

HOW TO BE A HEALTHY CHURCH FAMILY

Galatians 6:1-10

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. A 2022 Barna Group survey found that the majority of U.S. Christians don't regularly attend church. Only 37% of Christians said they regularly attend church.
2. Since behavior is a reflection of what you believe, this means that most Americans don't understand what the church is all about. They don't have a Biblical understanding of the church. Because if you understood what the Bible says about the church, then you would be highly motivated to get involved in the church.
3. SIX SURPRISING INSIGHTS ABOUT THE CHURCH
 - i. The church is very important to Jesus.
 1. The Bible says the following about Christ's relationship to the church:
 - a. The church is the bride of Christ (Eph 5:25-27). Nothing is more important to a man than his bride.
 - b. The church is the body of Christ (Col 1:18). It is His hands and feet. He uses it to accomplish His work on earth.
 - c. Christ is the head of the church (Eph 5:23), the Savior of the church (Eph 5:23), loves the church (Eph 5:25), died for the church (Eph 5:25), is building the church (Mt 16:18), and provides and cares for the church (Eph 5:29).
 2. In other words, the church is very important to Jesus.
 3. If you are a Christ-follower, then you should value the things that He values.
 4. There are all kinds of clubs and groups and organizations and charities that you can get involved in. And many of them are very good. But nothing is as important to Jesus as the church. Nothing is as worthy of your commitment as the church.
 - ii. You need the church.
 1. You don't need to be active in church to go to heaven; but you need to be active in church to be a healthy, fruitful Christian.
 2. **Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)** "He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."
 - a. This verse is talking about the relationship between spiritual health and the church.
 - b. First, He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. So He wants us to connect with a local body of believers.

- c. Second, as each part does its own work, it helps the other parts grow. You will only be able to grow if you are in a church, where the other members can help you grow.
 - 3. The Christian life is not a one-on-one sport, like golf, or singles tennis, or bowling. It's a team sport like basketball, or baseball, or football.
 - 4. Over the summer my family watched LSU's baseball team win the college world series. LSU's pitcher, Paul Skenes, was the best pitcher in all of baseball. He won player of the year, and was drafted number one in the MLB draft in July. As good as he is, how well do you think he would have done if he had tried to play Florida all by himself? But that's what Christians do when they try to live without church involvement.
 - 5. Your relationship with God is very personal, but it is not meant to be private and isolated. God wants us to the Christian life in community with each other. Notice this description of the first Christians in Acts.
 - 6. **Acts 2:46-47** "46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."
 - 7. When the church started, about 3,000 people were baptized. But those believers didn't just scatter and go their own way. They formed an intimate community and did life together. Every day they met together in the temple and in homes. They ate together. They learned together. They prayed together. They served together.
 - 8. The Christian life is meant to be lived in the context of a church family.
- iii. The church needs you.
 - 1. Some people think, "I've heard everything that preacher can say; I know more than him; I don't need to go anymore." Did you ever consider that we don't just go to church to get something, but to give something?
 - 2. The church needs you.
 - 3. God has given you a unique set of gifts, talents, skills, and resources, to be used to make the church stronger.
 - 4. **Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)** "He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

5. Notice that each part of the body has a special work to do. You have a valuable contribution to make in the church. The church will be stronger because of your participation.
 6. Many people believe in the “holy man myth,” which is the idea that the pastor, or the holy man, is specially called and equipped by God to do all the work in the church. He is the minister, and everyone else is a recipient of the ministry. But the Bible teaches something different.
 7. **Ephesians 4:11-12** “11 And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ”
 8. The pastor’s job is not to do the ministry, but to equip the members for ministry.
 9. Every member is called to be a minister in the church. The word “minister” just means servant. You have been called by God to be a fellow-minister in the church; to get to work and help out; to find a place to serve and contribute.
 10. The church is not a building; it is the people. It is not an event to attend; it is a family you belong to. You don’t go to church to sit and soak and be served, but to serve, and contribute, and share.
- iv. No church is perfect.
1. Some people drop out of church because “it is filled with hypocrites.”
 2. The fact that the church is imperfect is not a reason to give up on it.
 3. If you ever find a perfect church, don’t join it, because then it won’t be perfect anymore.
 4. Do you realize that no organization is perfect. There’s no perfect school, or business, or charity, and there’s no such thing as a perfect church.
 5. You will never find a church that has no hypocrites, and the preacher is perfect, and the music is perfect, and the location is perfect, and the seats are perfect.
 6. If the only church worth belonging to is the perfect church, then nobody would ever go to church.
- v. The church is mission-driven.
1. The church is not a social club. We don’t exist just to have fellowships and parties together.
 2. The church was created by Jesus, and it was commissioned to accomplish something.
 3. **Matthew 28:19-20** “19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and

