



Healthy Churches by Carl McMurray

Among church growth students over the last three decades there has been a consensus that church growth parallels church health. Just like any physical body, when there is good health and the absence of disease and hindrances, growth naturally follows. A recent article I noticed followed up on this idea, *Seven Secrets of Healthy Churches*, by Thom S. Rainer. Although I don't believe these are "secrets," putting my own spin on his main ideas, I do believe he makes valid points when he says that healthy churches...

...possess leadership and membership that have a high view of Scripture. If we are not always holding up the Word, we will soon lose our focus on it in the distractions of this world. 2 Timothy 2:15

...seek to be relevant. We cannot help others with the gospel of salvation if we neither speak their language nor understand their needs. The date is NOT 1965 and the culture is not the same as it once was. 1 Corinthians 9:19-22; 10:33

...hold to the primacy of preaching. That is the method God chose for saving men. Shall we trade it for entertainment? Should we compress the meat out for a diet drink of milk? 1 Corinthians 1:21

...have a healthy, small group structure. It is in the relationship of small groups that we have the opportunity to ask questions, confess ourselves, and build relationships with others. Bible classes, contact groups, home studies or hospitality opportunities; those who don't use small groups lose their ties to their brethren and opportunities to grow spiritually. Ephesians 4:16

...emphasize corporate prayers and the ministry of prayer. Prayer is a fear killer and confidence builder. It is direct, heart-to-heart communication with our Father. It becomes the ability to see God working for us and with us. Jesus said it was the way that our Father gave us good gifts. Matthew 7: 7-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:17

...take membership seriously. Membership without accountability and responsibility is not membership at all—it is visiting! Healthy churches know the difference between members and visitors and act on that difference. Christians are not orphans and should not be acting like we have no family. Acts 9:26-28

...are highly intentional about evangelism. Healthy churches are motivated by heaven and hell to reach out to a lost world. Bible classes, advertising, outreach, and planning all have as their impetus sharing the good news of Jesus the Christ. John 4:34-35.

Are you a member of a healthy church? What are you doing to make it more so?

