

Differences Between What a Successful Church Is, & What It Is Not

By Jack Wilkie

As a minister, I'm constantly looking for materials (books, blogs, videos, etc.) that deal with church growth and helping build a "successful" church. Unfortunately, much of the material available today views churches just like businesses. In fact, if you stripped them of their religious language, many books and blogs could be just as easily applied to a restaurant or a clothing store.

But the church isn't a business. Its success is not defined by what man sees as success. Instead, each congregation's success is defined by her faithfulness to the missions God has given in His Word. Here are three ways to get past the world's pervasive definitions of success by going back to the Bible to find what God considers to be success and faithfulness.

A church is not successful just because it has a large number of people. That's not to say that a small church is automatically successful, either. The size of a church has no bearing on whether or not that church is being faithful to its mission. *Instead, a church is successful when it is helping every member grow to maturity as a contributing part of the body (Ephesians 4:14-16).* Whether there are 10 people or 10,000, what matters is that each one is being shown how to use their gifts to help build up the church.

A church is not successful because of the size, location, or beauty of its building. Though there's nothing wrong with having buildings, and it only makes sense to try to make the building look nice, the building is simply a meeting place. It is not the church's primary tool for evangelism. Jesus said "Go," not "Get them to come to you" (Matthew 28:19). *Instead, the building should be a launching point for the mission of the church, where we all gather together and then walk out with the purpose of spreading the Gospel message with our friends, neighbors, and co-workers.* In other words, what matters isn't the building that brings people in, but what happens in the building that sends people out.

A church is not successful simply because it has a calendar full of events. Once again, events aren't necessarily good or bad in themselves. They can hinder true growth, though, when busyness is used as a substitute for growth. It's good for the church to spend time together... but not at the exclusion of a community focus. It's good for the church to have fun together... but not at the expense of service and evangelism. *Instead, what matters is that the time spent together is used to build up the spiritual lives of the members (Acts 2:42-47), serve the needy (Matthew 25:31-46), and evangelize the community (Mark 16:15-16).*

The question has often been asked, *"If your church were to close its doors tomorrow, would anybody outside of it notice?"* It's a fair question, and it's a challenging question. Many ideas of what makes a church successful in terms of numbers and what goes on inside the doors can still leave the church invisible to the community. Truly successful churches will constantly be looking to strengthen their members so they can shine God's light of love and truth to the people around them.

*Taken from our 5/26/19 bulletin.

On Our Prayer List...	Bonita Madewell-fall on 4/8 Rita Stevens-CA	W. R. Long	Earl Forster-in Horizon Al & Vicki Peek	Jimmy Long-hip surg on 4/16. Jimmy Phy Toad Smith
*(Please keep all our elderly in your prayers)				
Ed Gunn- fall	John Henry & Carlene Davis & family-could use our prayers		Norma Ross(Glenn's mother)	
Shane Cobb-complications fr diabetes -toe/foot amputated	Sharon Curtis-Cancer		Tracy Wilhite(frd of Joyce Long) home fr hospital	
Wayne Hatcher-mass on liver & wife	Debbie-cancer in one eye		Tony England-Marvin's nephew- complications back sg	
Mike Parrish-(Wesley's son) surg went well -now home recovering	Ethan McClure-(friend of Buttrey family) has mass in stomach		Tresa Garber Staggs-(Frankie's daughter) cancer	
Barry Dean-(grandfather of a friend of Rachel Bell's) Cancer	Beth Schreiber Fritts (Wesley Parrish's cousin) breast CA		Jackie Borders-(Lauren Stuart's mom) cancer	
Linda Burns-(sister-in-law of Mike) broken ribs from fall	Wanda Wright-chemo treatments		Patrick Tarpay(grandson of Teresa Deloach) Diabetic/Covid	
Faye Marshall-(Traci Adams) mom	/Maggie Wright (friend of N. Buttrey)CA-chemo		Shirley Proctor-(Robert's mom) @ Waverly for rehab	
Jerry & Judy(blood clot lungs)Smith /	Frank Hall-(Brother-in-law Roy Deloach) Dialysis		Jimmy Arnold (Bruce&Roxanne's son's father-in-law)CA	
Tim Crafton-(Kathy Martin's nephew) advanced CA-no treatment at this time	June Dreaden-S.Rachford's mom		Carolyn Eddings-cancer treatments	
	Kim Marlow- CA		Kenna Rickenbrode-CA	
	Larry Hayes(fr Waverly COC) restarted chemo			

ASSISTED LIVING & NURSING HOME		MILITARY
AHC Decatur County -726 Kentucky Ave., Parsons,TN 38363-Wyle Marshall (Rm 726)-Traci Adams dad		Dustin Proctor -(Navy-Japan) 5301 562 Box 7273, FPO AP 96311-0073 Dalton & Hope Palk - (Navy-Louisiana) 500 Woodland Dr., Apt 597 New Orleans, LA 70131
Dickson Health & Rehab -901 North Charlotte,Dickson,TN 37055 -Clayton England -Marvin's brother		
Humphreys County -Billy Adams-Rm 712/Jane Ridings-Rehab-Rm 704 104 Forte Hill Rd, Waverly, TN 37185		
NHC -812 N. Charlotte St. Dickson, TN 7055 -Jim & Anita-(Rehab) Buckner -both in Rm 102 Doris Stokes- (Rm 127)		

At HOME	HERBERT CAPPS- 1400 Bradley Rd / EARL FORSTER-131 Bold Springs Rd/(currently in Horizon)	ELTON SMITH - 7731 Hwy 70 East
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ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS		
OUR SYMPATHY TO THE FOLLOWING FAMILIES: *Debbie Gentry & Sharon Tate & family on the loss of their mom "Virginia Tate" her service was held on Monday the 8th. & Wayne & Sonya Rachford on the loss of their nephew "Troy Rachford Jr"	YOUTH NEWS DEVO this Sunday the 14th after our evening services.	Camp Applications for Leatherwood are here.....Be sure to get one & send in this week to ensure your spot !!!!! Will be held the week of June 23rd-June 29th Campers are Age 9 thur 16 VBS Meeting — Sunday, April 21st @ 5:00 PM in Adult Classroom I. If you are helping this year please attend.

IN F.O.C.U.S. Faith, Obedience, Character, Unity, Salvation

It is so hard to believe that we are more than a week into the month of April! Time keeps going by fast and a lot of my attention is about to shift to VBS! We are only 2 months away from our biggest week of the year!!

Several of our youth and several adults were blessed to be able to go to Makin Music last Saturday afternoon. We had a group of 27 head down to Freed Hardeman for a great show! All the clubs did a wonderful job. Brayden, Jacen, and Noah are all part of Phi Kappa Alpha, and thankfully they took home the trophy for best show!! I know all the groups put so much work into Makin Music. I'm sure they are glad it's over and are gearing up the end of another semester. After Makin Music, we headed back toward McEwen, made a stop in Camden to eat supper, and then headed home.

In Christian Love, Keith

