

## Fight for the Church

Some Funny Things that the Church Fight Over...

1. **Argument over the appropriate length of the pastor's beard**
2. **Fight over whether or not to build a children's playground or to use the land for a cemetery** (*I'm dying to know the resolution of this one.*)
3. **A church argument and vote to decide if a clock in the worship center should be removed** (*I think this one is a timely argument.*)
4. **A dispute over whether the worship leader should have his shoes on or off during the service** (*I vote for shoes, shirts, and pants.*)
5. **A dispute in the church because the Lord's Supper had cran/grape juice instead of grape juice** (*Of course it should be grape juice. It's right there in Hezekiah 4:11.*)
6. **An argument on whether the church should allow deviled eggs at the church meal** (*Only if it's balanced with angel food cake for dessert.*)

Yes. These issues are silly; many are absurd. But they are all distractions from what we should be doing in our churches. In that sense, they are really great distractions from the Great Commission.

Mention the church to a group of Christians and you are likely to get a mixed response. Some might say that, while they do love Jesus, they don't love the church. Others might respond, "Of course we love the church."

**God has ordained the church**, a fellowship of the flawed, to carry out his purpose and will in the world. When we consider the biblical teaching on the church, we realize the church is vitally important for growing in Christ. Like a branch that grows because of its connection to the tree, we thrive when we stay connected to the church.

First, we have Jesus' declaration, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (**Matt. 16:18**). "Gates" likely represents the power of hell, which is no match whatsoever for Jesus.

After Pentecost the infilling of the Holy Spirit...

And the church is born you would say but actually it has always been...

## **Acts 2:42-47** The Fellowship of the Believers

<sup>42</sup> And they **devoted** themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Devotion is different than dabbling!!

To be devoted is to continue steadfastly or remain constant.

I am devoted to good food; I dabble in healthy living. I am devoted to reading the bible, I dabble in scripture memory. I am devoted to the New Orleans Pelicans, I dabble with LSU. There are great effects to biblical devotion to the church. I grew up in a family that was devoted.

They were devoted to the capital C church...It was a biblical directive that we followed.

Even when the church was imperfect (and we attended one imperfect church in particular.)

<sup>43</sup> And awe<sup>[d]</sup> came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

<sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. **And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.**

**Quit looking at what the church isn't and start fighting for what it can be!!**

It's like looking at you spouse and being mad at him for the things he isn't rather than what he is or can be. There is great potential when you look and fight in the correct way.

When I read those scriptures, I am encouraged to fight for the church that can be.

I am thankful that since the book of Acts Godly people have been fighting for the church.

The church is called out ones!

Early Church 33AD until 325 AD fighting through martyrdom and Emperor Nero who was burning people.

Establishment of Christianity 325AD and the false teaching that came with it

The rise of the Roman church until 1527 and rise of islam and the awfulness of the crusades

That there were men of Thomas Whycliffe

And the protestant reformation and martin luther who fought for the church through protest specifically the sale of indulgences which is not biblical, but he fought for the church.

The church must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the **church** does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

When we started Hope Community we were fighting for a healthy, restorative, disciple making, serving church here on the east side of Houma. We sat around a table with Brannon, Rachel,

Jeremy, Amber, Danielle, and thought of what the church could look like. We did a preopening on Thanksgiving and we were packed and encouraged and full cause we offered lots of free food. We opened the doors the first week of January and again packed out with family, friends, and supporters. Week two hits and no one. Crickets. We hit the streets. People would come and go.

We would have meeting after every service just to deal with all the problems that occurred during service. We had a drive by shooting during the middle of the service the first year. We were talking about being ready...nothing makes you ready like a drive by shooting during the middle of service.

The trials, tribulations, cars running through the building at midnight. The break ins became more frequent, there were less people, we were crumbling in our hearts,

...but the Capital C church is worth fighting for.

...and the local little c church is worth fighting for.

I have learned that God was doing something in the small things IN THIS CHURCH.

I have learned that God was bringing salvation IN THIS CHURCH.

I have seen God's restorative power in your lives IN THIS CHURCH.

I have been encouraged through testimonies and witnesses to keep on going IN THIS CHURCH.

I have heard from God through people IN THIS CHURCH.

Our kids are growing in Christ because they are IN THIS CHURCH.

Our marriage is worth fighting for because we are IN THIS CHURCH.

The kingdom of heaven is advanced because we are IN THIS CHURCH.

Darkness is fleeing because the prayer of the saints IN THIS CHURCH.

Biblical unity is accomplished because of the diversity IN THIS CHURCH.

We have learned to love God and your neighbor well because we are IN THIS CHURCH.

The church is led and filled with imperfect people. So naturally the church will be imperfect.

Quit looking for the PERFECT church and start letting the church PERFECT you.