centered. God is the end-all-be-all when it comes to the bride of Jesus Christ.

Churches also exalt God through praise and worship. “Whenever the church gathers, worship ought to be the ultimate priority” (John MacArthur). We worship God by ascribing honor to him, proclaiming his promises, declaring his magnificent character and devoting ourselves to him.

We also exalt God through the proclamation of the gospel. When sinners on their way to hell come to hear the gospel and through it accept Christ as Lord and Savior, God is most glorified. His Son died for this very reason.

Edifying Believers

There is much that can be said on how we as believers can edify one another, but an all-encompassing way to do this is by following the “one another” commandments.

- Love one another (Rom 12:10; 13:8; 1 Thess 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thess 1:3; 1 Pet 1:22; 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 5).
- Live in harmony with one another (Rom 12:16; 15:5; Gal 5:26; 1 Thess 5:13).

- Welcome one another (Rom 15:7; Rom 16:16).
- Admonish one another (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16).
- Care for one another (1 Cor 12:25).
- Serve one another (Gal 5:13; 1 Pet 4:10).
- Bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2).
- Be patient with one another (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).
- Be kind to one another (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).
- Forgive one another (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).
- Sing praises with one another (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16).
- Regard one another as more important than oneself (Phil 2:3).
- Speak the truth to one another (Col 3:9).
- Encourage one another (1 Thess 4:18; 5:11; Heb 3:13; 10:25).
- Seek good for one another (1 Thess 5:15).
- Stir up one another to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24; 1 Tim 6:17-18).
- Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16).
- Pray for one another (James 5:16).
- Be hospitable to one another (1 Pet 4:9).
- Be humble towards one another (1 Pet 5:5).

Evangelizing The Lost

Churches that desire to glorify God will have a desire to see the lost saved. This desire can be manifested in both local and international missions. The evangelistic mandate of the church was given from our Lord's own mouth, Matthew 28:18-20.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” – ESV

True evangelism involves making disciples and training them to think and live like Jesus. It is not merely convincing people to ‘make a decision’. According to this passage, we need to make disciples as we live our lives. The word “Go” is a continuous participle in Greek and could awkwardly be translated to “As you are going”.

The passage also instructs us on how to make disciples. We make disciples by baptizing them, by teaching them and helping them to observe (obey) the commandments and by introducing them to the whole of the Trinity.

Application

Which one of these purposes do you neglect mostly? Which one of these purposes do you aspire to mostly? A practical way to help you grow in your understanding of the purposes of the church as well as grow yourself in those purposes is to think of five ways you can help the church with accomplishing its purposes through your life. Maybe you should be focusing on worshipping God more? Maybe evangelism is a struggle? What is your five point strategy for being a better exalter of God?

Part 3: Spiritual Authority in The Church

Introduction

Jesus is the supreme ruler of the church. His sovereign Lordship was bestowed on him by the Father. **JESUS IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH** (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19; 1 Cor. 11:3; Matt. 11:27; John 3:35; 5:22; Acts 2:36; Phil. 2:9-11).

Elders

Elders are the means by which Jesus has decided his local churches must be led. Elders are to be selected (preferably) from within the local congregation as seen in Paul's example by selecting elders locally throughout the New Testament. Elders are to be held to a higher standard as seen in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

A man must qualify to be an elder before given to official title and office, therefore the character qualities must be already existing before being appointed as an elder. The office carries with it a responsibility that must not be taken lightly (James 3:1).

Responsibilities: Elders are to care for the church (1 Tim. 3:5) as part of the authority delegated to them by the Head as well as to give oversight in local church affairs. 1 Timothy 5:17 teaches us that elders who *rule* well are to be given double honour. The usage of the word 'rule' signifies that there is no *earthly* authority within the local church higher than that of an elder. "It is an authority built on precept and example to which the church gladly submits (Heb. 13:17)" (John MacArthur).

Elders are expected to preach and teach (1 Tim. 3:2; Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:15; Neh. 8:8; Titus 1:9; 1 Pet 2:2; Ps. 1:2-3; Heb. 5:12-13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 4:2). Elders are responsible for church polity (Acts 15:22), ordain other elders (1 Tim. 4:14), set an example for the sheep (1 Pet 5:1-3; Heb. 13:7), protect the sheep from false doctrine (Acts 20:28-30) and pray for the sheep (James 5:14).