of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

4. This passage is called the Great Commission. Jesus gave these marching orders to His followers right before He ascended into heaven. The Great Commission is the mission of every church. It can be divided into two primary tasks: Evangelism and discipleship.
 5. Evangelism is the task of reaching unbelievers. Discipleship is the task of growing believers.
 6. This is our mission, and everything we do should as a church should be focused on this mission.
- vi. Organized religion is a good thing.
1. Some people drop out of church because they don't like “organized religion.”
 2. Do you know why we organize things? To make them excellent and efficient and effective and successful.
 3. Think about your favorite restaurant. Will they be more effective if they are organized or disorganized? Think about a department store, like Macy's; will they be more successful if they are organized or disorganized?
 4. People value organization in everything else, but for some reason they have decided that organized religion is a bad thing.
 5. Let me ask you something. Do you want your bank to be organized or disorganized? Do you want your doctor to be organized or disorganized? Do you want your kid's school to be organized or disorganized? Do you want the U.S. military to be organized or disorganized? Or think about the DMV. Do you want them to be organized or disorganized? Imagine if someone went to the DMV, waited for two hours before it was finally their turn, and when they finally got to the window they said, “I'd like to file a complaint. It's too organized around here. It's too efficient.” That's absurd. We are wired to love and admire order, organization, efficiency, quality, excellence.
 6. The Bible says that God is not a God of disorder (1 Cor 14:33). He brings order out of chaos.
 7. So, why wouldn't we want the church to be as organized, and orderly, and efficient, and effective as possible?
 8. The church is a group of people who are working together to accomplish a task – the Great Commission. For us to be effective, we must be as organized as possible.

9. And if it is important for a school, or a private business, or for the government to be organized for effectiveness; then it is even more important for the church to be organized for effective. We have the most important mission in the world.
4. The Bible gives us many metaphors to help us understand the church. The flock of God (Acts 20:28), God's field (1 Cor 3:9), God's building (1 Cor 3:9), the temple of God (Eph 2:19-22), the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27), the bride of Christ (Eph 5:25-27), God's household (1 Tim 3:15), the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Tim 3:15), and the family of God (Gal 6:10).
5. In today's passage, I want us to focus on the idea of the church being a family, and we are going to learn how to be a healthy church family.

II. TEXT: Galatians 6:1-10

1. 1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit,, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted. 2 Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone considers himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Let each person examine his own work, and then he can take pride in himself alone, and not compare himself with someone else. 5 For each person will have to carry his own load.
2. 6 Let the one who is taught the word share all his good things with the teacher. 7 Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap, 8 because the one who sows to his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. 9 Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.

III. SIX BEHAVIORS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH FAMILY

1. Restore the sinner.

- i. **Galatians 6:1** "Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted."
- ii. "Restore" means to bring something back to its former position of wholeness or soundness (Hendriksen); to straighten out; to set in order (Ridderbos). The word was used for the work of a surgeon in removing some growth from a man's body or in setting a broken limb (Barclay). The point is to help, not hurt; to restore, not punish.
- iii. So, if someone in the church gets caught up in sin, or in false doctrine, it is our duty to try to restore that person. To lead them to the place of repentance.
- iv. Notice what we are not to do:

1. We are not to let them live in sin and remain in good fellowship with the church.
 2. We are not to let them be overtaken with sin and not do anything to help.
 3. We are not to be unforgiving and kick them out of the church.
- v. Notice what we are to do:
1. “You who are spiritual.” Those who are walking in obedience to the Holy Spirit.
 2. “Restore such a person.” Don’t punish; don’t get revenge; don’t kick them out; don’t shame and embarrass them; restore them.”
 3. “With a gentle spirit.” Don’t yell at them; call them names; or be mean to them. “Gentleness” brings to mind the way you hold a raw egg. If you’re too rough, you will break the egg. If you are too rough with the sinner, you will hurt them and run them off, rather than restore.
 4. “Watching out for yourselves.” When you’re trying to help someone who is drowning, you have to be very careful that they don’t drown you with them. If someone is caught in sin or false doctrine, you have to be careful that they don’t win you over to their way of thinking!
- vi. Let’s be frank. This is risky. If you try to restore someone, you may get rejected. You may fail. They may fuss at you and call you judgmental and holier than thou. But this is not optional. The Bible commands us to love one another enough to restore each other.
- vii. **Matthew 18:15-17** gives us to the process of restoration.
1. 15 “If your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he won’t listen, take one or two others with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established., 17 If he doesn’t pay attention to them, tell the church. If he doesn’t pay attention even to the church, let him be like a Gentile and a tax collector to you.”
 2. Steps to Restoration:
 - a. One on one in private.
 - b. Two or three on one.
 - c. Church leadership.
 - d. Excommunication.
- viii. So, this is how a health church should operate. Let’s say you see someone in our church who is living in sin, or who is getting in to false doctrine. Maybe they are talking about getting an abortion, or practicing homosexuality, or dating a non-Christian, or having premarital sex, or getting drunk. First, you talk to them personally and say, very lovingly, “God loves you and doesn’t

