

An Atmosphere for Growth

(1 Corinthians 3:6)

- Introduction:
1. Churches grow, not by accident, but by design.
 2. In this lesson, we will examine the atmosphere of churches that are stagnant and the atmosphere of churches that are growing.

I. Unhealthy Conditions Which Pollute The Atmosphere

- A. Refusing People.
 1. Are we willing to cross barriers (economic, educational, race, moral)?
 2. (Matthew 9:12).
 3. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
 4. (John 4:35) Some churches are "people blind."
- B. Stifling People.
 1. Some churches have the tendency to stifle enthusiasm and fresh ideas.
 2. They are equipped with spiritual fire extinguishers, ready to throw cold water on any idea or suggestion that does not uphold the status quo.
- C. Confusing People.
 1. Some argue about "words to no profit" which "ruin the hearers" (2 Timothy 2:14).
 4. Healthy churches uphold Biblical essentials (Ephesians 4:1-6) while allowing personal liberty in matters of opinion (Romans 14:1-15:6).
- D. Amusing People.
 1. Certainly, Christians are to rejoice in the Lord (Philippians 1:18; 2:16,17,18,28; 3:1,3; 4:4).
 2. However, there is a great difference in real joy and shallow entertainment to draw a large crowd.

II. Atmospheric Conditions That Are Conducive To Church Growth

- A. Uncompromising Commitment To The Word Of God.
 1. (1 Timothy 3:15) Pillar and ground of the truth.
 2. (Isaiah 37:31) Take root downward and bear fruit upward.
- B. Strong & Effective Leadership.
 1. (Hebrews 13:17) They watch for our souls and must give account.
 2. (Titus 1:11) Stop the mouths of those who would subvert the faith.
 3. Churches need to create a climate for leadership.
- C. Committed To Prayer.
 1. (Acts 2:42) Continued steadfastly in...prayer.
 2. Prayer stands as a declaration of our dependance upon God (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

- Conclusion:
1. Church growth is not an option that may or may not be pursued.
 2. Let's take care to cultivate a climate that is conducive to growth and maturity in Christ.