Authority: The authority of elders is solely received from the Lord Jesus and the elder's commitment to his Word. Elders are not equal to the Bible and definitely not above it in authority. An elder of a local church has no authority outside of scripture. What is meant by this is not that our elders should not lead and guide us in our secular lives, but that if an elder gives instruction or counsel that contradicts the Bible, the members has no obligation to obey (2 Tim. 3:16; Acts 17:10-15).

Plurality: Scripture presents the pastoral effort as a group effort. We see the New Testament model as displaying a plurality of elders that work together within a local church as seen by the regular usage of the word *presbyteros*, which is almost always used in the plural (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2; 20:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14). As MacArthur noted, the few singular exceptions occur when the Bible authors apply the word to themselves.

In leading the local congregation, the principle of unanimity among all elders needs to be followed. This kind of unity must always be reflected from leadership to the members since all have the mind and Spirit of Christ (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3; Phil. 1:27; 2:2). On occasion when there is disagreement over a decision, the elders should pause with any decision making, and first retreat to prayer, scripture and fellowship before coming together again and discussion the matter. This model

displays an example of unity and harmony from the elders to the members (Rom. 15:5; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Pet. 3:8).

Deacons

The New Testament puts the focus of the office of a deacon on the character of the person. A deacon needs to qualify in the same way an elder has to, with the exception of needing the ability to teach.

The word used for deacon originally was ascribed to serving food and waiting tables, but it came to include ministry that is preformed to meet the needs of other people (Luke 4:39; 10:40; 17:8; 22:27; John 2:5, 9; 12:2; Acts 6:2; John 12:26; Rom 13:3-4 - these verses are in reference to the usage of the word deacon).

Deaconesses: In 1 Timothy 3:11 we see indication that the office of a deacon is not solely available for men, such as the office of an elder. Some translations will translate the verse aforementioned verse as “Wives” or “Their wives”, however this is not accurate. The word used in Greek can be translated as both “women” or “wives” however Paul does not provide a possessive pronoun to indicate the women 'belonging' to anyone. He seems to designating women as an entity on their own within the context of deaconship.

“Consequently, the grammar suggests that the women addressed in 3:11 are relationally distinct from the men addressed in the previous verses. If Paul's intention was to elaborate on the behaviour of a deacon's wife, how come did he not do the same for the elders?

In summary, a contemporary deacon will be responsible for the management and maintenance of all church assets, the provision and care for the members of the church and provide assistance to the elders where need be.

Table 9.2 *Qualifications for Elders and Deacons*

Elders	Deacons
Above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)	Proven blameless (1 Tim. 3:10)
Husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)	Husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:12)
Sober-minded (1 Tim. 3:2)	Sober-minded [deaconesses] (1 Tim. 3:11)
Self-controlled and disciplined (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)	
Respectable (1 Tim. 3:2)	Dignified (1 Tim. 3:8)
Hospitable (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)	
Holding firm to the Word (Titus 1:9)	Holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (1 Tim. 3:9)
Able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2); able to give instruction in sound doctrine and to rebuke those who contradict it (Titus 1:9)	
Not a drunkard (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)	Not addicted to much wine (1 Tim. 3:8)
Not violent but gentle (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)	
Not quarrelsome or quick-tempered (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)	
Not a lover of money or greedy for gain (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)	Not greedy for dishonest gain (1 Tim. 3:8)
Skilled manager of his household (1 Tim. 3:4)	Manages household well (1 Tim. 3:12)
Keeping his children submissive with all dignity (1 Tim. 3:4); having faithful children not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination (Titus 1:6)	Manages children well (1 Tim. 3:12)
Above reproach as God's steward (Titus 1:7)	Faithful in all things [deaconesses] (1 Tim. 3:11)
Not a recent convert lest he become conceited (1 Tim. 3:6); not arrogant (Titus 1:7)	Must first be tested before serving (1 Tim. 3:10)
Well thought of by outsiders (1 Tim. 3:7)	(Implied in 1 Tim. 3:8)
A lover of good (Titus 1:8)	
Upright (Titus 1:8)	(Implied in 1 Tim. 3:10)
Holy (Titus 1:8)	(Implied in 1 Tim. 3:10)
	Not double-tongued (1 Tim. 3:8)
	Not a slanderer [deaconesses] (1 Tim. 3:11)

Part 4: Means of Grace within The Church

Introduction

God uses various means of grace with which to grow believers in Christlikeness. These means of grace are used to strengthen faith and conform us to the image of his Son (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

The means of grace used by God include:

- God's Word
- Baptism
- The Lord's Table
- Prayer
- Worship
- Fellowship
- Church Discipline

God's Word

God's Word is the primary method used by the Holy Spirit to grow believers in sanctification (1 Pet. 2:1-3). There is a direct correlation between the holiness of believers and the Word of God in their lives (John 17:17).

