

## **EXPERIENCING GOD**

### **GOD'S WILL AND THE CHURCH**

When a church allows God's presence and activity to be expressed, a watching world will be drawn to Him. Church members need to know how to walk with God and to know how to hear Him speaking.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for Christianity in our day is for churches to walk with God so closely that the world comes to know Him through their witness.

How can our church be that kind of congregation?

We must understand who we are in relation to God and to one another.

1. A church is a creation of Christ. He builds His church.
2. A church is a living body of Christ with many members.
3. A church is uniquely related to Christ as Head of the body.
4. Members of a church are uniquely related to every other member of the church.
5. A church is on mission with Christ in our world to carry out the Father's redemptive purposes.

Every Christian in every church has been placed where they are by God's will. God has a plan and a purpose for their membership. God works through the pastor, other spiritual leaders and people in the church to accomplish His purposes. Ultimately it is God who gets the glory rightfully due Him for kingdom work.

Being the kind of people who please God is far more important than doing something for Him. Of course God wants a church to obey Him by doing what He asks but He doesn't want a church to violate His commands to get a task done. Imagine how God must feel when a church splits because one group wanted to do something for God and the other group refused.

God wants His people to be holy, clean and pure. He desires unity in the church. He calls members to love each other because the world will know we are His disciples by our love. God will accomplish His work through His people in ways that are consistent with His command and His nature.

When each member does their job, the whole church works the way it should. The whole body looks to Christ...the Head of the church...for guidance. He guides all members of the body to fully understand His will.

The most important factor is not a method but a relationship with Christ. He knows how each one can work with Him to understand His will.

With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God came to dwell in every believer. He created the body...the church...so every member needed every other member. In the body of Christ, each believer has direct access to God. He works through the whole body to reveal His will.

When God speaks to people about the church, they should relate to the body what they sense God is saying. As members tell what God is saying, the whole body goes to God in prayer to discern His will. In His timing God

confirms to the body what He is saying. When Christ guides each member of the body to function properly, the whole body knows and is enabled to do God's will.

A church learns God's will when the whole body comes to understand what Christ wants it to do. The pastor doesn't have to try and convince the church this is God's will. Christ does the convincing on His timetable. The whole body follows Christ. This is why the church must learn to function as a body with Christ as its head.

This may be another place where you've reached a crisis of belief. Ask God for help through this one. Can God bring a whole church to a sense of unity about His will? Absolutely YES!!

Good directions from God may be lost by missing God's timing. Not only does a church need to know what God wants it to do but it also needs to know when He want it to act. As a body we must wait on God's timing.

God will seek to adjust us to Himself. Waiting on God develops confident patience in the Lord and loving trust in each other.

Paul wrote to the church in Rome and gave the members instructions about how the body of Christ should function in relation to each other. A church needs to learn to act as the body of Christ.

Living sacrifices and renewed minds are necessary to "test and approve what God's will is." Pride causes problems in the body. We should think of ourselves with sober judgment and honor others above ourselves.

All believers in the church are gifted with the Holy Spirit's presence. Each person's experience of the Holy Spirit is for the good of the entire body...not for them alone. That is why we need each other. Without a healthy, functioning body, a church will miss much of what God promises and provides for a church.

As you and your church allow God to teach you how to effectively live as a body, you will see love and unity spring up like you've never experienced before. Effective church life begins when each individual is rightly related to God in an intimate love relationship. It continues as all members become rightly related to Him as the Head of the church. Right relationships with God are far more important than buildings, programs, methods or size.

God accomplishes His purposes through an obedient church.