



What is Expected of a Congregation

In this session we might again be encountering a subject few people have thought much about. Yet this mandate is surely in the Bible. It is a main part of the doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers." We are talking about what congregational leaders are to be doing. They are to be equipping the lay people for their ministries as in Ephesians 4:11, 12. Jesus is here to provide for his church. One can read that in the first eleven verses of Ephesians, chapter 4.

We are discussing in this session how a congregation is to operate. Each person has a ministry. Each ministry is there to build up the body of Christ as a whole. But who is going to equip the members for their ministry so Ephesians 4:11-16 can be fulfilled? This passage goes beyond our usual mission statement. It tells us how a community of faith is to function. This can be viewed as a suggestion in a vague and simplistic way such that nothing new needs to happen. However, this passage does not let go of us that easily. In later sessions we are going to see that people such as wives, husbands, fathers, mothers, children, grandparents each have a ministry of their own. When they are fulfilling their ministry, the whole body of Christ, the community of faith is now actually moving in rhythmic coordination with great strength the way God has meant it to be.

Two challenges now face us. One is that many members have not either been told this or they don't want to believe it. One example of that is that a pastor has been hired, possibly a staff and they are getting paid. Does that not mean what they are about is basically all that is needed? No, this would put many people simply on the sidelines watching. Everyone needs to be involved because everyone is a minister in their own situations. In this course we are seeking to equip the parents and grandparents for their ministries. This course is seeking to provide the training the Bible calls for. It seeks to provide more sap to be going out to family branches giving them more clarity, wisdom and direction with which to conduct their home ministries.

The second challenge is this. For years what we are saying here has not been lifted up in many congregations. I served a congregation in North Dakota and I never trained family leaders. In fact, I never recognized they had a ministry, a most difficult one at that. Starting from there, is it any wonder many family leaders do not regard what they are doing as a ministry? Beyond that, a ministry requiring some training! Isn't it strange that for every job or career, for every musical event or game of sport, much training is involved? Yet, for perhaps the most meaningful and challenging assignment we have from God, raising our own kids or grandkids, we have left out training as though it is not necessary. When we look out at the world in front of us, the technology, the many others influencing our kids, does this oversight make any sense?

As leader or facilitator make sure you do seven things.

1. Go back and review briefly the Leader's Guide for Session One.
2. Prepare by yourself filling out the questionnaire you have handed out on "What is Expected of a Congregation?"



Adults Saving Kids

3. Read through the written material for Session Five.
4. Review the power point you will be going through with the class.
5. Write down any examples from your own life and thinking that touches on what this session is about.
6. Pray for each person in the course.
7. Print off the questionnaire leading to Session 6 on “What is Expected of a Congregation?” Both of these are to be handed out. The one on shepherding early and the questionnaire for Session Five at the end of the class.

Remember, if you have questions or concerns you can always call 612-708-1875 to discuss those.