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From Where I Sit . . .

"The Measure Of A Strong Church" Part Two

In the last edition, we posed the question, "What is the measure of a strong church?" Men are inclined to look on the surface when looking for a church to attend: **The Building** (or lack thereof); **The Number of Programs**, classes, etc.; **How Smoothly it Runs as an Organization** with its committees, departments, and such like. But a congregation can have all these things and still be dead! I suggested a better measure is to be found when we think of the Church in terms used in the Bible to describe it.. such as **"Body," "Family," "Temple," "Kingdom," "Bride."** I believe these figures of speech can help us to properly measure the strength of the Lord's church in a local community. Thus, we suggested that a strong Church **"FUNCTIONS LIKE A BODY."**

Secondly, a strong church is one that **"LOVES LIKE A FAMILY."** The Church is the Household of God according to **1 Timothy 3:15 (KJV)** ¹⁵ **"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."** This is the equivalent to saying that it is the "family" of God. As such we should think of each other as "family." A strong family is one where there is concern for one another; care for each other; and love for one another. The Church at Thessalonica is a good example for having brotherly love. **1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 (NKJV)** ⁹ **"But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;** ¹⁰ **and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more."**

To develop a sense of family requires a willingness to get to know one another; taking advantage of opportunities to spend time together. As congregations grow, it becomes harder to maintain this sense of family, but how well we love one another will be a true measure of the strength of a church!

A strong church will also be one that **"PRAISES LIKE A TEMPLE."** Temples of old were built to glorify the being to which they were dedicated. The structure was designed to praise. The sacrifices and services rendered in the worship also were for praise. The Church is God's Temple today - **1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (KJV)** ¹⁶ **"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ¹⁷If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."**

As Christians, the Bible teaches that we are at the same time the "temple" and the "priests" who offer "spiritual sacrifices" - **1 Peter 2:5 (KJV)** ⁵ **"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."** Our purpose is to proclaim the praises of God - **1 Peter 2:9-10 (KJV)** ⁹ **"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: ¹⁰Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."**

We offer Sacrifices and Praise to God by **LIFTING OUR VOICES** in song and prayer - **Hebrews 13:15 (KJV)** ¹⁵ **"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name;"** By **DOING GOOD DEEDS** - **Hebrews 13:16 (KJV)** and by **OFFERING OURSELVES** as living sacrifices - **Romans 12:1-2 (KJV)** How each of us praises God with our voices, body and service is a true measure of a church, Let's be careful not to despise the name of the God we serve as a temple and priests.

. . . Terry Broome