



BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

How Does the Church
Work?

1 INTRODUCTION

There's a saying that goes something like this, "Familiarity breeds contempt." In the other words, the more you do something, the less special that activity becomes. Think about how exciting the first day of school is for many kids, but a few months in and most kids are far less excited to get up and catch the bus!

For Christians, attending church is a regular event throughout the year. Since it's an activity repeated with such frequency, it's easy for church to become a fairly "normal" thing. One may even say that for some Christians, it becomes less important as time goes on. But after a careful study of the concept of church in the Bible, we begin to see that it is anything but mundane and unimportant.

2 THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH

Here are a couple of things to consider about the importance of the local church.

1. OUR CULTURE HAS PLACED A LOW VALUE ON THE LOCAL CHURCH.

Back in 2005, a study was done that revealed that although 40% of Americans say they attend church regularly, only about 17.7% actually do. Two out of every 10 people that actually attend church. Today, regular attendance means attending twice a month.

Here are more stats that make you scratch your head.

The average evangelical church sees a 33% turnover in membership every year. This means that, on average, a third of the church will be gone next year and a new third will replace it.

Church attendance in America is on the decline and even for those who attend a church, it seems to become less and less of a priority overtime.

However, let's consider this as well;

2. THE BIBLE PLACES A HIGH VALUE ON THE LOCAL CHURCH.

Here is one of many verses that highlight the importance of the church...

Ephesians 3:10

"and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."

God is using the church to make known His manifold wisdom of the gospel. Paul tells us that God has a plan to use His church to spread the gospel through the world!

READ Ephesians 5:25-27.

🗒️ What is the church compared to in this passage?

🗒️ What does this comparison say about the importance of the church to Christ?

READ Matthew 16:18.

🗒️ What does Jesus say about the church in this verse?

🗒️ What does that say about how important the church is to Christ?

God places a high value on the local church! But why?

Here are a few things to consider.

3 THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The mission of Redemption Bible Church is to “Glorify God by Making Disciples through the power of the gospel.”

Let’s dissect this mission phrase by phrase.

“GLORIFY GOD...”

READ Isaiah 43:7.

- 🔪 Why did God form man?

READ 1 Corinthians 10:31.

- 🔪 What should be the motivation for everything you do, even the mundane things like eating and drinking?

God’s glory is the starting place and the foundation for all that we do. We do not exist to build a big church. If that is the motivation, then it will dictate what we do.

We do not exist to make a name for ourselves. No, we live for the fame of the name of Jesus!

We want God glorified and we want His glory on display in and through our church!

We believe that every person in the world was created with longing in their hearts and a desire for more. That more we desire is God’s glory.

We believe that the church is the place where we should experience God’s glory every Sunday.

READ Ephesians 3:21.

- 🔪 Where, according to this verse, should the glory of God be seen?

The mission statement goes on to say...

...BY MAKING DISCIPLES...

READ Matthew 28:18-20.

These are Jesus' last words on Earth. It's His final commandment to the men who will start the church and it is our mission: To make disciples.

This commandment even defines what discipleship should look like.

1) Make disciples by teaching them...

There are important truths found in God's word that we need to teach others. These Truths are found in God's word.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says,

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

All you need to know to be a disciple, complete and equipped for every good work, is found in the pages of the Bible! So we need to open this book up and teach.

2).. Make disciples by teaching them to observe.

We do not simply teach others to know, we teach them to do.

James 1:22 says,

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

...THROUGH THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

The main theme and message of the Bible is the Gospel. Even though the central message of the Bible is the gospel, it is not the only thing the Bible speaks of. The Bible also speaks to other things. It tells us how to live and act and it tells us the history of Christianity. It tells us many things. But, the lens by which we must understand and view scripture is through the Gospel.

Because of this, the Gospel becomes absolutely essential for your spiritual growth.

Author Dane Ortlund said,

“We move forward in discipleship not mainly through pep talks and stern warnings. We move forward when we hear afresh the strangeness of grace, relaxing our hearts and loosening our clenched hold on a litany of lesser things—financial security, the perfect spouse, career advancement, sexual pleasure, human approval, and so on.”

To say it another way, we don’t grow and change to earn God’s grace. We grow and change because we already have His grace.

Since this is such an important topic, we cover it more fully in the Gospel Centrality booklet. Feel free to study that lesson for a more detailed and thorough explanation of gospel centrality.

