

## How Can I Help the Church Grow?

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Too often, I have heard people complain that the church they attend just isn't growing, or there are not enough people their kids' age, or the people just don't get together and do things like they'd like to. Unfortunately, most of the time, these same people aren't willing to do what it takes to help bring about positive change, being more willing to just move to another congregation nearby. That's not the correct solution to the problem, and so the question should be asked: How can I help the church to grow?

First, it must be recognized that everybody is vital to health of the congregation and everyone has a part to play. Paul refers to the church as a body and in 1 Cor. 12 shows the importance of every part, making the case that no part is greater than any other and every part is necessary. Not all do the same job but everybody must do their job in order for the body to be in the best shape it can be. In Eph. 4:16, Paul says that when every joint is working and doing its share, it "*causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*" We need to examine ourselves to see if we're doing our share, and if not, make the necessary changes. It doesn't matter if others are not doing their share, we still have an obligation to do what we can to help the body grow and be edified.

The edification that Paul speaks of is crucial in the church's growth and development. We have to make sure that edification is at the heart of everything we do, both in the public worship service and in our personal lives. That means that whatever we do to help the church grow must be done out of love and sincerity, thinking of others' needs and their spiritual health. By the way, isn't it interesting that when we do that, our own spiritual health is increased?

So how do help edify the brethren? Edification has to do with encouragement, so seek out ways to encourage the members of the body. Visit the sick at home and in the hospital. Take food to the sick. Talk with the discouraged. Show people you care. Have people in your home for meals and fellowship. If you're good at teaching, teach and make sure you put your all into it. Begin some Bible studies at your home and invite people from church as well as neighbors and friends. Doing these things and more can help edify the church and help develop the close feelings that Christians need to have with each other.

An obvious benefit of having home Bible studies with neighbors and friends included is that the lost are taught. Considering this is one of our greatest missions as Christians, we should be doing this anyway. How does this help the church to grow? Of course, the first way it can help the church to grow is by adding new converts to the local church. That should be our primary goal in the Bible studies and when others are converted, the church has grown numerically, but it also has grown spiritually.

New converts breathe new life into a church and can help jumpstart a stagnant church. New converts are excited and are often much more zealous for the gospel than those who have been Christians for some time. Also, new converts are likely to start spreading the good news to their friends and neighbors, and so with the Lord's help, even more converts are brought to Christ. When all of this starts happening, the church becomes excited and those who haven't been doing their share start getting involved again.

Instead of complaining about the church and trying to find a “better” church, let’s make sure we are doing our part to help the church grow. When we do our part, encourage the brethren and help to bring new converts to Christ, then everybody benefits and suddenly, we’re not looking for greener pastures.