

An Approved Church Edifies Itself 10-6-19 AM

What is Edification? In Spanish, the word *edificio* means building. Edification is a way of saying “building up, strengthening”. It is something we do for one another in a spiritual manner. It is one of the purposes of the church, as seen in passages such as Ephesians 4:11-16. But this work is done by the individual members of the church, as described throughout the New Testament in “one another” passages such as 1 Thessalonians 5:11 or Romans 15:2. Working Edification has a marvelous benefit; it provides a security of salvation and a confidence of the local church. Edification is a work of love; the love found in a local congregation is the heart of edification.

If the church is meant to edify its members, an important question is how does this work happen? The most obvious place of this work is in the assembly of the church. We see this in Hebrews 10:24-26, which describes the purpose of the assembly as being to stir each other up to love and good works. We do this just by being present with each other, but our assembly of worship can accomplish this too with singing (Colossians 3:16) and other works of worship (1 Corinthians 14:26). As well, the church can accomplish this work with assemblies and opportunities to study together (Acts 2:42-46, Acts 20:32).

But we need to understand that this work of the congregation is accomplished at a personal level too. For example, the words you speak to each other are at the heart of edification (Ephesians 4:29). The love you demonstrate to each other is at the heart of edification (1 Corinthians 8:1).

But often a church loses its perspective on this. In Revelation 2 the church of Ephesus is accused of leaving its first love; it might be suggested that it has ceased to love itself (the members of the church are not acting in love to one another) and it is now failing. When churches lose the purpose of edification, problems arise. It might be that “building up” is no longer about spiritual things, and becomes good feelings. This leads to the actual works of edification (worship, assembly, and profitable study of Scripture). Edification fails when the members of a church become selfish and self-centered in their lives. They desire that their church experience revolve around their desires, needs and wants.

As members of a local church we need to make the work of edification personal. First of all, we need to pursue the opportunities to be edified. At every chance we need to gather to study and worship. Secondly, as individuals we need to work diligently to edify our brethren. Each one of us needs to do our part to serve the church. Only then does *“the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love”* (Eph. 4:16).