

How God Transforms Us

4. Loving the Church

Our calling is to care for each other's souls. We want to bring our struggles to the Lord and to each other so that the church can be strengthened and the world can witness wisdom and love. Ed Welch

All Christians are meant to become wise counselors. God intends that every word you ever say to anyone is actively constructive in content, intention, tone and appropriateness (Eph 4:29)... Wisdom sets the bar high. We are to become a community in which substantial conversations predominate. David Powlison

Discussion: What's a church for?

*Then all your people will be righteous
and they will possess the land forever.
They are the shoot I have planted,
the work of my hands,
for the display of my splendour. (Isaiah 60:21)*

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

Changing Church

Ephesians 4:11-16

1. Through the ministry of 'one-anothering'

Ephesians 4 church

God gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists,
the pastors and teachers...

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to equip his people...

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for works of service [ministry]...

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that the body of Christ might be built up...

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and become mature, attaining to
the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

2. By closing the 'gaps'

- 'Gospel Gap'

- 'Ministry Gap'

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (Ephesians 4:29)

3. Training some to bless many

The final break-through to fellowship does not occur, because though they have fellowship with one another as believers and as devout people, they do not have fellowship as the undevout, as sinners. The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. Life Together, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Discuss: If we wanted to improve the quality (and honesty) of the conversational ministry going on in our churches, what could we do?

4. Change in our Church Culture

- Set a personal example
- Increase our application
- Improve our coffee!
- Create space for honest conversation
- Share honest testimonies
- Rethink prayer ministry

[Jesus Christ] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. (Titus 2:14)

Comments and questions

Further Reading

Caring for One Another by Ed Welch (Crossway 2018)

The Pastor as Counselor by David Powlison (Crossway 2021)

Something worth meeting for: a biblical vision for small groups by Steve Midgley (Journal of Biblical Counseling, 28:3 [2014])