

Church Relationships

11-30-14 AM

In our series of lessons on the pattern of the church, we have seen that the church was purposefully designed with a repeatable pattern (on the local level). In many ways it is a pattern of priorities (I Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11) as well. Finally, we have discussed how the pattern of the church as a whole is dependant often on the mind and conduct of the members individually (1 Corinthians 12:12-28)

In Philippians 1:27 and, 2:1-12 Paul speaks to the heart of the church relationship between members. He uses the word "mind" to describe our basic relationship; therefore, we will refer to this fundamental tie as MINDFULNESS. We will ask these questions: What does mindfulness look like? How do we achieve mindfulness? What are the consequences of mindfulness?

What Mindfulness Looks Like

We see mindfulness in several places in Scripture. In Acts 2:42-47 we see it in the invested time Saints committed to one another. In Acts 4:32-37 we see it manifested as sacrifices made for one another. In the church discipline of I Corinthians 5:4-5 and II Corinthians 2:5-10 we see how mindfulness made the church relationship something indispensable.

How Mindfulness is Reached

First we must have a relationship of affection. We are minded to each other (1 Peter 3:8-10) and show each other hospitality (I Peter 4:9-10). Second, we must have an openness without judgment. This is inferred by the implied ability to confess (James 5:16) and the ability to support (Galatians 6:1-2).

Why aren't we more mutually mindful? Perhaps it is selfishness (Philippians 2:21) that keeps us from making the necessary sacrifices to each other. Maybe it is fear of being exposed to one another in confession or support (I John 4:18). Too, it could be the distractions of the world that prevent us from investing the necessary time to our relationships (Mark 4:19).

Results of Mindfulness

Once we reach the level of mindfulness we ought, we see (as demonstrated in II Corinthians 2) an overwhelming desire to be attached to the church. We see real joy in our dispositions. Finally, we would have evangelism without effort.

Conclusion:

In the Church Jesus built, we are meant to have a relationship stronger than the ties of family or friends. In fact, these are meant to be relationships we would fight for and give our lives up to keep. There needs to be a willingness to change for each other at the heart of our relationships.