

# MARKS OF A LOCAL CHURCH

## HOW TO KNOW ONE WHEN YOU SEE ONE

*"Brethren, be followers together of me,  
and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."*

~ Phil 3:17

### **1. What Marks a Local Church?**

- a. We are talking about the church locally, not the one church, or each member.
- b. A local church is the local gathering of members of Christ's body for ministry
- c. We are not talking about any church (Acts 7:38), but a Pauline church – Phil 3:17
- d. What are the marks of a local church?
  - i. Beza – only 1 – preaching the word
  - ii. Calvin and Bullinger – 2 – preaching the word / administer the sacraments
  - iii. Belgic confession (reformed) – 3 - preach, sacraments, church discipline
  - iv. Catholic (Nicene) – 4 – one, holy, catholic, apostolic church
  - v. Mark Dever – 9Marks / J.M Carroll *Trail of Blood* – 10-11 Landmarks
- e. There are many imposters we should avoid – 2 Cor 11:3-4, 13; Rom 16:17
- f. What does a properly functioning local church look like?

### **1. They meet together**

- a. More than 1, meeting regularly, praying together, eat together, they are one.
- b. Some groups do not have an identity together in Christ or otherwise – 1 Cor 1:10
- c. Not just a Bible study or class, but saints who care one for another – 1 Cor 12:25

### **2. They have a Bible and believe it**

- a. Christ, our head, communicates to us through his word – 1 Tim 6:3, 1 Cor 14:37
- b. All scripture is inspired of God, and is needed for our faith - 2 Tim 3:16, Rom 10:17
- c. The Bible translation issue is a matter of our authority being the Bible – 1Thss 2:13

### **3. They rightly divide the Bible – 2 Tim 2:15**

- a. Paul is the master builder of this dispensation – Eph 3:1-3, 1 Cor 3:10, 2 Tim 2:7
- b. Failure to rightly divide leaves you with a kingdom nation – Acts 3:21 v. Rom 16:27
- c. They are stewards of the mysteries of God - 1Cor 4:1-2, Col 1:27

### **4. They work in ministry**

- a. Churches are not community centers, concert halls, gymnasiums, or recreational.
- b. Not an entertainment venue, but a place where saints gather to do ministry
- c. Ministry is according to God's will – 2 Cor 5:18, 1 Tim 2:4, Eph 3:9
- d. Ministry is personal, and not a spectator sport, not paying someone else to do it

### **5. They pursue purity**

- a. Purity is pursued, abhors evil, avoids worldly traditions, no compromise, integrity
- b. This is the will of God for your life – 1 Thess 4:3, 1 Thess 5:22
- c. The church does not meet people half way, but is clearly separate.
- d. It is not a gathering of unbelievers and believers, it is not mixed – 2 Cor 6:14

### **6. There is proper order – Col 2:5**

- a. Recognizes headship in the family, society, and church – 1 Cor 11:1-2, Rom 13:1
- b. Paul set things in the church in order – 1 Cor 14:40, Titus 2:5, 1 Tim 3:5

### **7. They edify each other**

- a. The main function of the church gathering – Eph 4:16, 1 Cor 14:12, 14:26
- b. Sometimes building requires we first demolish – 2 Tim 4:2, Gal 6:1-2
- c. Warns, rebukes, reproves, restores, comforts, instructs-1Ths 5:14, Rom 14:1, 15:3
- d. The church should be equipping each other, not self-help, self-motivated pep talks