

## Walk ... Together

### Intro

#### Divine priorities, mapquest, & the NT church

- God's purposes for us aren't realized in isolation from the local church.
- As we saw in our last study, the New Testament speaks in concrete terms about the Christian life. Here again, when the NT describes the Church – its nature, purposes, leaders, meetings, members – it speaks with clarity and simplicity.
- The church is not simply invisible, mystical, and universal. It is local, personal, visible, and mapquest-able.

#### Corporate flavor of Ephesians 4

Eph 4:1-7

“you [plural]”

“... bearing with *one-another* in love...”

### The Local Church, Your Needs, & Your Calling

#### You need leadership

4:8-13

- In Ephesians 4, the proper working of the local church begins with faithful leaders exercising their God-given role of equipping the saints for the work of ministry.

“The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to

manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil." (1 Tim 3:1-7)

"Practice these things, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers." (1 Tim 4:15-16)

"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching." (1 Tim 5:17)

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." (Hebrews 13:17)

"Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness." (James 3:1)

- When pastors faithfully teach God's Word and apply it to their own hearts and impress that truth upon the hearts of the congregation, things happen. The church is built up.

## You need sound doctrine

4:13-14

- Truth is for living. Sound doctrine fuels our worship, directs our mission, protects us from error, and prepares us for trials.
- When God's Word is expounded in the local church, God's people are being fed spiritually and equipped for ministry.

## You need fellowship

4:15-16

- Paul began with this in vs 1, then to fellowship marked by humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain unity.
- Now he urges them to speak the truth in love, to proactively and intentionally use their gifts (vs 7) to strengthen other believers.

▶ Experiencing and *being part of* a 4:16 church – a word about trials

▶ Church life in the book of Acts

## The Church, Then and Now

- All of these “gifts” – these “provisions” of Christ to us through local fellowship – they lead toward the goal for which Christ established the Church:  
*“... until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”*
- One on the one hand we are mystically joined to the invisible church – all who have come to Christ by faith, dead and alive. On the other hand, we are called to join ourselves to a local expression of the Body of Christ, where we serve, sing, learn, and live for the glory of God.