Kingdom vs Church Centric

External Focus

Pastors’ Edge, June 2017

Intro

* Organized biographically
* Focus more on practical than theological
* 1990-2006 Grew steadily, but so did our programs; programs kept growing after our body stopped growing in numbers
* Church became inward focused on my watch
* Vision leaks

Costs of an inward focused church

* Disobedience
* Sniping and griping
* Monastery effect
* Lots of activity, little purpose
* Burnout
* Low expectations
* Unattractive
* Apathy about hell
* Low view of Scripture

August 2006 a turning point for me personally – “Either step up to the plate, or get out of the game,” “Are you clear on the primary purpose of the church?”

Primary purpose of the church - Is there one? I wasn’t internally convinced that it was even a good question

* Not only one thing to do, but one primary purpose
* One focus that breathes new life into everything else church is called to do and be
* Importance of context in both settings

Possibilities:

* Great Commission: “Go and make disciples of all nations”
* Great Commandment: Worship the Lord with all your heart…
* Love one another as I have loved you
* Abide in Christ, be the body of Christ
* Be filled with the Holy Spirit
* Follow Jesus

I don’t believe everything I’m told, so I set out on a search to answer this question.

Start with Jesus’ last words:

* Matthew 28:18-20
* Mark 16:15
* Luke 24:46-49 & Acts 1:8
* No ascension scene in John

Examine the alternatives:

* Great Commandment (Luke 10:25-37)
* Love one another (John 13:34-35)
* Abide in Christ (John 15:5)
* Be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)
* Follow Jesus (John 1:14)

The primary purpose of the church in one word: Go. Clarity essential

* 1 Cor. 14:8 If the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?
* Primary purpose isn’t to welcome those who come, but to go where they are.
* Domains of 4Tucson
* Counter-intuitive, needs constant attention

Personal changes from 2007-2011

Personal changes from 2011-2017

Importance of City Church mindset

* Each congregation is only one part of the body
* Fishing is a group activity – partnerships
* Don’t duplicate efforts – join them (avoid the missing middle)
* Burnout comes from trying to be something God resists

Hindrances to an external, Kingdom focus

* Individualistic/Western mindset
* Deficit/poverty thinking
* Fear
* Isolation and independence
* Comfort
* Enemy

Indicators of Outward Focus

* Tithe in everything
  + Money
  + Time
  + People
* Foreign mission trips
* Local mission trips
* Outreach in everything
* Fervent prayer
* Think like a church plant
* Adopt a school – look for opportunities to serve
* Partner with other churches