

Making A Church Strong

It is my wish that everyone wants to be a part of a strong congregation. I think we generally have the misconception that a strong congregation is one with a self-supported preacher and maybe elders. Although those are good indicators, they do not define a strong congregation. Furthermore, numbers (Deuteronomy 7:7) and wealth (Revelation 3:17) do not make a strong congregation. Some even have a mistaken idea that the strongest congregation in town is the largest, but that is not necessarily the case (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

What does make a strong congregation is knowledge (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18), faith in God (Romans 4:21), spiritual appetite among the members (1 Peter 2:2), the right spiritual diet from elders and preachers (1 Timothy 4:6; 2 Timothy 2:14-16; Titus 2:1), the exercise of our senses (Hebrews 5:13-14; 1 Timothy 4:7-8), diligence and active service (1 Corinthians 15:58; 1 Timothy 4:13-16; Revelation 2:10), prayer and communion with the Lord (Philippians 4:5-7; Hebrews 4:14-16), liberality in giving (2 Corinthians 9:6-7), spirituality (Galatians 6:1), unity (Ephesians 4:1-3), love (1 Corinthians 13:1-4), and heeding what we hear (Hebrews 2:1-3).

Why would a congregation want to be strong? No one wants to be strong in order to glory in themselves (Jeremiah 9:23). We want to be strong to appreciate and glorify God (Ephesians 3:16-19), and to accomplish the Lord's work (Philippians 4:13).

What can hinder growth? Wickedness can hinder growth (1 Peter 2:1). Also, dullness of hearing can hurt growth (Hebrews 5:11). Youthful lusts can contribute to non-growth (2 Timothy 2:22), as well as foolish and ignorant questions (2 Timothy 1:13; 2:23). Finally, the love of money can ruin growth (1 Timothy 6:10).

How can a congregation encourage good growth? We can take thought one for another (Philippians 2:1-4), and exhort one another (Hebrews 3:12-14). We can do this through our assemblies (Hebrews 10:25; Colossians 3:15-16), and through our Bible classes (Acts 20:28; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:1-8).

Everything that we do should be prompted by loyalty to God's word (2 John 9), purity of life (Ephesians 5:27), peace (2 Corinthians 13:11), concern for our brethren (1 Thessalonians 5:12-14), and prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17). As long as we grow and do God's will regarding the growth of the body

(Ephesians 4:15-16), He will be with us (Philippians 4:13). Let's use our talents that the "*Lord hath given us for edification*" (2 Corinthians 10:8).

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