want you to live this way.” Second, they thank you for being courageous enough to approach them. Third, they repent. And fourth, if they don’t repent, the church takes the next steps.

- ix. When I was serving as a Youth Pastor, the worship leader was bi-vocational, also working as a salesman in the oilfield. Unbeknownst to the church, he had a gambling problem, and he was caught stealing money from his company to support his gambling addiction. He was fired from his company. Since he was a leader, he was asked to confess his sin in front of the entire church, which he did. While he did have to step down from his position of leadership in the church, he was not kicked out of the church, because he was penitent. Instead, the church surrounded him and his family with love and support, and helped them get back to a place of health and stability. That was over twenty years ago, and he and his family are still active members of that church. On the one hand, the church held him accountable and did not turn a blind eye to his sin. On the other hand, the church did not abandon him. It came to his aid during the darkest days of his life.

2. Carry one another’s burdens.

- i. **Galatians 6:2** “Carry one another’s burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”
- ii. What is the law of Christ?
- iii. **John 13:34-35** “34 I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
- iv. “Burden” refers to an oppressing affliction (Hendriksen); it is an extra heavy load (MacArthur). It is a problem or difficulty that someone can’t carry alone.
- v. Everyone will face problems in life.
- vi. God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.
- vii. Some problems can be handled alone; but some problems need the help and support of your church family.
- viii. Problems can make you better, or bitter.
- ix. If you try to handle a burden by yourself, it will make you bitter. It will conquer you. It will overtake you. It will overwhelm you. But if you will enlist the support of your church family, you can overcome your problem, and come out better on the other side.
- x. Burden-carrying is one of the purposes of the church. When church members are facing impossible odds, we are to come alongside each other for support.
- xi. What are examples of burdens? Addictions. Losses. Layoffs. Divorce or abandonment. Sickness or injury.

- xii. This is one of the primary purposes of Home Group. If nobody knows you, then nobody can care for you. But if you will get involved in a Home Group, then people will get to know you, and you will have a support group in place and on standby for when you need them. If you are not in a Home Group, I encourage you to get in a group.
- xiii. If you are in a Home Group, I encourage you to take this verse very seriously. When someone in your group is facing a burden, spring into action and show them the love of Christ. Be willing to get your hands dirty and make sacrifices for one another.
- xiv. Listen to the description of the early church in Acts.
- xv. **Acts 2:44-45** “44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. 45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need.”

3. Don't be prideful.

- i. Pride may be the most dangerous enemy of the church. Not Satan. Not the world. Not gossip. Pride.
- ii. **Galatians 6:3-5** “3 For if anyone considers himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Let each person examine his own work, and then he can take pride in himself alone, and not compare himself with someone else. 5 For each person will have to carry his own load.”
- iii. This passage teaches three lessons about pride.
 1. The problem of pride.
 - a. Notice the word “for.” That connects it with the previous sentence. After the command to carry one another’s burdens comes the warning about pride. Pride prevents the church from caring and supporting each other. “I’m too important to help someone. I’m too important to get dirty. I’m too important to do that kind of work. I’m too important to help that person.”
 - b. Pride is what prevents people from volunteering, because they think they are too important to work in the nursery, or to set up equipment. They think everybody should be serving them.
 - c. Pride is what causes cliques in the church. Some people think they above others in the church, and so they refuse to fellowship with them.
 - d. Pride is what prevents a person from being open to confrontation and church discipline. They can’t see their mistakes; they are not open to criticism; they refuse to apologize; they refuse to change, because they already have it all together. And they certainly aren’t going adjust their

behavior for you, because they are much more important than you.

- e. Pride prevents a person from following the leaders in the church, because they think they are smarter than the leaders, and that everyone should be following them.
- f. Pride is what prevents someone from being consistent at church, because they don't really need a church family; they think they are strong enough to succeed all alone.
- g. Pride is what prevents someone from growing spiritually, because they think they are already perfect. They aren't teachable.

