

The church is a place where we should be challenged to grow

When each of us obeyed the gospel of Christ, we were added to His body, the church, in its universal sense (all of the saved, throughout all places and times). But if we are fortunate to live where there are other faithful Christians, we also have the privilege of participating in a local congregation (an assembly of Christians in a particular place). We need to appreciate the local church for the blessing it is, but we also need to understand the purpose it was meant to serve.

At present, we have not have reached full maturity in our spiritual growth. We are striving for “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13), but we are not there yet. Obviously, there are things we need to be doing in our private lives to help ourselves grow. But we also need to be helping one another to grow. So Christ designed the local church to be a relationship in which each of us can contribute to the growth of one another. Whatever secondary benefits there may be to membership in a local congregation, this is the primary one. And this is the main question we need to be asking ourselves: are we helping one another to grow toward maturity in Christ? If not, some adjustments need to be made as soon as possible.

It’s hard to imagine how a person could get along without the spiritual help that is provided by the congregation. It’s a hard world, and we’re all tempted to become unfaithful to the Lord. We need the support and exhortation of our brothers and sisters to remain steadfast and keep growing.

We have a responsibility to help one another in this way, but we should be glad to fulfill this responsibility. If we love one another, this will be our desire. Love is always concerned for the greatest good of the other person, and if love would serve another person in lesser ways, it would certainly want to serve them in spiritual matters. We never have a greater opportunity than when we have a chance to help a fellow Christian grow stronger in the faith.

The local congregation provides many blessings to us, for which are thankful. But while we’re giving thanks for the fact that our brethren comfort us and soothe us, let’s also be grateful that they exhort us. *The church is a place where we should be challenged to grow.* That is its purpose.

Monday: Ephesians 4:11-14

Key Idea: In His body, the church, Christ has made provision for our spiritual growth.

Questions for Family Growth: According to v.12, what is the purpose for which the saints must be “equipped”? In v.13, describe the end result of the process that was outlined in v.12. Will this goal be reached perfectly in this life? Does that mean we should not pursue it diligently?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 16:21.

Tuesday: Ephesians 4:15,16

Key Idea: The church grows toward maturity when each part of the body does its part.

Questions for Family Growth: How is the truth to be spoken? In **v.15**, what is the goal of our spiritual growth? What do we learn in **v.16** about the importance of each part of the body? What are some things each of us can do to encourage our brothers and sisters to grow in Christ?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 16:22.**

Wednesday: Philippians 2:1-4

Key Idea: If we're concerned about one another, we'll serve each other's spiritual interests.

Questions for Family Growth: In **v.3**, what does it mean to "count others more significant than yourselves"? What are some of the "interests" that Paul might have in mind in **v.4**? Can you think of an example of someone sacrificing to serve the spiritual interests of a fellow Christian?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 16:23.**

Thursday: Hebrews 10:23-25

Key Idea: In the assemblies of the church, we are to exhort one another.

Questions for Family Growth: In **v.24**, what are we to "consider"? What does it mean to "stir up" another person? What are the two things that Christians are to stir up in one another? What opportunities do we have in the assemblies of the church to encourage each other's growth?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 16:24.**

Friday: 2 Peter 3:17,18

Key Idea: We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Questions for Family Growth: What would it mean to grow in "grace"? What about "knowledge"? What steps can we take to grow in these two things? If a brother or sister is not growing in these areas, what responsibilities do we have toward them, both individually and as a church?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 16:25.**

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