



# What GRACE is All About

Week 5—Becoming a Healthier Church Family



1. Pastor Rick said that at times church attenders go through the following pattern when they begin to attend a church: a. Get excited about church b. Get involved in the church c. Discover the church's imperfections d. Get discouraged but never address their issues with a leader in the church and e. Leave the church and take resentment with them. Have you ever seen anyone go through this process? Have you? Do you think this is healthy? What should a person do to ensure they do not go through this process?
2. Pastor Rick said that the first characteristic of a healthy church is unconditional acceptance. Have you ever experienced unconditional acceptance? When, and how did it make you feel? If you disagree with someone in some way, how can you continue to extend unconditional acceptance to them? Do you think you can be judgmental of someone and extend this type of acceptance at the same time?
3. Read Matthew 18:15-17. Pastor Rick said that conflict resolution is a sign of a healthy church, which is explained in this passage. What are the steps we are to take when we have an issue with a fellow believer? Have you ever actually done this? What happened when you did? What would the church be like if Christians handled disagreements this way? What do people usually do and what does scripture call it?
4. What is the main characteristic of a healthy Christian and therefore a healthy church? Why do you think this is true?
5. Pastor Rick said that a characteristic of a healthy church is explosive service, what did he mean? How is explosive service a result of the characteristic from the previous question?
6. The process of spiritual growth at Grace Church is represented by the concentric circles diagram which shows the movement from community to crowd to congregation to committed to core to commissioned. What are the characteristics of each group? Where are you in this process and what is your next step in this process?

## Answers

1. A. Have a healthy perspective of the church—The church is made up of sinful people who make mistakes just like me, even the leadership. Be willing to extend forgiveness and grace to them just like it has been extended to me. B. Assume the best about everyone, people are trying to do their best and they want what is best. C. Discern if my problem with the church is due to unbiblical things that are happening in the church or are they just not doing things the way I prefer, so I do not like it. D. Follow the Biblical method of settling disagreements which will be addressed in question #3.
2. If in no other situation, you were extended unconditional acceptance by God when you trusted Christ as savior. You extend unconditional acceptance to someone you disagree with by not being judgmental of them. If you punish them in any way for their behavior, you are being judgmental, even if it is only in your mind. You can accept a person for who they are as someone created in God's image without condoning their sinful behavior, this is exactly how Jesus treated the woman who was caught committing adultery. "You who are without sin, throw the first stone".
3. The steps are: a. The very first thing you do is go to that person privately and tell them what they did to offend you and seek a resolution b. If they will not listen to you, get two other spiritually mature people (Galatians 6:1) to go with you and talk to them again c. If they still will not listen, go to the elders of the church and tell them the situation so they can tell the entire church and d. If they will still not change, then remove them from fellowshiping in the church and do not hang around them anymore. If we did this, there would be more harmony in the church and we could get more done in serving God. The usual thing that people do first is go to their friends and complain about what the person did so that they get people "on their side". The Bible calls this gossip.
4. The main characteristic of a Christian and therefore the church should be that we love each other and those not in the church. This is true because Jesus said that if you would love others, you would fulfill all of God's requirements because you would treat everyone the way scripture tells us to. Love should be extended to everyone, all of the time, by every member of the church.
5. By explosive service he meant that the number of people serving explodes because when you love people, you serve them. Every member should be a minister.
6. The characteristics are: Community—People who live within a 30 minute drive of the church and attend at least one church event or service in the past year. Crowd—Those who have attended or watched a service online at least once in the past month. Congregation—Those who have attended the 101 Membership Class and become a member of Grace. Committed—Those who have attended the 201 class, are growing spiritually by practicing the four habits for spiritual growth, and are participating in a small group. Core—Those who have attended the 301 Class, have had their SHAPE interview, and are involved in serving in a Grace ministry. Commissioned—Those who have attended the 401 Class, have accepted their purpose of sharing the Gospel with the unsaved, and are involved in a local or international evangelism outreach ministry.