

## **DEDICATED MEMBERS ARE A KEY TO GROWTH**

### **I. We are dedicated to God.**

A. By God, we mean the Godhead.

1. Luke 10:27.
2. Exodus 20:3.
3. Psalm 111:1.
- 4.1 John 4:19.

B. God simply won't accept any place less than first in our lives.

1. It is first or nothing with God.
2. How can we know if He is first in our lives (1 John 5:2-3)?
3. The person who is putting God first is the one who enjoys doing the will of God.
4. We need to remember the Great Commission is part of His commandments.
5. If God is first, we will be committed church growth and the work assigned by God that brings that about.
6. Commitment is shown in our actions.

### **II. We are dedicated to Christ.**

A. A member of the Godhead came to this earth to save us from our sins and be our Savior.

1. His mission was to seek and save the lost.
2. Because He came to save us, the Lord is author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him (Hebrews 5:8-9).

B. While salvation is free, our Lord made sure we understand that commitment to Him is essential to receiving it.

C. While on earth, Jesus taught at least three things are involved in commitment to Him.

D. First, there is a denial of self.

1. Matthew 16:24.
2. The word translated deny here means to utterly deny, to abjure, to affirm that one has no connection with a person."
3. This is the word used when Peter denied Jesus.
4. To follow Jesus, then, is to completely deny ourselves.
5. This is the dedication demanded by Jesus and the type that will lead to church growth when members exhibit it.
6. Galatians 2:20.
7. A person who has denied self has no say in what he will do when it comes to keeping God's word.
8. This person is a slave and has given up all rights to self.
9. This person allows Jesus to have full control.
10. The tense of the word deny indicates continuous action.
11. It is not to be taken back at any time.
12. It is daily, not just a few pleasures on Sunday.
13. It is complete and continual.

E. Second, there is cross-bearing.

1. Matthew 16:24.
2. A cross in that day was a repulsive sign of death, used as punishment

of the worst criminals.

3. Deuteronomy 21:23.

4. This is why the cross was a stumbling block to the Jews.

5. Jesus didn't want there to be any doubt in the minds of His followers so He used the strongest form of death to get His point across.

6. Again, this is continual action, so there is no place to rest this cross we are bearing.

7. There is no place or reason to let it rest.

8. There is a lot of confusion about what this cross means.

a. Some relate it to some personal relationship.

b. Others relate it to some physical ailment.

c. These are challenges, not crosses.

9. The cross we bear is the constant self-denial and the willingness to die for the cause of Christ.

10. It is the constant reminder we have died to self with Christ (Romans 6:1-6).

11. Daily cross bearing is a reminder that we are living with and for Jesus.

12. One writer stated, "Cross bearing leads to gospel sharing; gospel sharing leads to church growth."

13. A church will only grow in proportion to the dedication of its members.

F. Third, is following Jesus.

1. Again, the tense is continual action.

2. There is no time or place where we don't have to follow Jesus.

3. This guarantees we aren't following Satan or self.

4. We are going to do whatever and go wherever Jesus commands us.

5. To follow Jesus is love everyone and be committed to the church He died for.

G. We need to ask ourselves the level of our commitment.

1. It is either full or unacceptable.

2. We can't let anyone or anything come between us and our Lord.

3. This will allow others to see Christ in us.

4. This, in turn, will allow us to teach the gospel to others.

5. We aren't looking for security, we are looking for a loss of self to Christ (Matthew 16:25).

H. Self-denial and cross bearing are the only sure ways to be in proper position to follow Jesus.

### **III. We are dedicated to the kingdom.**

A. Matthew 6:33.

B. The word translated seek means, coveting, earnestly or striving after (Colossians 3:1).

1. Everything that we are is to be used in placing God and His will first in our lives.

2. The term for first indicates first relative to place, order, time, or rank.

C. We must be completely committed to the church Jesus purchased with His own blood.

1. It is through the work of the church that we bring glory to God (Ephesians 3:21).

2. As dedicated servants, we do what is commanded.

#### **IV. We are dedicated to the Bible.**

A. A growing church must be dedicated to the word of God.

1. Everything we undertake to do or begin must be Bible based.
2. This is the only sound way to have church growth.
3. This is why verses such as 2 Timothy 2:15 are so important.

B. The Bible and it only must be taught in the classrooms and preached from the pulpits if a church expects to grow.

C. Only when a church is dedicated to what the Bible teaches on all subjects will it grow.

#### **V. We are dedicated to one another.**

A. A congregation that is dedicated to growth will do all it can to maintain the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:1-7).

1. This type congregation will be one that seeks what is best for one another.
2. Two can't walk together unless they are agreed.
3. They sure won't look out for one another's best interest.

B. Think of all the one another passages found in the Bible.

1. Prefer, love, edify, serve, admonish, consider one another.
2. Many more could be mentioned but these give us the idea of what is expected.

C. When congregations act in these ways, God is glorified and can grow in all areas of spiritual and numeric growth.

From an outline by J.J. Turner in his book, "How To Have Biblical Church Growth"