

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....” John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

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Growth Track

Take Your Next Step

Growth Guide



Handout: 9/17/2017

Study: 9/24/2017

Growing Deep and Wide

One of the distinguishing marks of a healthy church is a pervasive concern with church growth—not simply with growing numbers, but with growing members. Some today think that one can be a “baby Christian” for a whole lifetime. Growth is seen to be an optional extra for particularly zealous disciples. But growth is a sign of life. Growing trees are living trees, and growing animals are living animals. Growth involves increase and advance. In many areas of our experience, when something stops growing it dies.

Paul hoped the Corinthians would grow in their Christian faith (II Corinthians 10:15). The Ephesians, he hoped, would “grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ” (Ephesians 4:15; cf. Colossians 1:10; II Thessalonians 1:3). Peter exhorted some early Christians to, “like newborn babes, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (I Peter 2:2). It is tempting for Pastors to reduce their churches to manageable statistics of attendance, baptisms, giving and membership, where growth is tangible; however, such statistics fall far short of the true growth which Paul describes and God desires.

In his Treatise Concerning Religious Affections, Jonathan Edwards suggested that true growth in Christian discipleship is not finally mere excitement, increasing use of religious language, or growing knowledge of Scripture. It is not even an evident increase in joy or in love or concern for the church. Even increases in zeal and praise to God and confidence of one’s own faith are not infallible evidences of true Christian growth. What is? According to Edwards, while all these may be evidences of true Christian growth, the only certain observable sign is a life of increasing holiness, rooted in Christian self-denial. The church should be marked by a vital concern for this kind of increasing godliness in the lives of its members.

God is glorified by churches that are growing. That growth can appear in many different ways: through growing numbers being called to missions; by older members beginning to get a fresh sense of their responsibility in evangelism; by funerals many of the younger members of the congregation attend simply out of their love for the older members; by increased praying, and desire for increased preaching; by church meetings characterized by genuinely spiritual conversation; by increased giving, and by givers giving more sacrificially; by more members sharing the gospel with others; by parents rediscovering their responsibility to educate their children in the faith. These are just a few examples of the kind of church growth Christians pray and work for.

When we do see a church that is composed of members growing in Christ-likeness, who gets the credit or glory? “God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow” (I Corinthians 3:6b-7; cf. Colossians 2:19).

(from 9 Marks of a Healthy Church by Mark Dever)

KEY VERSE

Acts 16:5

“So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.” NKJV

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: Acts 2:40-47

Belong

What did it mean for the early church to belong to God and His church?

In what ways do you belong to God and Capital Baptist Church?

Tuesday: Ephesians 2:19-22

Connect

In what ways is the family of God different than other families?

How strong is your connection to God and people here at Capital?

How could your connection grow?

Wednesday: Romans 12:1-8

Serve

What does it mean to present your bodies as a living sacrifice?

You have probably heard it said that, “The greatest ability is availability”. How available are you to serve God?

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Acts 8:29-37

Bring

Think of the nonbelievers in your life. What are some specific ways you can develop or deepen a friendship with them?

Who are you praying for?

How does the Holy Spirit help us in bringing people to the Lord?

Friday: John 4:23-24; John 16:13-14

Worship

What does it mean to worship God in spirit?

What does it mean to worship God in truth?

As we wrap up the Growth Track series, what is an area that you are growing in? What is an area that you might need to focus on?