

Marks of a Great Church (3)

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Introduction: It is not uncommon to hear concern expressed about the future of the Lord's church.

- A. However much of the concern expressed in general and without personal effort on the part of the one speaking!
1. The Bible is specific concerning how a local church is to function. We need to look at God's word and not the fads of men.
 2. There cannot be any solution until the issue is made personal. (**Jas 2:14-18**)
 3. Today this or any other church can become great before God if each individual would apply these truths to their lives.

B. So far we have examined six characteristics of a great church. A Great Church is characterized by:

1. A Determination to Please God.
2. A Concern for the Lost
3. A Strong Stand for the Truth
4. Members Who Serve Others
5. Mutual Love and Respect among its Members
6. Spiritual Growth on the Part of Every Person

I. A Great Church is Characterized by a Spirit of Cooperation.

A. A great church is one where everyone does their part.

1. Consider the chart of J.D. Tant.
2. Is your attitude like this: "If it is a Bible work, you can count on me!"?
3. Consider the opportunities here.

B. Let us be sure it is a Bible work. (**2 Tim 3:16-17**)

1. We cannot ask others to be a part of that which has no Bible basis.
2. In fact we all should know what the Bible authorizes. (**Col 3:17**)

C. Consider the spirit of cooperation in the early church.

1. They all worked together with "sincerity of heart" (ASV) (**Acts 2:42-44,46**)
2. These Christians were of "one heart and one soul". (**Acts 4:32-35**)

D. Consider how this church faced its problems. (**Acts 6:1-6**)

1. They did not say: "We are doing the best we can. If you do not like the way we are doing it then get somebody else."
2. These brethren **saw** the problem, **acknowledged** the problem, and **worked out** the problem.
3. Some churches have the same characteristics of a dysfunctional family. They are taught to ignore problems for fear of division. They will always get what they fear!
4. These brethren did not say: "You have not done us right so we are going to stop and not take part anymore."
5. Rather than split or have some withdraw into bitterness, this church worked out its problems! The end result was growth! (**Acts 6:7**)

6. This same kind of spirit must exist here for us to be the kind of people the Lord expects.
- E. Consider several passages that exhort us to cooperate.
 1. Let each of us do that which we are capable of. **(Rom 12:4-8)**
 2. Can you imagine jealousy and division in your body? **(1 Cor 12:14-22)**
 3. To some division is preferred. They would rather fuss than work! Where is your heart? **(Jas 4:17)**
- F. Some common objections to cooperation.
 1. “This will not do any good. I will not waste my time.” How do you know? Did you pray for God’s help?
 2. “We did it in the past and it did not do any good.”
 - a. Again, how do you know?
 - b. Often the problem lies within us. Do we believe? **(2 Cor 4:13-14)**
 3. Are you one who will say: “Count on me” concerning the work of the church?
 4. On the other hand let us seek to be what God wants.

II. A Great Church is Characterized by a Hatred of Sin which leads to proper correction and discipline among its members.

- A. We must point out sin. **(2 Tim 4:2-4)**
 1. This needs to be a prominent part of the preaching, the Bible classes and our individual conversations.
 2. When we teach, we must teach in a way that **reasons are given** as to why it is sin.
- B. Those who fall into sin must be corrected with love, longsuffering and patience but with firmness.
 1. They need to know that when they are corrected, they have been corrected!
 2. We need meekness with the intent of restoration. **(Gal 6:1)**
 3. Again we show longsuffering while rebuking and exhorting. **(2 Tim 4:2)**
 4. In meekness but we must deal with the sin! **(2 Tim 2:24-26)**
- C. If a person will not repent then we must publicly mark and then withdraw our company from them.
 1. What did God want this church to do with this man? **(1 Cor 5:1)**
 2. Will we follow this command? **(1 Cor 5:4)**
 3. This will involve every Christian here. **(1 Cor 5:9)**
 4. This is what a great church does when one falls into sin. **(2 Thess 3:6, 14)**

III. A Great Church is Characterized by a Desire to Correct its Mistakes.

- A. The nation of Israel had a tragic attitude. **(Isa 30:8-11)**
- B. The church at Corinth with all its faults has a willingness to correct its mistakes. **(2 Cor 7:10-11)**
 1. This church mourned over its sins and made changes.
 2. Again, is this your attitude?
 3. Review the 9 marks we studied. Are there any changes you need to make?

Conclusion: Let each of us make this church great in the sight of God.