

FTL Class 6: The Importance of the Local Church

Ephesians 4:11-16 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love..."

Hebrews 10:22-25 "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching..."

Part 1: The importance of the local church:

- **Putting God first in our weekly patterns:** We need a structured work week
 - **Genesis 2:1-3** "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made..."
 - **Mark 2:27** "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath..."
- **Sitting under the authority of scripture:**
 - **Ephesians 4:11-12** "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints..."
 - **1 Timothy 4:6** "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained..."
- **Sitting under the influence of the Spirit:**

- **1 Corinthians 3:16** "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"
- **Matthew 18:20** "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them..."
- **Being stirred up to love and good works:**
 - **Ephesians 4:12** "For the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
 - **Hebrews 10:24-25** "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another..."
 - **1 Peter 4:10** "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God..."
- **Having a context to serve one another as we grow together:**

Ephesians 4:13-16 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: ¹⁶ From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love..."

Part 2: The most important elements of a healthy church

- **Gospel clarity:** You do not have a church if people are not genuinely converted.
- **Gospel centrality:** Everything is built on the gospel, not moralism or traditionalism.
- **Biblical Authority:** The final authority is scripture, and the consistent way that scripture is handled makes that submission to scripture obvious.
- **Christ-centered worship:** The gathering of the church is not ordered to entertain, but rather to call everyone to think deeply about Christ and glory in Him, not those who lead in the worship.
- **A loving community:** The regular ministry of the word has so shaped the culture of the church that deep bonds of Christian love are being visibly developed in the church.

Part 3: The specific focus of each local church gathering:

- **Sunday School Classes:**

- Interactive
- In depth discussion
- Greater development of concepts
- Age-appropriate interaction
- **Morning Worship service:**
 - Focused well-ordered service:
 - Scripture reading and corporate prayer
 - Congregational singing.
 - Prepared selections meant to focus our attention on the theme of the service.
 - Well-developed sermon.
- **Evening Worship service:**
 - A more family-oriented atmosphere.
 - Deliberately involving our young people.
 - A rotation of preachers with differing experience levels.
 - A longer period of fellowship after the service.
- **Mid-Week study and prayer:**
 - A more teaching oriented study though without interaction.
 - Prayer time and fellowship in groups.
 - Additional classes, especially for young people.

Scripture Memory Reviews: