

The DNA of The Church

Sunday, April 11, 2021

- * The letters DNA stand for Deoxyribonucleic Acid. It is a self-replicating material that is present in living organisms and is the carrier of genetic information. It gives each of us our fundamental and distinctive characteristics!

- * Try to imagine:
Suddenly, for the first time you, are consciously aware of your existence! You have no memory before the very present moment. Trying to inventory your surroundings and get your bearings, you notice a “book” sitting on a table. Desperate for some kind of understanding of your present situation, you open it and read! You are quickly enraptured by the story of The Creator of everything that exist. His creation was injured by the very ones that were given the responsibility to care for it. To restore His creation back to it’s created purpose, He had to become like one of His creation. When He came few believed Who He really was and they finally killed Him. He actually came back to life and promised to continue to be with His followers and as crazy as it sounds, He said He would live “inside” them and empower them to continue what He started! Through His initial followers He said that “the group” of followers would be given certain abilities beyond themselves to accomplish this work. No one person would be given all that was needed to finish what He started, but rather different abilities would be given to different ones of this group of followers. He then said, if you want to benefit from these different abilities, you will have to develop relationships and regularly gather together. It would be those times together that these individuals would receive what it takes to finish the work started by the Creator to restore His broken creation!

- * Question:
What does this look like?
If all you had was this book you have just read, what would these times together look like??? How would individuals receive and benefit from these various abilities of others? How would daily life be impacted by those who gather with this group? These are questions we all need to be asking!

Ephesians 1:22 (NLT)

22 God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church.

Ephesians 2:20-21 (NLT)

20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. 21 We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.

Ephesians 3:10 (NLT)

10 God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)

16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

1 Peter 2:5 (NLT)

5 And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)

24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

- I. I believe it is time for The Body of Christ to thoroughly reconsider the reason and function of The Church!
 - A. We grew up on phrases like, "You just need to go to church" and "It doesn't matter where you go, you just need to go!"
 1. After all, it's not really important what happens when you get there...you have won if you just manage to get there!

2. God's people have always gathered! Under the Old Covenant and The Church in the New Covenant!
3. So, what does The Lord have to say about some of this activity?

Amos 5:21-24 (The Message)

21-24 "I can't stand your religious meetings. I'm fed up with your conferences and conventions. I want nothing to do with your religion projects, your pretentious slogans and goals. I'm sick of your fund-raising schemes, your public relations and image making. I've had all I can take of your noisy ego-music. When was the last time you sang to me? Do you know what I want? I want justice—oceans of it. I want fairness—rivers of it. That's what I want. That's all I want.

Isaiah 58:2-5 (NLT)

2 Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. 3 'We have fasted before you!' they say. 'Why aren't you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don't even notice it!' "I will tell you why!" I respond. "It's because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. 4 What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. 5 You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the Lord?"

1 Corinthians 11:17-18, 20-22, 27-29 (NLT)

17 But in the following instructions, I cannot praise you. For it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. 18 First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it.

20 When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord's Supper. 21 For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others. As a result, some go hungry while others get drunk. 22 What?

Don't you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God's church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this!

27 So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. 29 For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself.

- B. It seems to me that The Church of Jesus Christ has much to learn as we try to be the expression of God in the earth!

Revelation 3:19-21 (TPT)

19 All those I dearly love I unmask and train. So repent and be eager to pursue what is right. 20 Behold, I'm standing at the door, knocking. If your heart is open to hear my voice and you open the door within, I will come in to you and feast with you, and you will feast with me. 21 And to the one who conquers I will give the privilege of sitting with me on my throne, just as I conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

- C. God's presence is what His Church needs! Let's open the Door!

II. Now that we have touched on the "reason and function" of The Church, what should the individual assemblies look like?

- A. Here in our American context, we have some very personal and even selfish desires and dare I say demands for worship!
 1. We use the phrase, "I want the worship style to be relevant!"
 2. Which means; I want it to be to my liking!
- B. To fully understand these challenges, we must first understand what the Local Church really is!
 1. It is an assembly or "ekklesia" of believers!

2. It is a gathering for believers for the purpose of worship!
 3. From the stories of the Early Church these gatherings included prayer, scripture reading, confessions, responses to one another and singing!
- C. First and foremost, WE MUST approach these times together with these awesome truths in mind!

Matthew 18:20 (NLT)

20 For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.”

Colossians 3:15-17 (J.B.Phillips)

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, remembering that as members of the same body you are called to live in harmony, and never forget to be thankful for what God has done for you.

16-17 Let Christ’s teaching live in your hearts, making you rich in the true wisdom. Teach and help one another along the right road with your psalms and hymns and Christian songs, singing God’s praises with joyful hearts. And whatever you may have to do, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, thanking God the Father through him.

1. This Christian faith of ours is all about relationship!
Our relationship with God and with each other!
2. When you read scripture you realize that this faith is lived in community with each other! We read it everywhere!
3. In submission and obedience to God, we are called to serve one another!
4. In that service to one another, we witness this message of The Gospel to the world around us!

John 13:35 (NLT)

35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

- D. This gathering has all the elements of a “family meal!”

1. Since the center of our faith is “The Table of The Lord” our assembly is literally “a family meal!”
2. Yes, a meal that you experience all alone can be had according to your individual preferences and the “way” you prefer for things to be.
3. This individual “worship meal” cannot replace the “community, joy and connection” that comes from being with others.
4. Here is the very real issue! Is your preferences more important to you than gathering with your brothers and sisters? Or, is your family more important than everything?

Romans 12:10 (TPT)

Be devoted to tenderly loving your fellow believers as members of one family. Try to outdo yourselves in respect and honor of one another.

Philippians 2:3 (TPT)

3 Be free from pride-filled opinions, for they will only harm your cherished unity. Don't allow self-promotion to hide in your hearts, but in authentic humility put others first and view others as more important than yourselves.