

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ!

10 21 25 V1n24 -- SOME KEY BASICS FOR A CHRIST-FOCUSED, BIBLE-BELIEVING CONGREGATION!

If you are... or if you are ministering to someone who is presently seeking the LORD'S DIRECTION as to a 'Church Family' ... OR if you need a fresh reminder on some important basics —You may find help here! **But first, CONSIDER:**

(1) When couples are considering the possibility of getting married; **(2) When churches** call a new pastor; **(3) and/or When** families or individuals are praying about AND seeking a new church home — **in all of these important areas far too many people will make 'surface' decisions** only to wake up a few days or a few months later totally surprised! They find out that they have entered into a covenant relationship with STRANGERS! **Problems explode. Conflict/divorce, rage!**

A common root problem is the process!

Too often these critical decisions are made without truly walking in the light with one another! We don't bother to tell the whole truth about who we really are; where we have been; and/or what scars in our lives might still be fresh, etc.

INDEED: In the real world, as to churches: 1) Many folks who are visiting churches are hurting from conflict or some

sort of difficulty in previous churches. **2) Others have moved to a new area and** are seeking a new church home; thus, they need honest information about the churches they may visit; and they also need to be honest! **3) Others simply have release** by the Holy Spirit to seek a fresh place of ministry.

4) Still others have found that their current Church has moved away from some of the core essentials of their 'faith and practice' of former days; and so they seek a loving fellowship that is more grounded in the Word of God.

5) SOME might be tired of needing 'ear plugs' when they come to worship; and they long for the grand old HYMNS of the Faith, right out of a Hymn book!

'HEADS UP!" In the following pages we set forth several important positions, beliefs, and/or practices which we believe should characterize a Christ-focused, Bible believing church! It is our prayer that saints in Christ, far and wide, will find something in these pages that will be of help in your journey of faith!

"ANOTHER HEADS UP!" The more that an entire church family is FOCUSED on these basics, the more powerful, effective, unified, and Christ-glorifying we will be!

Here are some Basics of a Good Church Fellowship:

I. A HIGH VIEW OF GOD: Jeremiah 9:23 & 24 states that the greatest quest in life worth boasting about is the quest

of knowing God. A good church will help you grow in Biblical knowledge of and fellowship with the True and Living God.

II. WORSHIP and PRAISE: The congregation's highest priority and privilege is worship. Psalm 2:11 declares, "*...Worship the Lord with reverence, and rejoice with trembling.*" Sadly, the modern trend today finds churches seeking to please congregations in whatever style of music they like. The world loves rock, rap, hip-hop, country, etc. Thus, many modern church services are more and more filled with 'Christianized' versions of people's secular loves and tastes.

However, Christian Worship is God-centered, not man-centered. God is worthy that we should Praise Him! Worship is for God and not for our carnal pleasure. Christian music should not be a mimic of the world. **At Southside, we love the great hymns of the faith because they are God-focused and God-glorifying!** We also appreciate modern Christian songs, praise music, Scripture songs, etc., so long as the words are God-honoring and the accompanying music matches those words instead of sounding like the world.

III. THE FAMILY: Our modern society has unleashed an unprecedented onslaught against the family. **To make the family a priority is to teach husbands to love** and lead their wives (Eph. 5:25); wives to submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22), and children to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1), and parents to train their children in the ways of the LORD (Eph. 6:4). Note:

That is God's agenda; and we best receive it! MOREOVER, God has ordained marriage to be between one man and one woman. Period. THUS: **We seek** to build up families! **We seek** to provide a haven for single parents by surrounding them with godly families. **We seek** to empower and encourage families. **We seek to encourage families with children— be they public school, home school, or Christian school families. ON Wednesday nights entire families meet together for study, fellowship, etc.**

