

FAITH ENGAGE 13: Church - PURPOSE

7.13.14

Matthew 22:36-39; 28:18-20

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With thanks to Rick Warren and his book “The Purpose-Driven Church”

Introduction

God loves the church. Jesus the Son came, died and rose to save her. She is now the temple of the Holy Spirit. She is the essence of the new covenant – **God’s law written in our hearts**. The church is the bride of Christ and there will be a wedding feast in heaven. The intimate union of husband and wife models the greater intimate union of Jesus and His bride, the **church**. **Jesus told the disciples that upon the rock of the truth that “Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God” He would build His church, “and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” The church will last forever!**

Individual churches are also loved by God. He ordained them. The apostles were told to appoint leaders in each of the churches begun in the first century. Paul and other apostles wrote letters of encouragement and challenge to many individual churches. Some of the New Testament books are letters to pastors of individual churches encouraging them to stand strong. The apostle John wrote letters to 7 individual churches in the book of Revelation.

But what is the **PURPOSE** of the church universal, and of each individual church that holds to the truth of Jesus Christ as Messiah and Son of the Living God? More specifically for us, what **is God’s PURPOSE for Oaks Bible Church?** I believe that God has laid out the 5-fold **PURPOSE** for the church in the Great Commandment and Great Commission. Pastor Rick Warren has written of this in his best-selling book “**The Purpose-Driven Church.**”

Today, in our FAITH ENGAGE series, let us examine this 5-fold purpose of the church, and see how Oaks is doing in this regard.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS: Matthew 22:36-39

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” And he said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

THE GREAT COMMISSION: Matthew 28:18-20

*And Jesus came up and spoke to **them**, saying, “**All authority has been given** to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

From the Great Commandments:

1. **WORSHIP** – “**love the Lord your God**”
2. **SERVICE** – “**love your neighbor as yourself**”

From the Great Commission:

3. **EVANGELISM** – “**make disciples**”
4. **FELLOWSHIP** – “**baptizing them**”
5. **DISCIPLESHIP** – “**teaching them**”

FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS – ACTIVITY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Acts 2:42 *They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching an to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

Note the implication of **DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP and WORSHIP**

Acts 2:45 *And they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.*

Note the implication of **SERVICE**

Acts 5:42 *And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*

Acts 6:7 *The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to **increase greatly** ...*

Note the implication of **EVANGELISM**

Acts 9:31 *So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.*

Note the implication of **DISCIPLESHIP, WORSHIP and FELLOWSHIP**

FROM THE APOSTLES' WRITINGS - WORSHIP

Romans 12:1 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

FROM THE APOSTLES' WRITINGS - DISCIPLESHIP

Ephesians 4:15-16 *But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, chases the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*

James 1:22 *But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

FROM THE APOSTLES' WRITINGS - FELLOWSHIP

Philippians 2:1-2 *Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.*

1 John 1:3 *What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

FROM THE APOSTLES' WRITINGS - SERVICE

Galatians 6:9-10 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Titus 3:14 Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

FROM THE APOSTLES' WRITINGS - EVANGELISM

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

Colossians 4:5-6 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

I note that the key concept in all 5 purposes is GIVE (not receive)

We are to GIVE worship to our God

We are to GIVE in following our Lord as disciples

We are to GIVE as we strive for the unity and sharing together as a body

WE are to GIVE as we serve others with our time, talent and treasure

WE are to GIVE as we share the message of salvation

Emphasizing worship makes an EXPERIENCING GOD church

Emphasizing discipleship makes a BIBLICAL CLASSROOM church

Emphasizing fellowship makes a FAMILY REUNION church

Emphasizing service makes a SOCIAL CONCERNS church

Emphasizing evangelism makes a SOUL-WINNING church

WE need to strive to be all 5 in balance!

MY PASTORAL ASSESSMENT:

Oaks tends to lean towards FELLOWSHIP and DISCIPLESHIP, emphasizing well: family and following. We can always use improvement, but these are our strengths at this point.

Next in our strength would be WORSHIP, but this purpose can use improvement and growth – both in our individual and corporate worship

Weakest in our strengths would be SERVICE and EVANGELISM, and we need to work most on these two purposes. We need to better extend our reach to others both within the body and in our community. We also need to better grow in the heart and mind of a soul-winning church.

MY PASTORAL CHALLENGE:

*Would you pray how you can personally grow in the areas of SERVICE and EVANGELISM? How can you better serve in the body at Oaks? How can you better grow a heart of evangelism? **Would you ask the Holy Spirit to give you a servant's heart and a boldness in sharing Christ?***