The Word of God needs to be a priority in the church and therefore in our lives (Acts 6:4). "This ministry is primarily accomplished through reading, preaching, and teaching the Scriptures". Like Timothy's instruction from the Apostle Paul, we are to devote ourselves to the reading of God's Word (1 Tim. 4:13).

Baptism

The word baptize means *to immerse*. The term was used in the days of the New Testament to refer to actions such as dipping fabric into dye. "But it is also used figuratively in the New Testament to emphasize the close identity and solidarity between two people.

For example, in 1 Corinthians 10:2..." (John MacArthur). The baptism of believers is done as per instruction and example of the Lord (along with the celebration of the Lord's Table as seen in Matthew 3:13-17; 28-19) in order to symbolize the internal reality of salvation. Believers are to be baptized in water as a public testimony to their faith and to show solidarity with the Lord Jesus. Water baptism acts as an outward, post-conversion demonstration of an inward reality that has already taken place.

The Lord's Table

Like baptism, the Lord's Table or communion is an ordinance that must be observed by the church. The difference between baptism and the Lord's table is that the Lord's Table must be observed and practiced by the Christian throughout their entire life.

The Lord's Table was practiced and initiated by Jesus on the last time he would celebrate the Passover with his disciples. He took the Jewish tradition and transformed it into something much more important. The Passover was the Jewish celebration of escaping slavery from Egypt, the Lord's Table celebrates our escape from sin and death through the sacrifice of Jesus.

The practice of the Lord's Table was observed by the early church (Acts 2:42) and would be known by many different names such as *love feasts* (Jude 12). Instructions that we are to follow when it comes to the Lord's Table are laid out for us in passages such as 1 Corinthians 11:23-32. Because 1 Corinthians may have been written earlier, before the Gospels, this account may be our earliest writing on the Lord's Table.

Prayer

Prayer is probably one of the most neglected means of grace in many churches, both corporately and privately. Prayer however is vital for our growth in holiness (Heb. 4:16). Paul makes clear the importance of prayer in many places such as 1 Thessalonians 5:17, where he instructs us to pray without ceasing.

The command to pray (Matt. 6:5-6; Mark 11:24; Luke 5:16; 11:1-2; Acts 10:9; Rom 8:26; 1 Cor 14:13-15; Eph 6:18; Col 1:9; 2 Thess 3:1; James 5:13-14, 16) includes prayers that focus on dependence, adoration, confession, intercession, thanksgiving and supplication. God honouring prayer is motivated by the desire to honour God and have fellowship with him (Ps 27:4; 42:1-2; 63:1-2; 84:1-2; John 14:13-14).

Worship

“Worship is the theme of salvation history” (John 4:23). We worship God through prayer by ascribing to him glory, honor, praise and worth (Matt. 4:10; Rev. 14:7) and worship unlike evangelism will endure for all eternity (Rev 22:3-4; 19:1-6).

True worship must begin in the heart. There are many ways in which believers can and should worship God, some of these are:

- Giving (2 Cor 9:6-15)
- Prayer
- Obedience (Matt. 22:37)

Worship is much more than just signing songs in church. It is firstly heart oriented and about us giving God our whole lives as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2).

Fellowship

Fellowship comes from the Greek word *Koinonia*, meaning partnership or sharing. The basis for this sharing and partnership in life is salvation. Because of the fellowship that believers have with the Lord Jesus, we have fellowship with one another (1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 6:17). If anyone is a believer in Jesus Christ, they abandon all Earthly elements that might cause separation such as race, politics and culture. All believers become part of a SUPER CULTURE in which the interests of other become more important than our personal interests (John 13:35; 17:21).

Fellowship includes sacrificial service towards one another (Phil. 2:1-4; Acts 4:32-37). This is best illustrated by the Apostle Paul's comparison of the church to a body (1 Cor 12:12-27). All of us are suppose to work together towards one goal and that goal is the glorification of Jesus Christ through proclaiming him and making disciples.

Church Discipline

The word discipline leaves a bad taste in many people's mouths. It is often solely connected with negativity and hurt. Church discipline in contrast is done from a place of love and respect. Some have preferred to replace the word *discipline* with the word **restoration**.

