

# How To Build A Strong Congregation

It is not sensationalism! It is not gimmicks! Committees cannot build a strong congregation, nor mere programs or even a "fun and games" emphasis. All of these may be appropriate for civic clubs, social clubs, and country clubs, but not for the Lord's church! But what does it take to build a strong church? A strong congregation must begin with a solid foundation -- the foundation must be Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). By looking in the scriptures, the following items are essential for a strong congregation.

1. Strong Bible preaching and teaching. God's word, when disseminated plainly, forcefully, uncompromisingly, and yet kindly, will build up! Paul said, "*I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up ...*" (Acts 20:32).
2. Exemplary leadership. We need men who are not only faithful to God's word, but by their faith love others more than themselves (Philippians 2:3-5). Men who sacrifice their desires to help others are not self-willed. To grow, the church must have quality leadership; men who know how to lead and will do so!
3. Godly living on the part of every member. Unimpeachable conduct so clearly evidenced in the lives of Christians will illuminate the way for many in the realm of darkness (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15).
4. Congregational warmth and love. The fellowship of the Lord's church should be so sweet and precious that the whole community takes notice and observes, "See how they love and care for each other" (John 13:35; Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 3:8). Without this a congregation will never have spiritual growth and unity.
5. Compassionate hearts. The church of Christ needs to be known as the most tenderhearted bunch of people in all the world, loving neighbors as we love self (Luke 10:25-37; Galatians 5:13).
6. Evangelistic fervor. The emphasis of the early church was converting people to Christ! The church will grow when we teach and preach Jesus as the Christ, and His church as the body of the saved (Acts 4:12; 2:47).
7. An attitude of service permeating the congregation. The church will grow when people zealously serve the Lord because they love Him (Matthew 22:37; Romans 1:9; 7:6). The life of apathy is past and a new day dawns with enthusiasm to build up the church.
8. An atmosphere of friendliness and hospitality. No stranger should ever come into the midst of the Lord's church without being graciously welcomed by a happy, friendly membership (Acts 16:15; 28:2; Romans 16:2).

It is my conviction that it takes these ingredients to build a strong congregation. I pray fervently that all eight will always be a reality here at this congregation, and in so doing, the Lord will be glorified and people will escape the fires of eternal torment.

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