

W @ K L J P r a J @ r J O U r n a l

DAILY BIBLE STUDIES

“A Local Church ‘Top Ten’ List” -Part 2

Selected Scripture

February 22 – February 28, 2009

| Praise & Prayer | ADORATION Hallowed be Your name. (6:9) | AUTHORITY Your Kingdom come... (6:10) | APPEAL Give us this day... (6:11) | AQUITTAL Forgive us our debts... (6:12) | ASSISTANCE Deliver us from evil. (6:13a) | ADMIRATION For Yours is the Kingdom... (6:13) | Lord's Day | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
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THE LORD'S DAY –As we continue this week in our small mini-series taken from Joshua Harris’ book entitled “*Stop Dating The Church –Fall In Love With The Family Of God*”, we are going to look at part-2 of a “top ten” list of things that should matter to individuals as they look for a local church. As I mentioned last week, this list is by no means exhaustive but it hits squarely the main and very important things that need to be present in a local church that would honor Christ. All of us that belong to Christ’s church in general and this local church in particular need to strive to excel in growth and further establishment of these God honoring criteria. We now turn to numbers 6-10 in our list. Read **1 Peter 2:4-5**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: God, teach me this week from Your Word.

MONDAY – 6. Is this a church where people strive to live by God’s Word?

Again, just like no pastor is perfect—no people are perfect either. In looking for a church it is important however to look for one that not only wants to believe rightly but also to live rightly. It is in the application of God’s truth that true growth and sanctification take place. This is what should be happening in the local church. Nothing is more detrimental than a church of people who say they love Christ but do not apply what He has taught. The church that pleases God is busy about the work of sanctification and becoming more like Christ—not just talking about it (**James 1:22**).

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: God, help me find and apply the wisdom from Your Word.

TUESDAY – 7. Is this a church where I can find and cultivate Godly relationships?

We have said over and over that we need one another in the local church. The very word for fellowship speaks of “*shared participation*”. The church is to be the place where people enjoy the benefits of Godly relationships. It should be the environment for **Biblical fellowship, encouragement, and APPLICATION** of the Scripture. Every person needs to look at how much meaningful time **they put forth** to make this happen. Running for the exits at the last “Amen” doesn’t show a

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desire for cultivating meaningful relationships based on God's Word, which is very important in church life. Read **1 Corinthians 10:14-22, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me to understand my unity with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank You for adopting me into Your family.

WEDNESDAY – 8. Is this a church where members are challenged to serve?

According to the Scripture pastors are not to be the “*paid professionals*” who do the ministry, rather the people themselves (more specifically the saints) are to be “*equipped*” to do the work of the ministry. (**Ephesians 4:12**) This is for the purpose of the building up of the body of Christ. When it comes to our serving in the church we need to be careful that we do not become selfish and look only to serve where we feel it accommodates us. True service is meeting someone else's genuine need. All church members should look for opportunities to meet needs rather than be upset if they aren't “*servicing*” because they are not doing what **THEY** feel like.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me to see I am called to “do the work of the ministry” and help me to work and serve as Christ taught me.

THURSDAY –9. Is this a church that is willing to kick me out? This is one of the most ignored and ridiculed aspects of church life, but is so very important. When a person claims to be a Christian and lives in a way that contradicts that claim, a faithful church is responsible to begin the process of church discipline; this starts with calling them to repent, treating them like an unbeliever, and finally removing them from membership if they do not have an attitude of repentance. Many scriptures speak to this action of church discipline. Jesus addressed this Himself in **Matthew 18:15-20**. We also see it in (**1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 9-13, Titus 3:9-11**). Rather than being upset or “*offended*” over such treatment, true believers should be thankful that a church would care enough to discipline them if they are living in a way that does not honor Christ. This process is not to be done with a vindictive attitude but with a strong love for the erring brother or sister in hopes that they would repent and be restored to the body. Again we must remember this is also a part of the example to the world that the church gives out. Permitting sinful behavior and tolerating it for the sake of “*unity*” is not at all what God has commanded and it actually shows a lack of love and concern for someone. A church that will love you enough to put you out is a great blessing from God and will encourage not agitate a true believer who is desirous of living a Christ like life.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: God, help me understand the importance of being admonished, rebuked and disciplined in the local church as I grow to be more like Christ.

FRIDAY – 10. Is this a church I'm willing to join “as is” with enthusiasm and faith in God?

Just as you shouldn't marry someone and plan to “change them into the person you want them to be”, you shouldn't join a church with the same mindset. God doesn't need any more “self-appointed” leaders. We all have our own sin to deal with and daily mortify, and you don't need to appoint yourself to circumvent God's leadership in the local church. Even God's appointed leaders are sinful men (i.e. Peter), but they are the ones God has entrusted His Church to as shepherds. This is not to say we shouldn't desire our church to grow and improve, but it starts with you assuming the role of obedience to God and His Word in your own life. As **Harris** say's, “*Leave your gripes and complaints at the door. Those attitudes will only detract from your experience, limit your involvement, and weaken the church's unity.*” Read **1 Peter 4:7-9, Hebrews 10:23-25**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me be patient and forgiving. Help me understand being critical and unforgiving grieves Your Spirit and will harm my growth and the growth of the local Church body.

SATURDAY – Church “*hopping*” or “*shopping*” is a big thing in today's culture. Don't be a “*hopper* or *shopper*”, but rather get involved with the right attitude to help edify and build up the local church God has led you to. We should ask the right questions of the local church, but ask them with the right attitude, an attitude of humility. Find a church that **TEACHES, VALUES, and LIVES** God's Word. Remember that you will never find the **PERFECT** church until we are all glorified with our groom Christ Jesus. Read **Ephesians 5:22-32**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Father, give me eyes to see the beauty of the marriage of Christ to His people and may I walk in the Spirit and strive to edify and build up the body and show through my life the beauty of my union with Christ.