

## Qualities Of A Healthy Congregation (2)

Ryan Goodwin

### Development of Talent

*“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”* (2 Timothy 2:2). The goal of evangelism is not to establish a flock of worthless, mindlessly obedient people. It should never be one man’s job to do all of the work in a church, for no single man can do everything that a church needs to be complete (Ephesians 4:16). Realize that Paul never had a problem with Timothy taking his words and teaching them to others. He did not collect royalties on evangelistic pursuits, nor was the church set up as a grand pyramid scheme. Rather, it is every Christian’s job to instruct others. And beyond that, to not just teach others about salvation, but to educate others how to do the same. In a growing, healthy congregation, it is not the sole responsibility of the preacher to do all of the “converting”. In fact, in one case, Paul made note of how he did not baptize very many people (1 Corinthians 1:14-17). The Christians in Corinth worked together in baptizing individuals, and even in the absence of the apostle this church grew.

Also consider 1 Peter 4:10-11, in which we are told to employ our special gifts in serving one another. Every Christians has something to offer, and each individual talent should be appreciated and refined. An environment that is not conducive to this sort of growth will never see itself climb beyond mediocrity.

### Effective Division of Labor

How very important it is to divide up the labor of the church evenly, as each one has received a gift in service. Some congregations depend on one or two men for every lesson, Bible class, prayer, and song. When these men are absent for whatever reason, the entire dynamic of the congregation is subdued. What is most troubling is the fact that churches never grow when they are pushed along by only a few of the members. Even worse than this is the situation many denominations have created for themselves. As growth approaches a certain benchmark, the Biblical pattern of organization is thrown out the window and a new, more human structure is put in its place. *“Unfortunately, many institutional churches have abandoned the New Testament blueprint, negated the value of deacons, and built a large corporate infrastructure unknown to the pages of the Bible”* (Tools for Team Preparation, Wilson, 18).

Such a system only sets itself up for failure, because the church was not designed to run like a corporation. One of the most telling examples of the right way to divide up the workload is in Acts 6:2-4. *“So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word’... The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem...”* What we see from the example of this text is that an effective division of labor, by talents, is a way that

we can encourage growth. Some members of the church may have experience as accountants, and could serve as treasurers. Others may know a great deal about construction and can make repairs on the church building. Still others, like the apostles, specialize in teaching and encouraging and should be given an opportunity to do that without being encumbered by chores. Preachers should not be hired as gardeners, maintenance men, financial planners, or social organizers. If a congregation hires an evangelist for preaching and teaching, then the members should allow him to do just that.