

## HEALTHY CHURCH 6: BIBLE TEACHING AND PRAYER

### RECAP...

1. The church is the “gathering” together of God’s people.
2. The local church reveals the glory of the Gospel in its relationships, as diverse people are made one in Christ Jesus.
3. Each local church has a responsibility to partner with other churches – locally, regionally, and globally. And denominations are a wise way of pursuing accountability and encouragement.
4. Every member of the local church is to be committed to the spiritual growth of the church and other members.
5. Embracing who God has made us – either as men or as women – will be critical to the church’s ability to reveal the supernatural power of God in our relationships.

Today...

6. Bible teaching and prayer = the Lord’s normal means of grace

### 1. BIBLE TEACHING

#### **(a) God’s Word is powerful**

*John 5:24*, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. he does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.”

*Romans 10:17*, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

*Colossians 1:28*, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”

**(b) The preaching of the Bible is central to the life of the church**

Preaching... highly unfashionable... but Biblically central to a healthy local church

Illustrated and explained in Scripture:

- Mount Sinai, Exodus 19-20
- Post exilic Jerusalem "church", Nehemiah 8
- The Gospel and the Bible is an imperial announcement... to which the church gladly listens and submits

**(c) Expository preaching should be the norm**

What is expository / expositional preaching?

Charles Simeon: <sup>d.1836, 53 years at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge.</sup>

"My endeavour is to bring out of Scripture what is there, and not to thrust in what I think might be there. I have a great jealousy on this head; never to speak more or less than I believe to be the mind of the Spirit in the passage I am expounding."

David Helm: *Expositional preaching: how we speak God's word today, pp12-13*

"Simeon viewed the preacher as duty-bound to the text. He was committed to staying on the line, never rising above the text of Scripture to say more than it said and never falling beneath the text by lessening its force or fullness... Expositional preaching is empowered preaching that rightfully submits the shape and emphasis of the sermon to the shape and emphasis of a biblical text."

The burden of the passage = the burden of the sermon.

A reasonably mature Christian can listen to a sermon... and see how the big point of the sermon... and its headings... clearly flow out of the passage.

So what? The advantages of expository preaching...

- It respects the way God has ordered Bible
- It helps preserve the congregation from a preacher's hobbyhorses
- It subjects our lives to the priorities of Scripture
- It teaches the congregation how to study the Bible
- It does the heavy lifting of growing a church

**(d) Allow God's word to work in the life of our congregation**

*Individually:*

- Read the passage in advance
- Pray for preachers
- Pray for your own understanding and obedience
- Listen attentively and take notes

*Corporate response:*

- Talk about it after church, over lunch... at fellowship gp... in discipling relationships... in families.
- Pick one thing to talk and pray about.
- Be concerned for truth: grow in discernment...

## **2. PRAYER**

**(a) The importance of corporate prayer**

E.g. *Matthew 6* – Lord's Prayer: "OUR Father..."

**(b) God uses corporate prayer to advance his kingdom.**

*Acts 4:31*, "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness."

**(c) Corporate prayer creates unity**

Think: there are prayer requests or testimonies of God's grace you could share with the congregation at the church prayer meeting?

Corporate prayer is a service to this congregation.

*2 Corinthians 1:8-11*

**(d) Corporate prayer teaches us how to pray**

**(e) Praying for our church**

1. Pray for the preacher (e.g. Ephesians 6:19-20)
2. Pray through the list of Immanuel people
3. Church prayer meeting
4. Pray for our church as a whole.