

“CHURCH IS .....

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*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47)*

As a newcomer to the EFCA family, naturally I have heaps of questions just as any newcomer would – Where do I park? What do I do now? When will it start (or finish)? Why is this? After being in one same church for 22 years, it’s like I almost knew everything about the church. It’s a funny feeling realising that I know almost nothing about this church and start all over again. This, however, gives me an opportunity to re-examine once again “What should a spiritual family look like? What is church, really?” There’re probably various ways to answer these questions. Through times of coffees and meals, conversations and meetings, I’ll try to understand the heartbeat and passion of our people as well as the corporate vision of the EFCA family. I’ll attempt to share with you some of my reflections in subsequent Family Letters and sermons on different occasions.

Let me start with this – **THE CHURCH IS GOD’S PEOPLE GATHERED TO WORSHIP AND SENT OUT TO WITNESS FOR HIM.** The Gospels teach us to “be disciples of Jesus” and Mt 28:19-20 culminates in commissioning every disciple to “make disciples who make disciples.” This could be described as the ultimate purpose of the church on this earth. Yet there’re different ways to accomplish this and every church does it differently. Therefore, my role as a pastor is to help every follower of Christ discover how the Lord wants him/her to do this and lead EFCA corporately to devise strategies to see this materialize.

Every church of Jesus Christ would accomplish the above by doing what Acts 2:42-47 records about the early church. This includes ministries of teaching, worship, fellowship, service and witnessing. From these 5 basic ministries are developed the 10 systems of the church – worship, evangelism, small groups, assimilation, volunteering, stewardship, strategy, leadership, administration and communication. We’ll be exploring these in the future. But ***undergirding any ministry and system of the church is obviously love and togetherness***, without which a church will merely be a human hierarchical institution rather than the family of God.

All followers of Jesus Christ must be transformed by love, filled with love and excel in love. Because God is love. It’s as simple as that. “Love your enemies” is a simple order from our Master and King. In contrast, although the word “frienemy” suggests making friends with one’s enemies, it carries pretty strong negative undertones. On the other hand, the word “together” appears 3 times in the short passage above. This is what we need to learn daily. May we grow together in love, by the abundant grace of Jesus Christ.

*Rev David Tse*