

1 Thessalonians 1 — “Essential Marks of a Healthy Church”

Our mission has not changed — it’s our compass always pointing to the Word of God

We exist to GLORIFY GOD:

by preaching the Word,
by evangelizing the lost,
by discipling the saved,
by obeying Jesus Christ—
by the Power of the Spirit

"That very church which the world likes best—is sure to be that which God most abhors!" Spurgeon

THESIS — This chapter provides 8 essential marks of a healthy Church.

I. A GOD-CENTERED CHURCH (1)

Being “in God the Father and in Jesus Christ” distinguishes it from any pagan assembly/association. They have received the call of God and Christ and thus are separated from the world and are brought into a new sphere of life, into vital union with God the Father & with Jesus Christ the Lord (D Edmond Hiebert).

II. A PRAYING CHURCH (2)

- the prayer (thanksgiving)
- the preeminence (thanks **to God**)
- the particulars (for **ALL** of you; for all the saints, by name)
- the persistence (making mention of you in our prayers)

All those who would walk worthy of the Gospel, must endeavor a sweet, close, holy, lasting union among themselves.
 (Matthew Newcomen)

III. A SERVING CHURCH (3)

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1. WORK that comes from faith

2. LABOR that comes from love

- Our ***love*** in the Church should be:
 - ➔covenantal (membership)
 - ➔careful (deliberate; care in obeying God’s Word in every aspect)
 - ➔corporate (high priority on corporate life; not individual life)
 - ➔cross-cultural (for everyone; live in love; seeing the heart)
 - ➔cross-generational (a family; where adults, children all gather)
 - ➔Christ-pointing (pointing to Christ; emulating Him)
 - ➔compassionate (caring for others humbly & sacrificially)

3. STEADFASTNESS that comes from hope

IV. A CONVERTED CHURCH (4-5)

V. A JOYFUL CHURCH (6)

VI. A EVANGELISTIC CHURCH (7-8)

“The Thessalonians’ faith shouted aloud, calling men to put their trust in the Gospel (John Calvin)

VII.A REPENTING CHURCH (9)

- **TURN** *to* God — turned to God (*first)
- **TURNING** *from* idols (from idols)
- **OBEYING** God [enslaved to a new, good Master]

VIII.A WATCHFUL CHURCH! (10)

“Friend, the church finds its life as it listens to the Word of God. It finds its purpose as it lives out and displays the Word of God. The church’s job is to listen and then to echo. That’s it. The primary challenge churches face today is not figuring out how to be ‘relevant’ or ‘strategic’ or ‘sensitive’ or even ‘deliberate.’ Rather, it’s figuring out how to be faithful -- how to listen, how to trust, and how to obey.” (Mark Dever).

Let’s resolve together to live out the 4 “P’s” —

- 1) **PREACH,**
- 2) **PRAY,**
- 3) **PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP,**
- 4) **PATIENTLY SERVE OTHERS**

BRETHREN WE HAVE MET TO WORSHIP!

Brethren, we have met to worship
 And adore the Lord our God;
 Will you pray with all your power,
 While we try to preach the Word?
 All is vain unless the Spirit
 Of the Holy One comes down;
 Brethren, pray, and holy manna
 Will be showered all around.

Sisters, will you join and help us?
 Moses' sister aided him;
 Will you help the trembling mourners
 Who are struggling hard with sin?
 Tell them all about the Savior,
 Tell them that He will be found;
 Sisters, pray, and holy manna
 Will be showered all around.

Brethren, see poor sinners round you
 Slumb'ring on the brink of woe;
 Death is coming, hell is moving,
 Can you bear to let them go?
 See our fathers and our mothers,
 And our children sinking down;
 Brethren, pray and holy manna
 Will be showered all around.

Let us love our God supremely,
 Let us love each other, too;
 Let us love and pray for sinners,
 Till our God makes all things new.
 Then He'll call us home to heaven,
 At His table we'll sit down;
 Christ will gird Himself, and serve us
 With sweet manna all around.

I LOVE THY KINGDOM LORD!

I love thy kingdom, Lord,
 the house of thine abode,
 the church our blest Redeemer saved
 with his own precious blood.

Beyond my highest joy
 I prize her heav'nly ways,
 her sweet communion, solemn vows,
 her hymns of love and praise.

I love thy church, O God:
 her walls before thee stand,
 dear as the apple of thine eye
 and graven on thy hand.

Jesus, thou Friend divine,
 our Savior and our King,
 thy hand from ev'ry snare and foe
 shall great deliv'rance bring.

For her my tears shall fall,
 for her my prayers ascend;
 to her my cares and toils be giv'n,
 'til toils and cares shall end.

Sure as thy truth shall last,
 to Zion shall be giv'n
 the brightest glories earth can yield,
 and brighter bliss of heav'n.

The poorest room where a few penitent believers assemble in the name of Jesus—is a consecrated and most holy place in the sight of God! Those who worship God in spirit and truth—never draw near to Him in vain. Often they go home from such meetings warmed, cheered, established, strengthened, comforted and refreshed. And what is the secret of their feelings? They have had with them the great Master of assemblies, Jesus Christ Himself! (JC Ryle)