

The Effective Church

Acts 11:20-26 (NIV)

²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ **The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.** ²² News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴ **He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.** ²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. **So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.** The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

1 Corinthians 9:26 (NIV)

²⁶ Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.

I. Thriving Christian Community

A. _____

A primary way in which we serve God is by serving with His people.

B. _____

We are integrally bound to one another – in our mission, purpose & evaluation of success.

Mark 11:24-25

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

C. _____ ---the cross

Galatians 6:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

1 Corinthians 1:18, 20-24 (NIV)

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but **to us who are being saved it is the power of God.** ²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but **we preach Christ crucified:** a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

II. 3 Attitudes Which are OK

A. A welcoming atmosphere

Matthew 9:12

Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.

B. We want to be the best we can be

1 Corinthians 9:24-26 (NIV)

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.

C. It is okay to be proud of your church

Ephesians 1:1-2, 15-16 (NIV)

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . ¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

III. Concerns & Fears . . .

A. I'll be used

Mark 5:22-24

Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet ²³ and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

B. I won't be treated fairly

John 9:13-16

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

C. All they want is _____

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (NIV)

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

D. They will play on my _____

John 11:43-44

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

E. I don't want to go too far . . .

Matthew 10:38-39 (NIV)

anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the Body of Christ. Forgive me for being critical of Your people. I repent of indifference and distraction. May the purposes of the living God be ignited within my heart. Enable me to use my life to serve You and Your people. May Your Church awaken to the opportunities of this generation and boldly proclaim the Lordship of Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus' name, amen.

KEY: service; relationship; redemption; money; emotions

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