2. The definition of pride.

- a. "If anyone considers himself to be something when he is nothing."
- b. Pride is thinking too highly of yourself.
- c. In reality, we are nothing apart from Christ, and we are weak and vulnerable without others.

3. The solution to pride.

- a. Examine your own work and don't compare yourself to others.
- b. To examine your own work means to compare yourself to Christ; measure yourself against God's word. To carefully test your own actions.
- c. And when you do, you can take pride in yourself alone. This doesn't mean you can brag. The Bible says, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord (2 Cor 10:17)." It means you "you will get the satisfaction of a job well done." You won't need to put others down to make you feel good about yourself; and you won't need to fish for compliments.
- d. Why shouldn't you compare yourself to others? "For each person will have to carry his load." This is a reference to the final judgment. One day you will have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and God will not grade on a scale. You will not be judged based on how you compare to others. You will be judged according to God's word; and according to your potential. What did you do with the potential and the opportunities that God gave you?

iv. Pride is like cancer in a church. Just as a body with cancer will be sickly, and possibly die, the same goes for a church that is plagued with pride.

v. **John Wooden** "Talent is God-given; be humble. Fame is man-given; be grateful. Pride is self-given; be careful."

4. Support the pastor.

- i. **Galatians 6:6** “Let the one who is taught the word share all his good things with the teacher.”
- ii. The meaning of this verse is to provide financial support for the pastor. That’s a good thing to do.
- iii. The pastor’s job is to preach and teach God’s word (Acts 6:2); to oversee God’s household (Acts 20:28); to shepherd the church (Acts 20:28); to equip the saints for ministry (Eph 4:11-12); to work hard for the church (Col 4:13); to lead in the Lord (1 Thess 5:12-13); to care for the church (1 Thess 5:12); to rule well (1 Tim 5:17-18); to manage the church (1 Tim 3:4-5); to refute those who oppose false doctrine (Titus 1:9); to keep watch over your souls (Heb 13:17); to be an example to the flock (1 Tim 4:12).
- iv. The pastor is to do this not out of compulsion, but willingly (1 Pt 5:2); not out of greed for money, but eagerly (1 Pt 5:2); not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock (1 Pt 5:3).
- v. In turn, the church is called to give recognition to pastors (1 Thess 5:12-13); to regard them very highly in love because of their work (1 Thess 5:12-13); to imitate their faith (Heb 13:17); to submit to their leadership (Heb 13:17). And to pay them.
- vi. **Luke 10:7** “For the worker is worthy of his wages”
- vii. **1 Corinthians 9:14** “In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should earn their living by the gospel.”
- viii. **1 Timothy 5:17-18 17** “17 The elders [pastors] who are good leaders are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says: Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain, and, ‘The worker is worthy of his wages.’”

5. Be holy.

- i. **Galatians 6:7-9** “7 Don’t be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap, 8 because the one who sows to his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. 9 Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don’t give up.”
- ii. Have you heard the old saying, “You reap what you sow”? This is where it comes from. To sow is to plant, and to reap is to harvest.
- iii. Paul says, “If you plant sin, you will harvest suffering and sorrow – in this life and in the life to come. If you plant righteousness – obeying God’s Spirit – you will harvest – abundant life on earth, and eternal life when you die.
- iv. Don’t think that you can give yourself to sin and not face any consequences.
- v. Why is Paul saying this? To urge the Galatians one more time of the importance of holy living. God has called us to conformity to His character, and obedience to His will.

- vi. Sin can kill a church. When we sin against God, He won't answer our prayers or bless our ministry. When we sin against each other, we will reap division and disorder.

6. Work for the good of all.

- i. **Galatians 6:10** "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith."
- ii. To "work for the good of all" has to do with helping the needy.
- iii. Do you remember the fruits of the Spirit? Kindness and goodness? Kindness is being helpful and beneficial. Goodness is helping the needy. This verse is saying that one of the things that the church needs to do is to be helpful and beneficial to the whole community.
- iv. As a church, our primary mission is to make disciples. To reach unbelievers and grow believers. But God also wants us to work for the good of all. He wants us to seize opportunities to help the needy and hurting as we encounter them.
- v. Years ago I read a book called *The Church of Irresistible Influence*. The author asked the following question: "If your church disappeared, would your community notice?" If we're not working for the good of all, they won't notice. His point was to make it our goal to be such a blessing to our community, so helpful and beneficial, that we become a real asset to the community; so that the community would be devastated if we disappeared.

IV. CONCLUSION

- 1. Church Acadiana is not the perfect church. It's not the only good church in town; there are many. But we are the church of Jesus Christ. We have a mission. We are family. So, let's work together to be the healthiest, most effective church that we can be. And may God get all the glory.