

Signs of a Healthy Church 10-30-16 AM

Revelation 2-3 is a message from Jesus (the Great Physician, Mt 9:12) to seven churches which typify any local congregation. It is a sort of spiritual health checkup, with Jesus telling them their condition, and prescribing their course of action. This checkup looks something like this:



By using tools such as these, the individual Christian is equipped to make discerning judgments about the spiritual health of a local church. In this case, see that Churches can be healthy, dying, or dead. It is also made clear to us that Jesus is NOT with a dead church. There are many different things that we can take from Scriptures and apply to the local church in order to ascertain if a church is healthy or not.

For example, we can examine the perceived importance of the assembly (meaning, how important is it to a local group of Christians that they come together to worship). We can ask if worship is central to the purpose of assembly, or do the members see themselves as the central purpose. Do members appreciate its importance? Do members work to assemble, or is it the case that on the first sign of difficulty they abandon coming together? This reflects a health condition that is in fact the LOVE OF GOD within a local church.

Another example of something we can look at is the perceived importance of discipline in the church. Any doctor will tell you that for your health you need to exercise. Paul speaks about the discipline needed to exercise the body (1 Cor. 9:25). A local church body needs to exercise discipline in order to remain healthy. Is sin tolerated among the members? Do members willingly allow for inspection? Is there an attitude that the members will submit to the Lord's will over their own? This is the health condition of a LOVE OF TRUTH.

One more example might be the perceived importance of the brethren. Is the love of the brethren apparent? Do members sacrifice for one another? Do members work to assemble? Too often a local family fails to see how important the love of the brethren is (1 Pet. 1:22). This is an important health condition: LOVE OF BRETHREN.

Sometimes the problem of examining a local assembly is that we look at the wrong conditions. The size of the congregation is not a measure of spiritual health, nor is the size of the contribution (yet we hear many times people call a small church a dying church; such reflects carnal thinking). In the same manner numeric growth is NOT a measure of spiritual health, and thinking it is is a worldly mindset. Another false

condition is that a church is seen to be healthy in some areas, and is assumed to be healthy in all. As seen in the church check-up, churches can be strong in works, doctrine or diligence and still be sick.

When we inspect a local church, we need to understand that it is composed of members (1 Cor. 12). We are all supposed to be members of a local body; if we are not, then we are not disciples of Christ. In the spiritual checkup, there are several things spoken of that an individual can do regarding the spiritual condition of a local church.

Remain pure – Revelation 2:24-25

Be unafraid – Revelation 2:10

Revitalize your priorities – Revelation 3:2-3

Have zealous behavior – Revelation 3:19