

New Day A Place Where People Can Learn

Wayne & I pastored Churches on the same District for about 8 years. He was and is an extremely intelligent man. His desire as a Pastor was to develop a church around a Bible College model. He wanted to offer all kinds of classes through the week and on Sundays have worship be a time of Theological reflection. During the years since I meet Wayne he has completed 4 degrees. He was already a Bible College graduate when I meet him. He then got a Bachelor's Degree, a Seminary degree and a Doctorate. He has now completed his second Doctorate and the last time I heard from him working on a third PhD. The unfortunate reality is that Wayne has become obsessed with degrees and has lost touch with the people in the Churches that he has served. Every Church that he has pastored in Illinois, Texas and Indiana has either closed or has declined dramatically because his quest for knowledge has made him unapproachable, his people cannot understand what he is teaching them and his goal of a Biblically literate church, a Church that teaches or instructs people, has been sold out so that he can acquire more and more degrees at the expense of now his fifth or sixth Church.

Listen to some of what Jesus says about the Church.

Matthew 16:13-18 “When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” 14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” NIV

(literally – “the gates of hell will not prove stronger than the Church”)

Matthew 16:18 “And now I’m going to tell you who you are, really are. You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.” The Message

In those verses Jesus introduces us to His idea of the Church. The Church is built upon the truth – the rock – that Jesus is the Christ – the Messiah and a Church built upon Jesus Christ will have His power so that even the gates of hell will not be able to stop the advancing of the Church. The Church is to be a place where the enemy is defeated one person at a time. The Church is a place where people are discovering that God loves them and as Jesus said to the Apostle Paul in

Acts 26:17-18 “I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” NIV

God’s desire for the Church is that it would be a group of people that He could use to show the world around us God’s power so that they could be forgiven and sanctified by faith.

Then we read this:

Matthew 28:18-20 “Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” NLT

When we put all of those verses together we get a picture of what Jesus had in mind for the Church. It's a group of people that He is using to reach people who do not know Him so that they can be forgiven, filled with the Spirit, trained and disciplined or equipped so that together we can be more and more like Jesus Christ.

Now, what do we mean when we say that we are to be a Church where people can learn is a church that instructs, teaches or trains people? Does it mean a place that the Pastor – like Wayne – is so intelligent that what he says cannot be understood? No, a Church where people can learn is a Church that is trying to fulfill Jesus' challenge that we just read to make disciples; to teach, train and equip people so that they are growing in their faith and are prepared to be used by God to minister to others.

The word that this is describing is Discipleship. There are two equally important aspects of discipleship.

#1: Individual

1 Timothy 4:7-8 “Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. 8 "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.” NLT

#2: Community

Ephesians 4:11-13 “Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.” NLT

So, in order for our Church to be a Church where people can learn, it is your and my responsibility to exercise spiritually and it is my responsibility as your pastor to do what I can to train, equip and prepare all of us.

So, if New Day Community is a Church where people can learn then we will be:

First, A Place to Grow

Colossians 2:7 “Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.” NLT

A part of our dream is that New Day will be a place where we can grow in our relationship with Christ. Let me list a few of the ways that we can and should grow.

#1: In Knowledge

2 Peter 3:18 “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” NIV

#2: In Character

2 Peter 1:5-8 “In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” NLT

Second, A Place to Invest

We fully expect every person who is a part of New Day Community to be involved in investing in a variety of ways and we make no apology for it. As a matter of fact, if we did not teach about investing in these areas, we would be neglecting what God has clearly called the Church to be.

All of us need to invest in:

#1: Service

Galatians 5:13 “You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” NIV

One of the reasons we want you to discover your SHAPE that I mentioned dozens and dozens of times is so that all of us can find out how God has made us so that He can use us in any number of ways to serve people in love.

Spiritual Gifts

Hearth (our passions)

Abilities

Personality

Experiences

So we need to all invest in serving – ministering to others. We need to invest in:

#2: Sacrifice

2 Corinthians 9:7 “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” NIV

There are many areas of sacrifice that we could discuss, but one big area is that of our financial support of God’s Kingdom. Churches that dare to make a difference in their world need financial resources to impact people for Christ. We believe that God has all the resources necessary to accomplish our dream of reaching Champaign County and beyond for Christ – some of those

resources will come from people who are not yet associated with New Day Community, but some of those resources are already here. God asks us to be cheerful givers. He asks us to be generous to be sacrificial for His Kingdom.

#3: Support

1 Thessalonians 5:11 “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” NIV

In that verse and others like it God challenges us as followers of Christ to support, encourage and build up one another in our faith. We are to pray for each other, listen to each other, love one another as well as point one another to a deeper relationship with God.

New Day Community Church needs to be known as a place that if I fall, stumble or sin that we will help each other up rather than hold each other down. We need to be known as a place where a person will be cared for and prayed for. We need to be a place that supports one another. When I'm hurting you support me. When you're hurting I support you.

Application #1: Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8 and begin developing ways to train yourself for godliness.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 “Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. 8 "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.” NLT

Spend time every day doing some spiritual training – getting spiritual exercise – getting in shape spiritually.

Application #2: Plan on being here for You've Got CLASS 201 – a CLASS on growing Spiritually - which will take place sometime in the next few months. (I will give you the date in early June)