

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

Church of Christ
371 W. Main Street
Greenwood, IN 46142
(317)888-8288

www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org

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What Makes A Church Successful

By Steve Higginbotham

No matter what the undertaking may be, we desire to be successful. That can be no more true than when it comes to the success of the Lord's church. There is no more important task that we can put our hands to than to work for the success of the church. That being said, some apparently do not fully understand what makes a church successful. In the minds of most people, a successful church is measured in size, numbers, facilities, and reputation within a community. People often point to the mega-churches within our society as examples of successful churches.

While there is nothing wrong with size, numbers, facilities, and reputation within a community, not a single one of these characteristics is essential or integral to having a successful church. A church can be successful without possessing a single one of the above qualities.

So just what does make a church successful? While I cannot offer an exhaustive list, below are some of the qualities that make churches successful.

- Christians who humbly and quietly try to live out the

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Lordship of Jesus in their lives every day.

- Christians who unceasingly pray, every day for the strength and stability of the Lord's church.
- Christians who love the truth supremely; who will not allow their own personal desires or situations to skew their perception of God's revelation.
- Christians who are committed to moral living and whose goal is not to fit it with society, but whose goal is purity and godliness.
- Christians who love peace more than they do a fight; who love the calmness of unity more than the rhetoric of a fuss; and who love words of edification more than the allure of gossip.
- Christians who support the weak, restore the fallen, and who re-affirm their love and commitment to those who have stumbled.

Now those characteristics would make a successful church! And take note: It's not about numbers, size, or facilities. It's about inward transformation, a renewing of the mind, conforming one's life into the image of Jesus. And here's the best news - it's within the grasp of everyone of us. You see, it matters not whether we can or cannot grow to great number, or build some huge facility, or have a multimillion dollar budget, because those are not the things that make great churches. The qualities that bring success and constitute greatness in God's eyes are qualities that are within reach, that each one of us, if we choose to embrace, will make, and will continue to make the church at South Green Street a faithful and successful congregation of the Lord's church.

How To Remain Faithful

By Steve Higginbotham

National statistics suggest that we are losing 60%

of our young people after their graduation from high school. Our own congregational history suggests that we are losing 59% of our young people after graduation from high school, and that figure jumps to as high as 80% among those who have been out of school for more than 10 years! So what can be done?

1. Realize that mediocrity doesn't work. It's a proven failure. You can't simply be a nominal Christian and expect to weather the storms of life. Christianity must be at the core of your life and not a peripheral. Attend all the worship services. Study the Bible at home. Plan service projects for your family. Demonstrate that nothing, including sports, band, homework, etc. will come before the Lord. Compromise and mediocrity have proven to be miserable failures.
2. Realize that today's actions determine tomorrow's destiny. Likes and dislikes, preferences, and attitudes, are all developed early in life, and to a great extent, they are shaped by the company we keep. Understand that if you want to be faithful ten years from now, you are going to have to choose a path today that will take you there. You can't travel the wrong road and arrive at the proper destination.
3. Develop your own faith. Make Bible study a priority, a daily routine. "I've always heard," or "The preacher said," or "That's the way I was raised," just won't cut it when called upon to make tough moral, ethical, and biblical decisions. God has no grandchildren, he only has children. You cannot sustain a relationship with God through the faith of your parents or your spouse.

Oh, there are more things that can be done, for sure, but if you leave these three things undone, I can just about guarantee you that you'll have regrets.