Growing in Grace

Growing in Community

Life Lessons on Maturity with the Corinthians

***Church in the Trenches***

***How do spiritually mature people team up to serve the Body of Christ?***

1 Corinthians 16:5-24

In these often overlooked sentences, a veteran servant of God lets us in on how he works, how he works with others, and how we all should work together.

*The spiritually mature church. . .*

❖ sends and supports those in ministry. vv. 5-9

“Send me on my way. . .”

❖ respects, supports, and encourages younger trainees in ministry. vv. 10, 11

“Let no one despise him. . . Send him on his way. . .”

❖ grants and acknowledges personal freedom in ministry. v. 12

“He was unwilling. . . He will have opportunity.”

❖ streamlines itself for ministry in love. vv. 13, 14

“Be on guard. . . stand firm. . . be strong. . . Do everything in love.”

❖ honors “home grown,” worthy leaders in ministry. vv. 15-18

“Submit to such as these. . .”

❖ networks with other churches and ministry leaders. vv. 19-21

“Greet. . .”

❖ continues steadfast in ministry through the grace of Jesus. vv. 22-24

“Love the Lord. . . the grace of the Lord. . .”

**Growth Principle #22 The spiritually mature church is part of a network of churches which recognizes, fosters, and trains young leaders while cooperating with proven leaders to establish churches and spread the gospel to the nations.**

***1. Notice the centrality of the church for ministry.***

Of the 114 times the New Testament uses the word “church,” 97 of them refer to flesh and blood gatherings of actual people who are accountable to one another and to God for the purpose of building up one another and sharing the gospel with the world. Jesus came to redeem and build His church. Do you see the church as indispensable to God’s plans, or just another special interest group? Romans 12:3-13; Philippians 2:1-4

***2. Notice the charge to recognize and train young leaders in the local church.***

Timothy is told to teach others what Paul has taught him (2 Timothy 2:2), and here the church is being told to support Timothy in that task. “Theological education” is not to create professional ministers, but humble disciples. Is your home a place where future church leaders are given a vision and nurtured? Is our church such a place? 1 Timothy 4:1-16

***3. Notice the assumed, loving interchange between leaders and the assembly.***

Eight leaders are named in this passage, but the majority are not merely watching them! They are engaged in ministry, too, by praying, giving, supporting, and encouraging leadership and sharing in the common vision. Have you found your place of joyful service? Do you see yourself as a member of a vibrant church, or do you merely attend services? Hebrews 13:7, 17

***4. Notice how to leave room for personal choices, open doors, and the unforseen.***

Paul was a strategic planner, but he knew better than to manipulate others or assume that everything would go his way. He also knew that all things are in God’s hands. How do you respond when others choose not to take your suggestions? Do you give folks in your life the room to be who God made them to be? Philemon 1:21, 22; 2 Timothy 4:9-16; Titus 3:12-15