

Coach's Corner



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“The Four P’s”

What kind of program can we institute which will help our church to be healthy? The answer we find in the New Testament is that there is no program which can do that. However, according to Mark Dever and Paul Alexander in The Deliberate Church: Building Your Church On The Gospel, there are four p’s which must be part of the church, if it is to be healthy in a New Testament way. I want to look at those four p’s in this issue and then over the next several issues of **Coach’s Corner** I want to summarize the rest of their book to foster discussion among us as to how we should lead this congregation to health and strength.

Preaching

By preaching I mean the proclamation of God’s Word in such a way its meaning becomes plain and the application becomes clear. This includes not just preaching on Sunday morning, but also teaching in other settings such as youth, Sunday School, and small groups. The point is that we understand faith (Romans 10:17), salvation (Romans 1:16; James 1:18), growth (John 17:17; Colossians 3:16), and equipping for ministry (2 Timothy 3:16-17) all come through the Word of God. In fact, the way God saves and grows people is by His Spirit working through the Word in response to prayer (e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-11). If we seek to motivate or change people apart from this word-centered, God-honoring means, we will certainly short-change God’s true work.

Prayer

God has ordained He will typically work in response to our faith-fueled praying (Matthew 7:7-11; John 14:12-14). Part of the reason behind this is that prayer brings us to a point of dependence upon God for what we need. He gets the glory and we get the benefit (Psalm 50:15; Isaiah 64:4). Prayer is certainly hard work (Colossians 4:12) and since it is such a strong weapon in our hand (Ephesians 6:18) it is opposed by Satan. To be engaged in prayer truly is spiritual warfare. As elders we must pray about prayer in our own lives, families, and in our church. We must also remember that coming boldly before the grace of God for help and mercy in time of need (Hebrews 4:16) is not a last resort, it is the most effective and powerful activity in which we can engage for the hearts of men, women, boys, and girls. For this reason, we must continually look for opportunities to equip the church for prayer and to help them come together in prayer.

Personal Discipling Relationships

A good percentage of the work of the gospel is done when we come alongside others for the purpose of either helping them come to know Jesus Christ as Savior or helping them grow in their walk with Him. It is in these relationships we can help people in ways specific to their situation to take in God’s Word, to learn to pray, and to learn to be involved in ministry. This is what Paul called Timothy to do as an elder in Ephesus (2 Timothy 2:2). It has been my experience that a church will usually not get involved in this kind of work unless its leadership is modeling it. That is why it is crucial we are involved in some kind of Iron Man team.

Patience

As you have picked up from my preaching, I believe it is very important that we grasp God is sovereign over all things and we learn to trust our sovereign God no matter what is happening. This is at the heart of how Christians achieve patience. Yet, I have also discovered about myself that I can become very impatient in relation to ministry matters. I would like for things to happen today or yesterday if possible. Yet, when we become impatient, we can easily slip into a mode of using people as objects or “running over them” as we try and bring change or move things forward.

This is why patience is such an important part of the fruit of the Spirit. People need to see their leaders trusting in God and content in their service, rather angry, full of anxiety, or lacking in Christ-like love.

Conclusion

Men, let's covenant together that we will pray for each other and ask the Lord to build within us the practice of these four p's. Let's ask Him to grant us the wisdom and resolve to pursue these four p's as part of the core of how we keep the gospel foundational to all we do.

Joyfully Following Him With You,

Tom