

## Right Ways to Help the Church Grow

by John Isaac Edwards

There are right and wrong ways to help the church grow. From Ephesians 4, we take a look at some right ways to help the church grow.

1) **Right Living.** Some churches do not grow due to members not living right. Right living involves living how God would have us live (v. 1), not living as others live (v. 17), and not living as we once lived (v. 22). Some principles of right living include: “putting away lying, speak every man truth” (v. 25), “Be ye angry, and sin not” (v. 26), “Neither give place to the devil” (v. 27), “working with his hands the thing which is good” (v. 28), “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying” (v. 29), “grieve not the holy Spirit of God” (v. 30), “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (vv. 31-32). Does this describe you?

2) **Right Attitudes.** Attitude is important and is ever showing! Ephesians 4:2-3 reveals attitudes that promote unity and growth in the church. *Lowliness and meekness* is needed. Jesus said, “I am meek and lowly in heart” (Mt. 11:29). “...by pride cometh contention” (Prov. 13:10). Contention and strife stifle growth! Philippians 2:3 teaches, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” *Longsuffering* is a right attitude which will help the church grow. “Charity suffereth long...” (1 Cor. 13:4). We need a good dose of this today! Where brethren are impatient with each other, there is a lack of love — and such is a hindrance to growth. *Forbearing one another* is important too. We need to bear with each other. Some become dogmatic about matters of individual determination to the point that they bind their personal scruples to the disruption, disturbance and division of brethren, and wonder why the church doesn’t grow. *Love*

should be reflected in all that we say and do. Without it, we are nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Jesus taught, “That ye love one another; as I have loved you” (Jn. 13:34). *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* is a must as well. Unity is good, pleasant, and precious (Ps. 133). There is nothing good nor pleasant about division. We must “follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19). Is your attitude such that will help the church grow?

3) **Right Platform.** Ephesians 4:4-6 sets forth the platform upon which all of us must stand. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all...” This will bring about unity in worship, authority, message, practice, organization, life, desire and expectation. Not a single of these seven one’s can be compromised and bring about the growth the Lord intends!

#### 4) **Right Leadership.**

The right leadership involves Christ as the head (v. 15) and gifts given when He ascended on high (vv. 7-11) — “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” Christ is the absolute authority and His headship must be respected in all things (Eph. 5:23-24). Apostles and prophets laid the groundwork (Eph. 2:20), and there are none living today. The work of an evangelist in three words is to “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). Bishops are also referred to as elders and pastors (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). Their work involves feeding and leading the flock of God. They are Holy Spirit-made as they are appointed according to the qualifications revealed by the Holy Spirit in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. God’s plan calls for “elders in every church” (Acts 14:23) “in every city” (Titus 1:5). Teachers are those who teach others (2 Tim. 2:2). The Lord expects us to become teachers as Hebrews 5:12

says, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers...” By becoming an evangelist, bishop or teacher or the wife of such and encouraging others in these important works, you are encouraging the church to grow as the Lord would have it.

#### 5) **Right Work.**

We must never lose sight of what our God-given work is. “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (v. 12). This involves evangelism, edification, and relief. The Lord has provided all the equipment necessary for this work. He did not equip His body for other tasks.

#### 6) **Right Message.**

*The truth* is the message to be spoken, and the right motive must accompany that message — *in love* (v. 15). Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32). There are misconceptions today as to what it means to speak the

truth in love. Some think that when one is bold, takes a stand for truth and opposes error, that he is unloving. A study of the work of Christ and His apostles will reveal what it means to speak the truth in love.

#### 7) **Right**

**Participation.** Verse 16 reveals the right participation — every joint supplying and every part working. Are you supplying your part? The church is not a place for spectators! Too often the work is done by the same few. How involved are you? Do you talk about what “they” are doing, or what “we” are doing? Is it “them” or “us”? Do you take part in the services? Do you help out around the meeting-place? When there is a work day, do you come and help? Are you active in personal evangelism? Do you contribute to the edification of the church? Do you come to the relief of your brethren?

May God help us to help the church grow!

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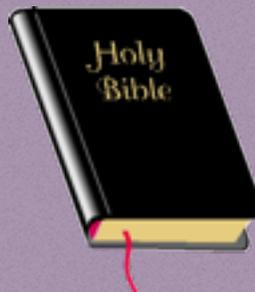
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