

The Work Of Edification

Introduction. The Bible teaches that the church is a self-edifying body. "Edify" means "to build up, strengthen, more firmly establish, instruct, and improve." This work of teaching Christians the will of God and establishing them more firmly in the truth so they will be prepared to dwell with Him in eternity is a worthy part of the church's mission. The church is not to be edified through a human educational society or any other human institution, but is to edify itself.

I. ***The Church Is Edified By The Development Of Its Members***

- A. Edification is our duty (Romans 15:1-3; 2 Corinthians 10:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- B. We are edified by what every joint supplies (Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 2:18-19).
- C. Everything we do is for the purpose of edifying (Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:26).
 1. We are no longer children and babes (Ephesians 4:14-15; Hebrews 5:12-14).
 2. We grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).
 3. We grow in love, knowledge, and discernment (Philippians 1:9).
- D. The objective of a congregation is not numerical growth alone but the development of spiritual strength. Churches grow in godliness and the ability to overcome temptation.
 1. We establish our hearts unblameable in holiness (1 Thessalonians 3:13).
 2. We build ourselves up in the most holy faith (Jude 17-23).
 3. We resist the devil and draw nigh to God (James 4:7-10).
- E. There is not a single verse of scripture that commands the church to sponsor preschools or teach secular subjects. We train young men to preach the gospel, not through a large multi-congregational organization, but through our own members.

II. ***A Lot Of This Development Is Attained Through Individual Effort***

- A. We follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, and fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:11-12).
- B. We keep what is committed to our trust (1 Timothy 6:20).
- C. We hold fast the form of sound words (2 Timothy 1:13).
- D. We study to show ourselves approved (2 Timothy 2:15).
- E. We add several virtues to our faith (2 Peter 1:5-11).

III. ***Christians Are To Encourage And Edify One Another***

- A. We take thought for one another (Philippians 2:1-4, 19-21).

- B. We restore the one in fault and bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:1-2).
- C. We encourage the fainthearted and support the weak (1 Thessalonians 5:12-14).
- D. We exhort each other (Hebrews 3:13-14; 10:24).
- E. We are hospitable and serve one another (1 Peter 4:9-10).

IV. ***Ways Through Which A Congregation May Edify Its Members***

- A. The church edifies through worship (Hebrews 10:25).
 - 1. As lively stones, we are built up into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5).
 - 2. We are to confess our faults to one another and pray for one another (James 5:16).
- B. The church edifies through faithful teaching.
 - 1. The leaders of the congregation have oversight of the teaching program and are responsible for protecting the church against false doctrine.
 - 2. This is the responsibility of holding fast the faithful word (Titus 1:9).
- C. The church edifies through discipline (Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; Titus 3:10).
- D. The church edifies by maintaining and encouraging a full program of good works (1 Corinthians 12:14-27; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Philippians 4:15-17; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).
- E. The church edifies through the proper love and consideration of the members for each other (1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 4:29-32; Philippians 4:2; Colossians 3:12-15).

Conclusion. Whenever any congregation builds and supports some other organization through which to accomplish its work of edification, it becomes guilty of avoiding its God-given function. It delegates its own responsibility without divine sanction, and substitutes man's way of discharging its obligation for God's way. Since God has given by divine wisdom an organization to the church, and has made it sufficient to accomplish His purpose, it is the only medium of work and worship through which the Christian can accomplish the purpose of evangelizing the world. Our responsibility is to be satisfied with His will, His way, and His word.