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How To Succeed In The Local Church  
Pastor Charles Mendenhall

Prophecy that had been given in 2003 was read.

"Many are concerned about the future and they wonder what will happen, will darkness overtake or will the light shine bright, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, remember that you are in my hands and remember that I know the future better than you know the past. All is well, I will alert you concerning that which will effect you, I will show you the way to go and you will walk in it and be blessed above all the people of the world upon the earth, you shall be blessed for thou are my people and my people shall rule and reign and the blessings of God will fall upon them, the later rain shall be poured out, yes upon nations that are now barren and void but the rain will be poured out, the seed will be planted, the harvest will come and the glory of God will shine upon the earth and all the world will walk in the way which they walked and the darkness shall overtake them, but you shall walk in the light, the entrance of His words giveth light, walk according to the word, walk in the word, walk in the spirit and the power shall rest upon you and the glory of God shall be seen upon your face, many shall turn to the Lord, great days, great times, great blessings are ahead, so rejoice and be glad."

In the following scripture, Paul is teaching the people the importance of the correct way of behaving in the church, it is Gods plan that truth will be taught there however, attitudes have a part to play.

1 Tim 3:15 "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." KJV

There are many books which have been written regarding the different ways to become successful in life, but not many regarding how to be successful in the local church.

An example was given regarding a gentleman who had a definite call upon his life and the future ministry that God had planned for him. However, there was a time of preparation he had to go through before his call was fulfilled. He started by attending bible college along with his wife, but there was a need to have a job to supplement their income and so he applied for and was hired as a janitor for a local church. He had hopes of having a future large ministry, which eventually happened, but in the meantime, he wasn't seeing anything going in that direction and begin to get unhappy in his job, complaining and finding fault with the pastor, critical with the people that attended the church. The Lord began to correct him that he needed to treat this job as his calling. He knew that his future ministry would be different than what he was doing, he took the correction and for a period of time improved his attitude but began slipping back into complaining. He began to see what was happening around with different ones teaching, he began to say if that he was teaching, he would be doing it different. He still would find fault and the Lord had to correct him again, told him that he needed to make a list of the kind of janitor he would

like, if he were the senior pastor. His list included many things that he wanted done, the Lord told him that his job should be like the list that he had made. He realized that he must take the initiative and do for others what he wanted done. However, he slipped back into the former attitude and the Lord ministered to him, telling him that on the outside he was doing what was expected, but on the inside he was rebellious. God asked if he was seeking a position or wanted to be a servant?

Many times we find ourselves in this position, wanting to be recognized, but if we are only seeking this, it will never bring fulfillment and our hearts will never be right. We must learn to receive correction and in order to have excellence we have to be faithful in the small things. Excellence means doing better. We are usually spiritual enough to hear the voice of God, in the area of discipline, but many times we are not mature enough to walk it out or maintain it. In our spiritual walk with Jesus in the area of correction, the bible teaches that God corrects those that He loves.

Matt 7:12 "Here is a simple, rule-of-thumb guide for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for *them*. Add up God's Law and Prophets and this is what you get." MESSAGE

Hebrews chapter 12 goes into the area of correction and training as does a large amount of scriptures found in Proverbs and in order for someone to learn there must be a desire to be taught. If we are wanting to learn how to behave in the local church, we must be taught.

Pro 12:1 "If you love learning, you love the discipline that goes with it—how shortsighted to refuse correction!" MESSAGE

Pro 12:1 "To learn, you must love discipline; it is stupid to hate correction." NLT

Correction or discipline is hard and whoever rejects will die. Whoever listens will become wise and get understanding.

Pro 15:10 "There is severe discipline for him who forsakes God's way; and he who hates reproof will die [physically, morally, and spiritually]." AMP

Pro 15:10 "Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die." KJV

Pro 15:31-32 "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. 32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding." KJV

Pro 15:31-32 "The ear that listens to the reproof [that leads to or gives] life will remain among the wise. 32 He who refuses *and* ignores instruction *and* correction despises himself, but he who heeds reproof gets understanding." AMP

Pro 15:31-32 "If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise. 32 If you reject discipline, you only harm yourself; but if you listen to correction, you grow in understanding." NLT

Pro 13:18 "Refuse discipline and end up homeless; embrace correction and live an honored life." MESSAGE

In order to receive the most benefit from correction, we must learn to do what we are instructed to do, it might be in the area of a study or lesson of some kind, but we must follow through to what we have been instructed.

