



emphasis

The Uchee Pines Institute health and news letter



HOW TO HAVE A HEALTHY CHURCH

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.” 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

1. Healthy Churches Focus on Jesus. “I am the vine, ye are the

branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5

A healthy church understands that everything they do is through Christ and for His glory. If a church does not have Christ at the center, it can never be a healthy church.

2. Healthy Churches are Built on God’s Word. “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word

that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4

The Bible is a powerful tool that can transform lives when it is taught intentionally and accurately. A healthy church recognizes this power and prioritizes biblical teaching in all aspects of its ministry.

3. Healthy Churches Have Vibrant, Thought-provoking Worship. “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh

come to worship before me, saith the LORD.” Isaiah 66:23

At growing, healthy congregations, churchgoers say the worship is relevant, meaningful, and reverent. This is worship composed of not just the emotions, but also the mind.

4. Healthy Churches Focus on Discipleship. “Go ye therefore, and teach (disciple) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching (discipling) them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19-20

Shepherds don’t reproduce sheep. Sheep reproduce sheep.

5. Healthy Churches Engage Visitors. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Hebrews 13:2

If a church is growing and healthy, it will be good at involving new people into the life of the congregation. Here is a foundational truth about church growth: your church will never grow without visitors. Without visitors, your church will stall and decline will occur. Dying churches have little to no visitors.

6. Healthy Churches are Financially Responsible. “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” Malachi 3:10

It is critical that the church’s financial decisions be driven by its mission and values. Healthy churches are thoughtful about how they use the resources God has given them. They prioritize investing in impactful ministry

and making a positive difference in the community. A vision-centered church budget guides in planning programs and ministries, helps set faith goals for income, and allocates resources to your priorities.

7. Healthy Churches Have Thriving Small Groups. “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” Acts 2:46

Small groups are essential in growing a healthy church. People build strong connections in these groups, and it is a major way to close the back door of your church. Discipleship ramps up to another level in your small groups as people pray for each other, discuss Scripture together, and care for one another.

8. Healthy Churches Serve Their Community. “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” Philippians 2:3-4

It should be no surprise that churches that are growing are those that include an external focus. A central element of church health and discipleship is serving. When people serve sacrificially, they build stronger relationships in the community of faith, and within those relationships they can grow in Christ.

9. Healthy Churches Have a Diverse Membership. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” John 17:20-21

A diverse church brings different perspectives, experiences, and gifts that can enrich the body of Christ. Churches that have a diversity of participants across genders, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status are more likely to be healthy and growing.

10. Healthy Churches Have Congregations that are Involved in the Mission of the Church. “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

Churches often speak of an 80/20 rule—80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. When asked to estimate the percentage of regularly participating adults that volunteer regularly in the congregation, churches estimated about 44%. Fewer than half of regular churchgoers are actively serving within their congregation.

11. Healthy Churches Have Vision. “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Proverbs 29:18

Many church leaders struggle with crafting and communicating a vision that inspires the congregation, but healthy churches are able to help their members grasp their goals. While 84% of churches say they their congregation has a clear mission and purpose, only 39% strongly agree.

12. Healthy Churches are Open to Change. “Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it?” Isaiah 43:18-19

Healthy, growing churches aren’t only innovative in their worship, they’re seeking to do new things to meet new challenges facing their congregation. If COVID-19 taught

churches nothing else, it's that they should be ready to face anything and pivot plans when circumstances warrant. After decades of decline, churches increasingly say they are willing to change to meet new challenges.

13. **Healthy Churches Have a Healthy Pastor.** "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Jeremiah 3:15

Pray for, and minister to, the pastor. Pray for his personal health and his connection to the Lord. Pray for his marriage and his family. Pray for him as a leader, and for his ministry to the city around the church. Lift him up before the Lord. If he is weak and struggling, how can he possibly lead a healthy church?

14. **Healthy Churches Deal with Conflict Biblically.** "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Romans 12:18

"We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in the salvation of souls we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with one another." (E. G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 485)

15. **Healthy Churches Are Praying Churches.** "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

If we want a healthy church, we must pray for it; because prayer is essential to everything the church does. Pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal where the church might be falling away from God's ideal. Pray

to ask God what changes must be made to ensure that the church is preaching the whole gospel, and witnessing in spirit and truth. Pray for forgiveness where the church has fallen short and commit to doing what is necessary to come back into harmony with His principles. Above all, pray that the church will not forget its First Love.

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has

been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God." (E. G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9)



Trainee Dedication

In December, we joyfully celebrated the dedication of eight trainees to the gospel medical missionary work. These individuals came from diverse backgrounds, representing Paraguay, the Bahamas, the USA, Jamaica, and the Philippines. Among them were six Lifestyle Educators, a Lifestyle Counselor, and a Healthcare Provider Intern.

This dedication ceremony marked the culmination of their training and a new chapter in their commitment to sharing God's love and healing through service. We are excited to see how these newly dedicated missionaries will make a difference in their communities and beyond.



Lemon Balm

Native to southern Europe, the Mediterranean, and Central Asia, lemon balm helps heal cold sores, eases menstrual cramps, treats insomnia and other sleep issues, supports cognitive health, decreases blood pressure, and relieves irritable bowel syndrome. Available in tea or capsule form, Lemon balm is also antiviral and antibacterial.

From our Lifestyle Center

What Our Guests are Saying

They teach you how God created us, how He made the body, and how it works. It's incredible. You get to learn and understand how much God cares and really loves you. They make you feel at home. I found the place so beautiful. It's country living, full of life. Beautiful pictures and framed paintings on the walls. God bless you all.
-Francis

Fennel Cucumber Salad

- 2 large fennel bulbs (trimmed and cored)
- 3 small Persian cucumbers
- 1/2 cup fresh chopped dill
- 1/4 cup red onion, thinly sliced (optional)
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- Sea salt to taste

Cut fennel bulbs in half and remove their hard core. Using a mandolin, shave fennel thinly and place in bowl (or finely slice as thin as possible).

Finely slice cucumber and onion with the mandolin and chop the dill. Place all in the bowl and add olive oil, lemon, and sea salt. Let marinate in the fridge for 30 minutes before serving.



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