

Grace Bible Church Connection

November 2010

Being thankful!

By Pastor Larry Rupp

Being truly thankful is a challenge for most of us. Too often we see the glass half empty rather than half full. We don't seem to take much time being thankful to God for all He has done and all He is doing in our lives. The other night I was watching the television show **60 Minutes**. They were doing a report on individuals who were unemployed and have been unemployed for almost two years! Most of these folks were only ten to fifteen years from retirement and they were losing their homes, savings, retirement accounts, and hope for the future. I can't imagine how hard it is for some people during these difficult economic times!

It made me realize that my life is not very tough at all. Not only am I not going through these financial difficulties but, when I think about it I have been so blessed by the things that are really important in life, like my wife, children, grandchildren, friends, and the most important thing in life, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Christ gives us the hope for the future that so many people are missing today. He gives us real hope even in difficult circumstances.

The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18:
“give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” It has been a challenging year for many of us and many of our circumstances have not been pleasant, but we still have much to be thankful for. As a church we will be coming together for our annual **Harvest Dinner** on November 6th at 6:00pm. Together we can share what God has done in our community and church. Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join us!



Take time this month to be thankful for all that God has done for you and encourage others by sharing examples of God's faithfulness with them.

Have a Great Thanksgiving!

“How should we do church? Why do we do church the way that we do? Hey, I’ve heard of a great idea for something we can do in the church...” Let’s face it, there are a lot of questions and thoughts out there these days about how to do church. Some of them are great, some of them not-so-much. What determines which is which? The Bible itself: we get a clear picture of what a church should be doing throughout it’s pages, especially in the New Testament.

What are some of the basics for what a church is and does? For starters, the purpose of the church is to worship God. This happens through music and by the preaching of the Word and the breaking of bread. But there’s more as well. Chuck Swindoll, in his new book “The Church Awakening” (which I would highly recommend), points out that Acts 2:42 gives us four essentials for what it means to be and act like a church: teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. That’s it. Pretty simple, at least in concept.

And yet not a month passes when some new book comes out claiming to have the best new strategies about “how to do church.” So why is doing church so complicated? Let me suggest two possible thoughts: First, it seems that many people have misconceptions about the purpose of the church. Look again at Acts 2:42 and tell me what you don’t see... That’s right, the church’s purpose isn’t to build larger buildings, start programs, run cool and trendy events, and seek after cultural relevance. Certainly there is a right time and a right place for some of those things, but we so often lose focus (what Swindoll calls “erosion”) about what a church should really and truly be doing. Second, I’ve noticed again and again that many people believe that a church is like any other organization - if you just follow the right leadership principles and incorporate “best practices” then it is guaranteed to grow. But therein lies the problem - the purpose of the church isn’t ultimately to grow numerically; it is to glorify God. Numerical growth might be a part of that, but it is certainly not the goal or the overall purpose.

How do we ground ourselves and keep from slipping into the many and varied errors of focusing on the wrong things for church? Stay in the Word! The Bible tells us what a church is (Acts 2:42-47), what a church looks like (Acts 2:42 specifically), and what a church produces (believers who live out the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20). Who builds and grows the church? Christ is the answer in both cases. Our job? Belief and spirit-enabled action in what Christ has commanded in the pages of the Bible. That is what faithfulness looks like and that is what we should be looking towards to determine whether we are successful in God’s eyes or not.

Want to study more? Check out Swindoll’s book - it is a breath of fresh air for the “how to do church” bookshelf because he bases the entire study on Scripture. -Pastor Kevin

Men's Ministry

Every Tuesday morning

6:30 - 7:30am

"The Measure of a Man"

Join us for a time of Bible study, prayer, fellowship, laughter, and encouragement!

All Men Welcome!



Women of Grace

Monday nights at 7pm

Studying a Beth Moore series on the Book of Esther called "It's Tough Being a Woman."

Questions?

Call:

Cheryl
Rupp

232-2821



P.F.C. (Prayer, Fellowship, and Communication)

November 17, 2010 (Third Wednesday of each month)

6:00pm: Meal & Fellowship

6:30pm: Prayer Time (Church, Country, & each other)

7:00pm: Church Communication Meeting

8:00pm: Elders and group meetings

All are Welcome and encouraged to attend!

