

TEACHING IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Introduction

Eph. 4:15,16 provides a concise description of a mature, productive local church.

- ¥ Speaking the truth in love,
- ¥ we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,
- ¥ from whom the whole body,
- ¥ being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies,
- ¥ according to the proper working of each individual part,
- ¥ causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.ó

The mature local church is made up of mature believers who work together to fulfill the Plan of God and the Christian mission.

The Local Church's Mission

The local church's mission includes the following activities:

- ¥ worship as a local assembly - "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together"
- ¥ Evangelism - the winning of people to the Christian faith. "He that winneth souls is wise..."
- ¥ Edification - "Feed the church of God ..." "Feed the flock"
- ¥ Training - "Study to show yourselves approved unto God, a workman ..."
- ¥ Service - Attention to the details of encouragement and support of everyone in the body of Christ.

The local church's mandate, then, is to maintain an organizational structure for the purpose of meeting God's requirements for worship, evangelism, edification, and the development of skilled workers to carry out the work associated with the stated mission.

We are to worship "in spirit and in truth". The work of the local church must be carried out in the presence of the Holy Spirit, with His control, and through His total ministry of teaching, convicting, and controlling. The work of the local church must center in and deal exclusively with the Bible, the word of God. The revealed word of God, the "mind of Christ" is the only effective tool for learning what God's will is and carrying it out.

Therefore, the main daily work of the pastor and members of a local church is to provide a maximum of high quality Bible teaching, in sufficient quantity to allow believers to make rapid progress in the Christian way of Life. The main activity of the local church, apart from prayer and worship, is Bible teaching

To meet the teaching requirements of the church's mission, the following are required:

- ¥ A thorough description of the biblical mandate for the local church.

Teaching

- ¥ The establishment of teaching requirements to meet the mandate.
- ¥ The designing of plans for meeting teaching requirements
- ¥ The execution of the plans by assigning and employing people to the work, setting schedules, and putting the plans in motion

The Church's Teaching Ministry

2 Tim. 2:1,2 "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

Bible study has three main components:

1. BIBLE ANALYSIS - exegesis and exposition. The process of dissecting a passage of Scripture into its component parts (vocabulary, syntax, grammar) in order to learn as well as possible the meaning (interpretation) of the passage.
2. TOPICAL DEVELOPMENT - categorization. Briefly, the process of determining the meaning of words and concepts found in a passage of scripture by searching the whole Bible for clues, explanations, and illustrations of the subject under study.
2. HISTORICAL STUDY - The process of studying the social history of the people and cultures in the context of the Bible passage, and the language history of the text, to learn as much as possible about the text as used colloquially in the time in which it was written, and to learn how the text was applied to the people living in that time and place.

With these things in mind, a local church can design a comprehensive Bible teaching curriculum which will meet the needs of all age groups as they grow in Christ. Such a curriculum will contain components such as the following:

Bible Studies

- ¥ Verse by verse expositional studies of books of the Bible
- ¥ Studies of Bible topics regarding salvation, stability in the Christian way of life, and spiritual production
- ¥ Survey studies: Old Testament survey, New Testament survey, life of Christ, Acts and Life/Epistles of Paul, etc.

Historical Studies

- ¥ Survey of Ancient History (early times to Byzantine Empire)
- ¥ Survey of Hebrew History (in Bible light)
- ¥ History of major mid-Eastern world powers - Egypt, Assyria, Sumer, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Hittites, Greece, Rome
- ¥ History of Judea
- ¥ History of the Jewish religion and practices
- ¥ Detailed history of the period from 100 BC to 100 AD
- ¥ American History (from Christian viewpoint), American and state government
- ¥ Law - short courses in legal research or orientation to law and the courts

Studies in Preparation for Teaching

Teaching

- ¥ Biblical languages (Greek, Hebrew, etc.), introductory and advanced.
- ¥ Hermeneutics and exegesis
- ¥ Use of reference materials: concordances (English, Greek, Hebrew); Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias; commentaries; systematic theology studies
- ¥ Development of expertise in preparing Bible studies
- ¥ English grammar and composition
- ¥ Public speaking
- ¥ Christian literature (non-fiction)
- ¥ Bible lesson development and organization
 - Use of parallel passages
 - How to find and use illustrations
 - How to determine and teach appropriate applications

Such a curriculum is very ambitious and will require several years for any individual to complete. But when this effort is compared to the requirements for obtaining a high school diploma or college degree, the eternal results to be gained certainly make the work of organization, teaching, and study worthwhile.

Doctrinal Studies (Partial Listing)

The following is a partial listing of the doctrinal topics to be covered in a comprehensive Bible teaching ministry. These topics can be considered the essential fundamentals for any believer who is motivated to move toward spiritual maturity.

Salvation Doctrines

- Grace Mental Attitude of God
- Blood of Christ
- Barrier Doctrines (Propitiation, Reconciliation, Redemption)
- Salvation and Positional Truth
- Ark of the Covenant and Mercy Seat
- Imputation
- Expiation
- Regeneration
- Sin and the Penalty of Sin
- Heaven and Hell
- Faith
- Adoption
- Resurrection and Ascension of Christ

Teaching

Christian Life Techniques

Confession of Sin

Faith Rest

Living in the word

Occupation with Christ

Orientation to Grace

Spirituality vs Carnality

Divine Viewpoint vs Human Viewpoint

The Lord's Supper

Baptism

Judgment and Judging

Justice of God

Divine Guidance and the Plan of God

Forgiveness

Christian Giving

Inheritance

Royal Family

Love

Repentance

Sanctification

Spiritual Adultery and Worldliness

Suffering - Deserved and Undeserved

Divine Discipline for Nations and Individuals

Stability Doctrines - Christian Life Foundations

Essence of God

Salvation Doctrines (the believer at the moment of salvation; 36 Things)

Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ

Person and work of the Holy Spirit

Sin and the Sin Nature

Mental Attitude

Volition: The Will of Man

The Soul

Teaching

Positional Truth

Marriage

Grace

Law and Legalism

Privacy

Works: Dead and Alive

The Faith System of Learning Divine Viewpoint

Edification

Productivity Doctrines

Grace in Production

Holy Spirit: spiritual gifts, power

Friendships

Personal Evangelism

Local Church - organization and work

Spiritual Testing and Suffering as a witness

Christian Missions

Divine Institutions

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