

3 Marks of a Healthy Church/Body

Ephesians 4:1-16

1 Peter 5:6-11 "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Ephesians 4:1-16

1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says,

"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

"No passage is more descriptive of the church in action"

3 Marks of a Healthy Church/Body

Mark #1: A Healthy Church is Marked by Spiritual Unity (1-6) •

1. United by Divine Calling (1)

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

- "Take no part in unfruitful works of darkness, instead expose them." (Eph 5:11).

• 2. United by Christ-like Conduct (2-3)

No one exemplified them like Jesus, who was the greatest example of humility (Phil 2:5-11).

As for gentleness, he said, "Come to me ... for I am gentle." (Matt 11:29).

As for patience, it is merciful (1 Tim 1:16).

As for love, he demonstrated it (Rom 5:8);

As for being eager to maintain peace, he was the Peacemaker (Eph 2:14).

Humility. (Rom 12:3-8, Phil 2:1-11; Col 3:12- 15).

Pride is being filled with self.

Humility is being filled with God.

" Humility is not thinking "less of yourself," it's "thinking of yourself less" (Keller)

Gentleness. Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit, and is the way we are to care for one another (Gal 6:1; 5:23).

Patience.

How do you cultivate patience? By relying on the Spirit! One should also meditate on the patience That Christ has had on you. IT's easy to learn facts, it's hard to be patient with people.

Bearing with one another in love. This means to "put up with each other in love." "Love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pet 4:8)

- We must **renounce self-centeredness,**
- We must **renounce harshness,** i
- We must renounce the **tyranny of our own agendas,**
- We must renounce **idealistic expectations,** i
- We must renounce **indifference and this passive idea of unity that we tend to have.**

• 3 United by Gospel Confession (4-6)

- **One Body** – We share a common existence in Christ’s church. All of each – as a diversity of ethnic groups.
- **One Spirit** – We share a common origin in the Holy Spirit’s work. The Spirit is the one that creates unity.
- **One Hope** – We share a common hope in Christ. Formerly, we were “hopeless” (2:12) until we were called to Christ. Now we have hope, and must live in a manner worthy of our calling.
- **One Lord** – We confess Jesus Christ as Lord. When the early Christians said, “Jesus is Lord,” they were saying, “Nero is not lord.” And when a Jewish Christian said this, they were boldly identifying Jesus with the God of the Jewish Scriptures (cf., Deut. 6:4). This just wasn’t a creedal affirmation that didn’t mean anything. This meant possible death. When we confess Jesus as Lord, it should affect our entire lives too!
- **One Faith** – We embrace the essential truths. “Faith” refers to the body of truth we embrace (cf., 4:12; Jude 1:8)
- **One Baptism** – We share a common experience of being spiritually baptized into Christ. We are united with him. The act of baptism into water pictures this reality. This ordinance may be in view as well here.
- **One God and Father** – We share the same Father as his children. He is the God over all, but is the Father of all his children – regardless of their ethnicity. We are one big adopted family.

Mark #2: A Healthy Church is Marked by Spiritual Diversity (7-12)

1. We Have Diverse Gifts (7-10)

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7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

8 Therefore it says,

"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men."

9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?

10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Paul provides one of the key passages on spiritual gifts in the NT (cf., Rom 12:4-8, 1 Cor. 12-14).

Your possession of gifts and abilities are a reflection of Christ's generosity. Christ "gave gifts to men" (8).

- **2. We Have Diverse Responsibilities (11-12a)**

Christ gave us gifts that we would "use them" (1 Pet 4:10-11).

- **The leaders equip the saints (11)**

Apostles and Prophets.

Apostle in a technical sense refers to the twelve (defined in this way, we don't have apostles anymore). In a general sense it can refer to a "sent one."

Prophets were forth-tellers. Used in a technical sense, like the Apostles, we don't have biblical Prophets. In a general sense, prophets apply God's word to God's people.

Evangelists. are those gifted in proclaiming the gospel (cf., 2 Tim 4:5; Acts 21:8). Everyone is called to evangelize, but some are uniquely gifted in this area.

Pastors and Teachers. The term pastor is only used here in the NT.

A pastor has been gifted by God to do some things others can't do. God has gifted others to do things he can't do!

The church is to have an "every member ministry." That is everyone serving.

App: What are you doing with what God has given you?

How are you impacting the Kingdom with the gifts that he has given you to use?

Your life is much bigger than a good job, an understanding spouse, and non-delinquent kids. It is bigger than beautiful gardens, nice vacations, and fashionable clothes. In reality, you are part of something immense, something that began before you were born and will continue after you die. God is rescuing fallen humanity, transporting them into his kingdom, and progressively changing them into his likeness – and he wants you to be part of it.

(Paul David Tripp, Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, 20)

Mark #3: A Healthy Church is Marked by a Growing Maturity (13-16)

1. Christ-likeness (13)

Are you growing in Christ-likeness? Are you loving sacrificially?

2. Doctrinal Stability (13, 14)

Are you growing in doctrine? Are you reading the Bible? Good books? Are you in a group that is growing in Christ?

3. Truth Joined with Love (15-16)

Are you known for truth and love?

• 4. Contribution (16)

We need each other. Every member is to contribute - using what you have.

We ultimately need Christ. We "grow up into him." We are dependent on Christ, who is the head and source of the church, "we are to grow into him who is the head, into Christ" (4:15). And we are members of the body, we are dependent on each other, "when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." (4:16).

As we grow into Christ, and as we use our gifts – in love – the body becomes healthy and strong to resist the Lion.

Resist him