

Church Purpose: Love God and Love People

Jesus clearly stated that we have no higher purpose but to love when He pointed to loving God and loving people as the two greatest commandments. He said, “All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matt. 22:40).

Love should therefore be our motivating force in the church. Love should saturate all we do. Helping others love God and love people should be our primary goal. It should be to this end that we develop strategies and programs. Nurture, worship, prayer, fellowship, benevolence and outreach are not simply Biblical mandates but they are also means by which we express love to God and love for people. We must keep that perspective or our programs will become like that “resounding gong or clanging cymbal” mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13.

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1 Cor. 13:2-3)

Love is not only the greatest commandment but it is also the greatest challenge the church will face. Obstacles and distractions from a variety of sources will threaten that focus along the way. Yet, we are called to love the Lord with “all” we are, “all” we have, and “all” we do (Matt. 22:37). In relating with one another, “above all” we are to “love each other deeply” (1 Pet. 4:8).

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