

EPHESIANS
SPIRITUAL MEASUREMENTS

Wednesday, September 23
Reading: Ephesians 4:11-16

Ephesians 4:11 *So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

When a new baby is born, we all eagerly wait to see the pictures. Parents proudly tell everyone their baby's height and weight measurements. As the days go by, everyone wants to know how the baby is growing. Frequent visits to the doctor for more measurements are common. These check-ups do more than give parents a chance to "brag" about their little one. The baby's growth is a major indicator of health.

The same holds true for the body of Christ. A church's growth rate is a strong indicator of its' spiritual health. In Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul gives us some spiritual "measurements" that help us gauge if our church is healthy or not.

1. A healthy church will be training people to serve (4:11-12). The task of the pastor and leaders of the church is NOT to do all the work of ministry by themselves. They are to teach and train the congregation to reach out to others and share their faith.
2. A healthy church is united (4:13). They stand together to reach the world for Christ and grow in their own walk to become like Jesus.
3. A healthy church has members who know what they believe and why they believe it! (4:14). They will not be fooled by false doctrine and the lies of Satan.
4. A healthy church speaks the truth in love (4:15). They do not "water down" the gospel to gain public acceptance. Nor do they "shove the gospel down people's throats." They share the reality of sin and the plan of salvation with a loving heart. They speak about the eternal punishment of Hell with tears in their eyes. Everything they do and say is done in love - love for God and love for others.
5. A healthy church is one where every member is striving to live like Christ (4:15-16). They are all growing in their faith, rejoicing in fellowship with other believers, and using their gifts together to achieve the purpose of God.

These measurements are for churches as well as individual believers. They are an indication of how mature we are in our walk with Christ as individuals and as a body. How do you and your church measure up?

LESSON: A healthy church is a united church. Paul begins this chapter by giving us the attitudes necessary for unity (4:1-7). (1) Humility – putting others first. This is displayed by a gentle spirit that does not argue and steamroll over others. (2) Patience – make allowances for people's mistakes and give them time to grow. This is displayed by love for each other. (3) Peace – Paul has emphasized that Jesus is our peace (2:14) that He has made peace (2:5), and that He preached peace (2:17). Now we must strive to keep the "bond of peace" in the church. We are all part of the same body and serve the same Lord. We share the same faith and hope and God is the Father of all believers. When we fight and backbite each other we are only showing that we are not living worthy of God's call on our lives (4:1).