Col 3:17 "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." KJV

This was the answer that our gentleman found to be the way of doing things with his janitorial job as if Jesus was to be the next person coming into the bathroom. It begin to prepare him for his future ministry. This is also how we are to prepare ourselves for the plans are that God has for us.

There are 4 Points or principles that will help us to be successful in the local church, wherever we

fit in and regardless of our calling, the supportive type ministry that we might have. There are many people who will attend the local church that do not comply with these principles.

1) Committed to God first and the Word of God. This is a simple thing to do, but being busy and doing the work of God, does not substitute for spending time with God and the Word of God. Sometime during the day we have to put Him first place.

Mk 3:14 "And he ordained twelve, that \*they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach," KJV

\* that they should be with him

He is wanting a relationship with them, He is wanting them to have a relationship with Him. We need to have this type of relationship with Him, not just working for Him, and when we do we can begin to work for Him.

Paul was teaching in chapter 19 of Acts, how the people of Ephesus had been so adamant about having correct doctrine, not allowing false teachers to come into the congregations, but he had one thing against them they had left their first love and that it was important for the people of Ephesus to return to that first love.

2) Committed to the local church. It is said "in the process of becoming a great preacher, that we become a lousy Christian." Gifting is not a substitute for character and integrity or becoming like Jesus, serving in the body of Christ is far more than a title, charisma will take us places, but it can't keep you there unless you have character. We must be devoted to the church, some people say that the church is not important, some think that it is not important that they go to church, the bible tells us that we should come together as an assembly and not forsake coming together. The local church teaches how to lead, learning to be submissive, not just our will but to others, the church is also the "womb of God" where we grow up, the church is where we learn forgiveness, learning to walk in love, having patience and endurance. It is important that we get involved in the local church that is teaching the Word of God, in order to benefit from all these things, this is where we will grow. If we are devoted to the local church we will not do anything intentionally that would hurt or harm the church, we will be trying to build up the church, we will be praying and tithing, to the church, using our gifts to help in whatever area we can, doing things that we may not like, not taking offense or spreading gossip to others. This is how we can be successful in the local church, honoring it and the Lord through the church.

3) Committed to ones own gifting in the local church. God has gifted us and blessed us not to just bless us, but to help others. There are those who have been gifted in certain areas and if they don't use that gifting, there will be those who will not receive a blessing. We must be faithful to our gifting, regardless of what we may be feeling. Each of us have different giftings, God has given those gifts in order for the local church to be built up. Romans chapter 12 talks about all the gifts and that the body of Christ is made up of all the parts or gifts in order for Him to be complete. Learn to be faithful to your gifting regardless of what your gift is. When everyone does his or her part it will all work.

Rom 12:9 "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." KJV

Sometimes there is an attitude that things may be used for a stepping stone for greener pastures, but as we look at the ministry of Moses with his brother, sister and friend coming along side of him and sometimes being critical of what was happening, their attitude may have been that they

were to have more to do with Moses ministry and that everything was a stepping stone and they had a bigger part to play. They had been called to come along side and help Moses led the children of Israel. When this happens in the local church and someone has a strong gifting in a specific area and it causes people to begin to question that maybe the gifted one should have their own ministry, as they begin to listen, it will pull them out of where God wants to use them and there is no success. If you are serving, you are in the ministry, you are faithful to what God has called you to do.

4) Devoted to the pastor. This is a spiritual principle of truth.

Phil 2:20-21 "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." KJV

Paul is in prison and he is writing to the Philippians informing them that he is sending Timothy to them because there is no one else like minded like him that he can send who will care for them, those that are there are more interested in their ministry and being seen and they wouldn't help the people.

People to be successful in the local church, especially those on staff, must be like minded with the pastor, you can't always be at odds, doesn't mean that you always will agree, can't be stirring up trouble, speaking negative all the time what is being done in the church, by the pastor or others.

Paul ask them to pray for him that he would have utterance in the Holy Ghost. Utterance means to have a message from God, delivered with the power of God and the anointing and the authority of God on it. This is how we should be praying for our pastor, that he would have a message, with power and authority.

In review, the four principles of being successful in the local church are: Putting God and His word first, love the local church, being faithful to our gifts that God has given to us and being devoted to our pastor.

Eph 4:15-16 "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." KJV

This scripture is saying that when everyone is doing their part, the church will be built up, but it takes everyone to make that happen.

1 Cor 12:28 "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." KJV

The ministry of helps is a supernatural and miraculous ministry.

Helps means "though the infinite value of the humble gospel workers, thousands of people who have no gifts of leaders, are number one helpers, how grand revival moves along when red-hot platoons of fire baptized helpers crowd around Gods heroic leaders of the embattled host."