So how do we accomplish our mission? Through living out several key distinctives.

4 THE DISTINCTIVES OF THE CHURCH

What makes Redemption Bible Church unique? What do we believe is important? What are our core values?

We have identified the following distinctives that describe our church.

1. PASSIONATE WORSHIP

READ John 4:23-24.

- ✎ What is the Father seeking?

- ✎ What two words did Jesus use to describe the kind of worship the Father wants?

✎ To the best of your knowledge, what is worship?

Worship is when we give something worth or high value. What value should we give God in our lives? What is He worth? He is worth our all!

The Father is seeking worshippers, so we should worship Him with the magnitude He is due.

Two things come to the top of Jesus' list when it comes to worship: spirit and truth.

The word "spirit" in the Greek means your "inner man." It's what we would call your heart. Jesus says that we should worship with our heart. This is found all over the Bible.

Matthew 22:37 says,

"And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment."

God deserves to be worshipped with all your heart and emotion.

However, the emotional response must be based on truth! Singing Biblically accurate songs and offering sacrifices of praise to God must be directed to the God the Bible reveals. The worship we offer at church must have a firm foundation in Scripture.

At our church, we seek to guide people to live a lifestyle of worship. In our weekend services, we want to lead you in singing songs that are both steeped in the truths of God and that move you worship passionately with your whole heart.

For more information, see our Worship Booklet.

2. APPLICATIONAL PREACHING

READ 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

- ① What did God give us?

- ① How did He gift it?

- ① According to verse 17, why did He give it?

God breathed out His word, the Bible, so that we would know how to handle everything that life would throw our way. God's word is inspired, sufficient, and effective!

READ 2 Timothy 2:15.

- ① What can we do to avoid being a worker that brings God shame?

READ James 1:22

- ① According to this verse, what are we to be?

The ultimate goal of teaching God's word must align with God's PURPOSE for His word. So, not only should we be passionate about preaching the Bible verse by verse, but this should be done in such a way that people know how to live out his word everyday.

For more information about the Bible, see our Bible Booklet!

3. INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

As was discussed earlier, Jesus was clear that the mission of the church is discipleship. Paul clearly understood this to be true.

READ 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

- 📌 According to this verse, what were the men in the church to do?

Discipleship doesn't just happen by accident. There must be a plan and process in place for effective discipleship to become the culture of the church.

Redemption Bible Church focuses on our small group ministry. We want our people to be getting into a group of people where they can be fully known and fully loved. We want our small groups to be a place where people can share their life and struggles and find help and support.

We also want to see one on one discipleship happening in our church.

Sometimes people walk through very difficult situations. It could be a hard trial, a life-dominating sin, or relationships that have gone bad. For those very difficult situations, we have trained counselors that are ready and eager to help people grow!

For more on this, please read the Community booklet.

4. FERVENT PRAYER

READ Jeremiah 33:3.

- What is the promise in this verse?

READ Philippians 4:6-7.

- What does this passage call us to do?

- What are we promised as a result?

Prayer is an amazing gift from God. One has only to read the Psalms to see how often men have called on God and have seen Him rescue them and move on their behalf.

As a church, prayer must be a core functioning value. There must be regular opportunities to gather together and pray. This should be done in small groups, before and during church services, through prayer events, etc.

For more on this, please read the Prayer booklet.

5. STRATEGIC OUTREACH

There is simply no truth greater or more impacting than the gospel. Because of the gospel, we have been given eternity in heaven with Jesus. Because of the gospel, we have joy and purpose in our lives today. Once we choose to believe the gospel, and once we make it the center of our lives, everything comes into place.

READ Mark 16:15.

📝 What did Jesus command His disciples to do?

📝 To whom were they to do this?

READ Acts 1:8.

📝 What did Jesus say the disciples would become?

📝 Where were they to go?

As a church, we must be seeking outreach opportunities within our city and also around the world! We want to see the gospel having an impact here, there, and everywhere!

Along with teaching personal outreach (see our lesson on that topic), we also have outreach initiatives and events that help us reach our city for Jesus. We also partner with the Great Commission Collective in order to aid in church planting around our country and the world!

5 CONCLUSION

The church is the key tool God is using to proclaim the gospel to the world. We want to help you grow in both your understanding of the church and your involvement in it!