

153rd Session of the Virginia Annual Conference
Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, Presenter
Bishop W. Darin Moore, Presiding Prelate

“Healthy Churches, Healthy Congregations”

Scriptural References: Roman 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 18-21; I Peter 5: 1-7

Proverbial Question: What are you looking for in a church?

Goal: To examine some possibilities for establishing increasingly HEALTHY CHURCHES and HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS. The important thing to note is that you cannot have one without the other. The implication of having a healthy church is assuming the congregates (people) are themselves healthy.

Objectives:

1. To biblically present models for increasingly healthy congregations and people
2. To explore the mark(s) of increasingly healthy churches and healthy congregations
3. To explore some of the sign(s) of increasingly healthy churches and healthy congregations
4. To explore the role of *LEADERSHIP* in cultivating healthy congregations and healthy people by exploring areas of concern causing illness in the Body of Christ.

The Mark(s) of increasingly Healthy Congregations and Healthy Churches

1. Honest Evaluation
2. Faithful Cooperation
3. Individual Participation

Some Sign(s) of increasingly Healthy Congregations and Healthy Churches

1. A clear understanding of the centrality of the Word through preaching and teaching –
2. Having a biblical understanding of the gospel and its “RELEVANCY”
3. An ability to articulate and live a personal theology
4. Clearly articulating and teaching the role of the local congregation to EVERYONE...
5. A clear standard for Membership and Discipline in the local church
6. Evangelism and Cooperate prayer that is externally focused on the “sinner” as opposed to self
7. Strong small group conclaves and interactions to foster conversion, salvation opportunities

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Conclusion: A Healthy Church and Healthy Church People, increasingly reflect the character of God as it has been revealed in God’s Word. It is not always an easy place to be where God’s character is being reflected.

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

1 Peter 5:1-4

In verse 1 and 2, we see that Peter uses three different terms for the leaders of the church. He calls them elders in verse 1 (to the elders), but in verse 2, he calls them both shepherds (pastors) and overseers (bishops). In some churches, these are three separate positions (elders, pastors, bishops), but in the Scripture, they are not. They are used interchangeably for the same office, just as Peter uses them in this passage.

- ❖ What are characteristics of a healthy church?
- ❖ Healthy churches have a plurality of leaders. One man or woman cannot lead alone.
- ❖ Healthy churches have faithful leaders. They are not lazy; they are not greedy or power hungry, but eager to serve. This should be true of the congregants as well.
- ❖ Healthy churches have members who submit to their leadership.
- ❖ Healthy churches humbly serve one another and passionately serve those outside the church