

BUILDING UP THE LOCAL CHURCH

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Some churches grow both numerically and spiritually; some do not. None, to my knowledge, make the amount of proper growth that could (and should) be made. Frequently, in the absence of growth, many excuses are offered; most of which fail to really pinpoint the real reason, or reasons. But let us disregard the excuses and observe ways by which acceptable growth is made possible. Listed in the following paragraphs are seven ways in which nearly every member may contribute to the building up of the local church.

1. **Study** your Bible daily, 2 Tim. 2:15. With *“the eyes of your understanding being enlightened,”* Eph. 1:18, you are less likely to be *“tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,”* Eph. 4:14. Like Israel of old, God’s people are yet being *“destroyed for lack of knowledge,”* Hos. 4:6. Proper growth is based upon proper understanding, which is only made possible by diligent and regular study.

2. **Attend** every service of the church. *“The manner of some,”* Heb. 10:25, is to forsake the various assemblies, which adversely affects the ones guilty, and causes others to consider the worship of God and the study of His word as being of little importance. Also *“forsaking the assembling of yourselves together”* shows disrespect for the local church because it could not exist if all assemblies were abolished. Too, it shows that the guilty parties aren’t really interested in provoking one another *“unto love and good works,”* Heb. 10:24.

3. **“Pray without ceasing,”** 1 Thess. 5:17. Have we forgotten the fact that *“the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,”* James 5:16? Pray for the elders, deacons, teachers, song leaders, preacher, the sick, the weak, and for all.

4. **Call, write, or visit** those who were absent from previous services. They may be sick and need to know of our concern. They may be unfaithful and need to be strengthened. *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted,”* Gal. 6:1.

5. **Visit, write, call,** or in some way, contact visitors from the area. They have shown an interest in us. We need to show an interest in them. A non-visiting church is a non-growing church. Remember that *“personal work”* is just that; it is personal, and it is work. It involves you and me!

6. **Be cheerful and optimistic!** *“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones,”* Prov. 17:22. No person is pessimistic alone — he shares his pessimism with others. No person is optimistic alone — he shares his optimism with others. Which feeling would you want to see permeate the church? Do we not know that *“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...,”* Gal. 5:22?

7. **Live** like a Christian ought to live! Christians are a *“chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,”* who must *“abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,”* 1 Peter 2:9,11. Don’t give the *“there-are-too-many-hypocrites-in-the-church”* excuse maker’s use as a cloak to cover up their own sins. Strive to *“be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,”* shining as *“lights in the world,”* Phil. 2:15.

Let all the saints at the Seffner church of Christ realize that the task of building up this congregation is every member’s responsibility. May we each so labor and so live that it could be said of us: *“For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Seffner and Florida, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything!”* cf. 1 Thess. 1:8.