Church discipline is the means by which the church is kept pure (2 Cor 7:1; Acts 5:11; 1 Cor 5:1-13; 2 Thess 3:6-15; 1 Tim 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16). The practice is never to be done with the agenda to embarrass or humiliate or to push one's personal or political agenda. It should be overseen by the elders with the purpose of restoring a sinning brother or sister (Gal 6:1-3).

The process of church discipline is outlined for us by the Lord Jesus himself in Matthew 18:15-17. The passage outlines a four-step process in which church discipline is to be done.

1. **Personal:** Believers are to address sin in a personal and private manner. The sinning person needs to repent of their sin or correct a misunderstanding. If the sinning person refuses to repent, we proceed to step two.

2. **Group:** The believer who is addressing the sin of the sinning person invites one or two believers to join the conversation. This should not come as a surprise to the sinner. The sinner needs to be informed of this as well as made aware of when and where this will happen. The other persons joining the process must not be 'fed' information so as to make them bias. They merely need to be informed of a process of discipline and be asked to sit in on the next conversation.

3. **Church:** If the sinner still refuses to repent, the matter must be given over to the elders and the church. They should continue to show love and respect and try and persuade the sinner to repent.

4. **Excommunicate:** If the sinner still refuses to lay off their sin for Christ, they are to be revoked of membership and removed from the fellowship of believers. In this stage, the church is to treat the sinner like an unbeliever, showing love and mercy and evangelizing him or her while praying, in hope that they will repent of their sin.

At any of these stages, if the person repents, they are to be fully forgiven and nothing is to be held against them.

Part 5: A Foretaste of Heaven

Introduction

The church provides believers with a foretaste of heaven. If you do not like the church, the local church, it is safe enough to say that you will not like heaven, unless you are supernaturally changed. Local churches are all flawed and imperfect, but they are the only places on Earth where the activities of heaven are reflected and practiced.

The Church is our foretaste

The church resembles and reflects heaven in a number of ways:

- God's people desire to submit to his moral will (Matt. 6:10).
- They seek to obey him out of love and devotion (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3).
- Believers serve God (Rev. 22:3-5).
- We desire holiness (1 John 3:2-3).
- Believers offer continuous adoration to God (Heb. 13:15).

The church is not by any means perfect, but that is because the church currently consists of redeemed sinners. In heaven all sin and selfishness will be removed. We will be purely devoted to God and to one another. We will exalt God for all eternity and be joyful forever (Rev. 4:8-11; 5:11-14; Phil. 2:9-11).

As a church, we can make our local church feel more like heaven and reflect heaven much closer if we earnestly pursue to walk in holiness towards each other and the outside world (Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:10; 1 Pet. 1:16; Ps. 15:2).

Closing Thoughts

Many people may have had bad experiences when it comes to church. Many of you reading this booklet may have a sour memory of an interaction or an event related to the church in the past. What's important to understand is that the church is not a "*hurt free zone*". Joining a church almost guarantees that you will in some way at some time be hurt by someone else. Why? Because you are sharing in life as a sinner with other sinners.

No matter how sanctified or mature in the faith a Christian may be, they always have the potential to act in a selfish manner towards their eternal brothers and sisters. We often find ourselves hurt the most by those who we least expect it from. It is crucial as a member of a local church to understand that the church is a *foretaste* of heaven and not heaven itself.

Those within the church are in a state of becoming, just like yourself. Because the church is an environment where people share their lives with each other, in contrast to places such as workspaces, hobbies or social clubs, the severity of hurt is always worse. As believers we must always have Paul's mindset illustrated in 1 Corinthians 6:7. We must always place God on top of the hierarchy of importance. If honouring God is our ultimate goal in life and in all interactions with others, we will let ourselves be defrauded and wronged for the sake of our Lord, just like Jesus patiently took the unjust blows of evil against himself for the sake of his Father and his bride.

When we as the eternally redeemed desire to please God above all else, church truly becomes a shadow of heaven. We will serve one another without expecting praise or gratitude. We will put the interests of others first before our own. We will literally lay down our lives for each other all in the name of glorifying God.

Is our church perfect? No one will say that it is. But our church is made up of people who desire to die to their sinful selves and please God! That is what gives us hope, that is the gift of God to us.

What should you do now? YOU SERVE! Do not wait for your fellow Christian to do the right thing, do not hope that someone else will read this document and do not lecture others on what they should

be doing. First focus on YOU! YOU SERVE! Despite ungratefulness, lack of praise and people who might even take advantage of you, HONOR GOD! When you are serving God you never serve in vain and you will never lack.

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