

Five Purposes of the Church

All the good that ever happens at West Noblesville Community Church comes from the hand of God. In the book of James we are told that every good and perfect gift comes from God, and the Apostle John reminds us that without God we can do nothing. Let us not forget these important truths.

As we look ahead to this coming year, let's commit to one another to continue to press on toward the prize. Let's covenant with one another that we will not grow lazy and complacent in this ministry. Let's continue to intentionally focus on the five purposes of the church, so that we can have a healthy, vibrant church body. We must continue to focus on:

1. WORSHIP- "Celebrate God's Presence" " Exalt our Master"

Hebrews 13:15 says, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

Jacksonville Jaquers center Kevin Long, who played under Coach Bobby Bowden at Florida State University, said his college coach inspired the team with parables. Long recounted a favorite story: "[Bowden] was playing college baseball, and he had never hit a home run. Finally he hit one down the right-field line, into the corner. He rounded first without touching the base and looked to the third base coach. He turned at second, was halfway to third and the coach was still waving him on. He got to home, and he hit the plate. He had his first home run, he was so excited and everybody was slapping him high fives. Then the pitcher took the ball, threw it to the first baseman, and the umpire called him out. [Coach Bowden] said, "If you don't take care of first base, it doesn't matter what else you do. If you don't honor the Lord first, it doesn't matter what else you do."

At WNCC, taking care of first base is worshipping our great God through singing, praying, hearing the Word of God, giving, and remembering the Lord's Supper. I look forward to the times that we as a body get together to worship and exalt His name.

2. EVANGELISM- Communicating the "Good News" of God's Word "Evangelize our Mission Field"

Many Christians seem content when a church "holds it own" and merely maintains its membership and budget numbers. Could that really be what Jesus had in mind when He gave us the Great Commission? I don't think so.

If you went to the airport, and there were no airplanes landing, and there were no airplanes taking off, you'd say, 'There's a problem!' If you went to the train station, and there were no trains coming and no trains leaving, you'd say, 'There's a problem!' So why is it that we can be part of churches that go on year after year with almost no truly unchurched people coming to faith in Christ, and with very few people really becoming more Christ like, and yet think there's no problem?

We are told in Acts 1:8 that we are to be His witness. This year we will continue to work together to build relationships with others and share the "Good News" of Jesus Christ by:

- Praying for souls to be saved.
- Preaching and teaching salvation through faith in Christ alone.
- Using special days such as Christmas Eve and Easter to proclaim the fact that Christ came to this earth to live a perfect life so that He could die for an imperfect world and that He has resurrected Himself from the dead so that we can have eternal life with Him forever.
- Passing out Jesus videos at appropriate times.
- Constantly encouraging our people to look for opportunities to witness with their lives and voices to neighbors, friends, co-workers, and relatives.
- "Fishing" for new contacts and converts through our New Move In ministry.
- Running special advertisements in our local paper, and doing several special mailings.
- Hosting outreach oriented ladies events throughout the year.
- Having a Vacation Bible School that will be Christ centered.
- Sending children to summer camp where they will hear about Christ.
- Hosting many children's events throughout the year that will allow us to build rapport with families in our community.
- Financially supporting and praying for our missionaries.

It has been very exciting to see several people come to Christ and be baptized this past year. It will be our goal as a church to continue to build relationships with people and lead them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in 2004.

3. FELLOWSHIP - "Incorporating God's Family" "Encouraging our Members"

From 1986 to 1990, Frank Reed was held hostage in a Lebanon cell. For months at a time Reed was blindfolded, living in complete darkness, or chained to a wall and kept in absolute silence. On one occasion, he was moved to another room, and, although blindfolded, he could sense others in the room. Yet it was three weeks before he dared to peek out of his blindfold to discover that he was chained next to Terry Anderson and Tom Sutherland. Although he was beaten, made ill, and tormented, Reed most strongly felt the lack of anyone caring. He said in an interview with Time, "Nothing I did mattered to anyone. I began to realize how withering it is to exist with not a single expression of caring around [me]. ... I learned one overriding fact: caring is a powerful force. If no one cares, you are truly alone." Christians, who are never truly alone, are also fortunate to receive God's gracious care through the church. This care can provide the strength to endure.

I am so pleased with the caring and fellowship that we at WNCC enjoy. Whether it is in Sunday School, Wednesday nights, prayer meeting, special dinners or Friday night events we truly love to be with one another.

If there is an illness or hardship in a family we have consistently supported these people with prayer, food, finances and other acts of kindness. I believe we have honored the Lord and each other by our demonstration of love and encouragement. Let us continue to "love one another" this way.

4. DISIPLESHIP - "Educate God's People" "Educate for Maturity"

Ephesians 4:12 says that the body of Christ is to be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. In other words we are to grow in our spiritual maturity.

At WNCC we will continue to "educate for maturity" in the following ways.

- By providing Sunday School for all ages.
- By providing a Children's Church program that will teach our children the Word of God.
- By preaching Scripture based, relevant, life changing messages in our worship time.
- By continuing to improve our small groups ministry.
- By discipling new believers.
- By teaching and modeling the importance of individual and corporate prayer.

5. MINISTRY - "Demonstrate God's Love" "Equip for Ministry"

-Service in the armed forces of the United States is more than free tourism or government -funded education. It is perilous duty in service to a nation that has enemies. The crew and families of the USS Cole were reminded of this on October 12, 2000, when terrorists caused the deaths of 17 and injured dozens more while the ship was refueling in Yemen. Recruitment posters may emphasize seeing the world or getting financial help with college, but the harsh truth is that enlistment in our nation's armed forces carries serious and grave risks. Dare we present the Christian faith in the spirit of a recruitment poster that talks about the "perks" of being a church member without letting people know that one's life is on the line for following Christ?

Ephesians 4:12 says that the church is to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

It is my sincere desire that people truly understand that (1) they can serve God, and (2) how God has equipped them to do so.

These are the things that our Church needs to be doing in order to further the Kingdom of God locally, nationally, and abroad. I am pleased that we as a church are striving to minister within these purposes.