IV. DISCIPLESHIP: The church must be equipping men and women for ministry. The mission of the church is clear, "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...*" (Matt. 28:19) The call is not to 'count nickels and noses' so as to get the praise of men for having a crowd present. **Moreover, discipleship in a body of believers is not** the exclusive responsibility of pastors. Indeed, the primary privilege of this process lies with the assembly of saints: (Meditate upon **Ephesians 4:11-16; I Corinthians 12:13-26**)

Christian Fellowship and Discipleship takes place in Sunday School Classes, Ladies Bible Studies, Saturday Men's meetings, in our homes, and etc. **"FAMILIES TOGETHER" on Wednesday nights, at 6:30pm** Parents and Children, of all, of mixed ages ... all meet together for a time of varied activities, for Bible Studies, led by various parents, etc...

V. EVANGELISM: A church obedient to Christ will have a solid emphasis upon sharing the Gospel, beginning in its own community and extending to the uttermost parts of the earth. Our Lord Jesus charged His disciples just prior to His ascension with these words, *"....and you shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth."* (Acts 1:11) THUS, by the grace of God, Southside is a MISSION MINDED congregation! **FYI — Two of the greatest hindrances to evangelism today are unholy living and conflict in the churches.** At Southside, God continues to call us to holiness and love so as not to cancel the Gospel message we proclaim!

VI. A SERVANT'S ATMOSPHERE: Where the Word of God is taught and saints are growing there will be people serving. A good church emphasizes everyone's responsibility for involvement and mutual ministry. *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many."* (Mark 10:45). *"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh; but through love serve one another."* (Gal. 5:13) We seek to be a congregation of servants for Christ.

VII. PREACHING & TEACHING: Biblical preaching is not to be geared toward amusing the audience; nor geared toward some fad that comes down the pike in our entertainment-oriented age. **Biblical preaching will TEACH the faith; CORRECT error;**

RESET the direction of our lives; and TRAIN us in righteous living. **Preaching and teaching that is true to God's Word will equip us for every good work and supply genuine needs!** (2

Tim. 3:16-17) Paul charged Pastor Timothy, *"Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."* (I Timothy 4:2) **We live in an**

intense spiritual war zone— and yet, there are many who seek churches where their 'ears will be tickled'. They have little or no interest in sound Biblical doctrine. They want to keep their sin and be promised heaven. They love fables and stories and religious entertainment. **At Southside, we desire to grow in love for and practice of the pure Word of God!**

Moreover, on a typical Sunday at Southside— Our lead Pastor/Elder Jaden Allen, or one of our other elders, or a faithful man from the congregation; or a visiting Missionary] may be in the pulpit! We find it to be a positive experience for the congregation to receive the pure Word of God through various personalities who have various gifts. **Pastors also profit from sitting in the pews!** And, it is a wonderful way for the Pastor/Teacher to equip the saints by giving saints opportunity to have their faith stretched and gifts developed!

VIII. A CLEAR GOSPEL MESSAGE: The Gospel is the good news of Christ's death for sinners, His burial and resurrection, all according to the Scriptures. [SEE I Corinthians 15:1-4 where this Gospel is clearly presented.] A good church will continually

be refuting the idea that men and women can obtain Heaven through human merit of any kind.

Ephesians 2:8-9 states, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."* **We believe that** a good church will also be bold to proclaim **Ephesians 2:10!** FOR TRUE Salvation is GOD'S WORKMANSHIP; the work of God's sovereign and free grace! True salvation results in a changed life that overflows with good works! THUS, we must constantly convey that salvation is: By GRACE alone Through FAITH alone because of CHRIST alone, UNTO good works, AND for the GLORY OF GOD!

