

☞ What does the Church do?

5 Key Practices

☞ Why does the church exist? Reach the Lost; F.O.C.U.S.

Now we focus on the activity of the church.

Every soldier in the U.S. Army is required to meet some basic qualifications including physical fitness requirements and weapons knowledge. Likewise, every soldier in God's army must be involved in these five fundamental activities. Individuals may specialize in one or two, but everyone must be active in all five. These are our basic assignments. We do a lot of ministry, but what are the basics? Everything we do can actually be boiled

☞ down to **five basic activities**.

1. ☞ **Worshipping** = extravagant respect; admiration; devotion

Matthew 4:10

☞ ...it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve **him only**.'

☞ Psalm 95:1-7 mentions **singing, shouting, thanksgiving**, music, bowing down and kneeling.

--Erwin W. Lutzer... You don't learn to praise in a day, especially since you may have been complaining for years! New habits take time to develop. But you can begin today, and practice tomorrow, and the next day, until it becomes part of you.

--Joni Eareckson Tada... A sacrifice of praise will always cost you something. It may be a difficult thing to do.

There are many forms, but true worship is from the heart, not just a form.

John 4:23-24

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit,

☞ and his worshipers must worship **in spirit and in truth**."

☞ Romans 12:1 (*offer yourself as a **living sacrifice**; your spiritual act of worship*)

1 Peter 2:9 (*this is one of our very first callings*)

you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

We like the idea of being chosen and royal, but let's not forget that we are to be praising and worshipping God. Let's do some right now... what are some things you are thankful for?

2. 🗨️ **Evangelizing** = preach the gospel; announce the good news

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will **be my** 🗨️ **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

This is the activity that fulfills the purpose of reaching the lost, which we talked about just recently. People need the Lord. We're not just talking about how to have a better life. There is an eternity to be faced in either heaven or hell.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to man by which we must be saved.

Romans 10:13-15

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they 🗨️ have not heard? And how can they hear without someone **preaching** to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are **sent**? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

We are all part of this process. One easy way to be involved is by giving to MVP (Missionary Venture Plan) and supporting missionaries around the world. But, even if you are not called to be a missionary in a foreign land, we are all called to evangelize and share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

-- D.L. Moody... If this world is going to be reached, I am convinced that it must be done by men and women of average talent. After all, there are comparatively few people in the world who have great talents.

*The Institute for American Church Growth asked 10,000 people what led them to church. Answers: Friend/relative, 79 percent. All other answers were less than 10 percent. Don't 🗨️ forget, we have "**You're Invited**" business cards available for you to give away.*

Cecil Northcott in "A Modern Epiphany" tells of a discussion in a camp of young people where representatives of many nations were living together. "One wet night the campers were discussing various ways of telling people about Christ. They turned to the girl from Africa. 'Maria,' they asked, 'what do you do in your country?' 'Oh,' said Maria, 'we just send one or two Christian families to live and work in a village, and when people see what Christians are like, then they want to be Christians too.'"

3. ☞ **Serving** = giving help; meeting needs

1 John 3:16-18

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 18 Dear ☞ children, let us not **love with** words or tongue but **with actions** and in truth.

--Charles Kingsley... If you wish to be miserable, think much about yourself; about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you, and what people think of you.

Ephesians 4:11-12

It was he who gave some... 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

John 13 (*Jesus served the disciples in the lowest fashion, by washing their feet*)

Many Christians suffer from loneliness because they are sitting instead of serving.

I know that many times when we talk about serving some will only think we are trying to recruit more help. And while that may be part of it, there is also a benefit for you. You will get to know more people and not feel so lonely; you will get a sense of satisfaction from having a part in something important.

Acts 20:35

☞ ...remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: '**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**'

☞ **Ten ways to get rid of the blues: Go out and do something for someone else--then repeat nine times.**

4. ☞ **Fellowshipping** = (koinos) having something in common; (koinonia) = partnership; participation; sharing together

People join churches more because they want warmth than light. Sermons may get them into church the first time, but what keeps them coming are friendships that foster inward awareness and support.

In fact, one of the plumb lines for OBC is this: *We understand that programs and ☞ preaching attract people; but **personal connections** and clear purpose keep them.*

Hebrews 10:24-25

☞ And let us consider how we may **spur one another on** toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us **not give up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us **encourage one another**-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

And all the more... times are getting more and more difficult for believers. There is an anti-Christian bias spreading throughout our nation. There is outright persecution of believers in many parts of the world. We need each other.

--Corrie ten Boom... Be united with other Christians. A wall with loose bricks is not good. The bricks must be cemented together.

--Billy Graham... Church-goers are like coals in a fire. When they cling together, they keep the flame aglow; when they separate, they die out.

5. ☞ **Discipling** = growing up in faith; helping others follow Christ and move to maturity

Matthew 28:20

☞ **teaching them to obey** everything I have commanded you.

Hebrews 6:1

☞ Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and **go on to maturity**

Last week we talked about spiritual maturity and perfection. There is always more growing to do as a Christian. None of us has reached the stage of perfection quite yet, so we continue to need to be disciplined.

What you are is God's gift to you. What you make of yourself is your gift to God.

The Christian walk is like riding a bicycle; we are either moving forward or falling off.

--Billy Graham... Salvation is free, but discipleship costs everything we have.

The walk with Christ is all uphill. There is no leveling off. Another way to look at it is this: God is on the move. His kingdom is advancing. If we are sitting still, we are getting left behind. I've said before that just being "in the kingdom" is far less than God intends for his ☞ people. He wants us to be **continually growing, maturing and advancing**.

You can learn, like Paul, to be content in any circumstance, but you should never settle for less than God's best.

Early Church had all 5 practices going. (See Acts 2)

--David Ravenhill... Most Christians readily acknowledge that they have been saved, but all too many fail to understand that they are called.

Many are happy to believe in God and even ask him for forgiveness. But often people stop right there. And, eventually, their faith falls apart and they think that Christianity just doesn't work. The problem isn't with Christianity, it's with people who quit too soon!

Some even agree with the goals of Unity, Maturity, and the Fullness of Christ. But it's in word and thought only.

 **You want your faith to be real?** Then get on with the assignments! **Worship!** Don't just stand there with your arms folded; honor God! Praise God! Worship God! **Evangelize!** Let your Christianity show! Talk to your friends and family about your faith! Invite them to church. **Serve!** Get involved in church ministries! Don't just take, take, take; start giving your time and energy! Do something for someone else! **Fellowship!** Don't be a recluse; don't just hang out with bad influences; be around other strong believers; be at church; join a Small Group! **Disciple!** You personally need to keep growing in your faith. You also need to help others grow in theirs. We are not done yet! There's work to do!

As food and water are fuel to the human body, so is his presence to the Church. However, just as the human body is made strong and builds muscle through exercise, so the Church is strengthened by carrying out its duties. The opposite implication seems obvious. Just as the human body can become out-of-shape and unhealthy without exercise, so can the Church be distorted and unhealthy if the duties are neglected. It is the combination of entering his presence and executing our practices that lead to a healthy, growing church. Let us be active in carrying out our responsibilities and thereby grow and build up the Church!