IX. A COMMITMENT TO THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES: A high view of the Bible is demonstrated in a good church when preaching and teaching is done under the presupposition that God has given to us a Bible with answers for life's questions and problems. In II Peter 1:3, we are clearly told that God has *"Granted to us everything pertaining to life and Godliness."* **THUS, a good church will not substitute heart issues with psychological jargon (Matt. 15:19), or label sin as disease.** Nor will a good church turn to fables and stories in a carnal attempt to keep folk's attention. **Attentiveness to the Word of God is a spiritual, heart decision and choice!**

The Attractiveness of Jesus and His Word comes by the blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit, not by a Hollywood movie

clip in a sermon. The Psalmist declared the sufficiency of God's Wisdom when he said, *"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."* (Psalm 19:7)

X. Dependence upon the Holy Spirit is critical for a good, Bible-believing Church. Upon Spiritual birth, all Christians are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, (1 Cor. 12:13). We are commanded to be being continuously filled with the Holy Spirit, (Eph 5:18; Col. 3:16); and we are warned not to quench or grieve the Holy Spirit, (1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30). God has given various gifts of the Holy Spirit, as it pleases Him, (1 Cor. 12:1-33; Rom. 12:1-9; Eph. 4:11-16)

Note: Christians are at different places as to understanding some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, there is nothing in the New Testament that equates any or even all of the gifts as being a sign of a high level of spirituality or power with God. **The Corinthian Church came behind in no gift, yet they were very carnal.** The great need is for Christians to be being filled with the Holy Spirit, overflowing with abundant evidence of the nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit! (Gal. 5:21-24)

XI. A WILLINGNESS TO IMPLEMENT CHURCH DISCIPLINE: The name of Christ will be honored and the purity of the church will be maintained only when the members of the church are willing to obey God in their commitment to lovingly and in humility of heart, confront one another when needed:

*"And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother." (Matt. 18:15) "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted." (Gal. 6:1) **RESTORATION requires forgiveness, which is both a great virtue and the key to genuine unity in the church...** or in our homes! When we forgive each other, we tear down the barriers that are built up through sin. As Christians we are to *"Forgive each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."* (Eph. 4:12).*

Based upon the fact that we have received the forgiveness of God in Christ, we are to offer forgiveness to others.

XII. A GOOD CHURCH MUST BE COMMITTED TO A LIFE OF PRAYER: Since only God can do the work of God, then we must pray. The Temple of Jesus is still to be a Temple of Prayer. Private, individual prayer, and Church-wide prayer must be a priority!

At Southside, we are committed to be and to be becoming a good church! We will never arrive! We will always be in process. WITH OUR EYES ON JESUS, we will continue to go forward. If ever we put our eyes on man - any man - we will fragment. **Will a good church be free of problems?** No! — Because people = potential problems! But a good church will face and deal with problems in a loving, solution-oriented,

Christian manner. (The above points are not exhaustive... but certainly foundational!)

ABUNDANT GRACE TO YOU AND YOURS!

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sunday Services, OCTOBER 26

Sunday School @ 9:30am; classes all ages
WORSHIP SERVICE @ 10:45am

SPECIAL MEETINGS:

October 26, 5:00pm WORSHIP SERVICE- Adam Troutt, preaching

EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am— Men's Bible Study (Doors open by 7:30am— Enjoy Coffee / Juice / Donuts / Hardee's Biscuits!) **STUDY** starts @ 8:00am—

NEXT Ladies Bible Study— October 28 @ 11:00am
 (LESSONS from JOB) – (Downstairs, BIG Bible Study room)

EVERY TUESDAY @ 10:00am – 10:30am LADIES PRAYER MEETING (Back door, first room on right)

TUESDAY EVENING, Teens, Young Adults— Bible Study,
'EXODUS!' ... 7:15pm @ Jaden & Rhi's home

WEDNESDAYS, 6:30pm— (Come in back double doors; **ADULT
MEN'S PRAYER GROUP**
YOUNG FAMILIES— Study & Prayer Service

**LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD (by MAIL or by
ONLINE GIVING) For Church Ministry and/or
MISSIONS: SUCH funds, (if checks), make out to
Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO: Southside Baptist
Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066 / OR... TO
GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:**

<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>