

# Ensuring the Church as a House of Growth

**Vault verse for this series: Hebrews 10:24–25 (NLT)** <sup>24</sup> *Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.* <sup>25</sup> *And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

1. God's word encourages **faithful participation with other believers.**

2. **The early church came together daily.**

**Acts 2:42–47 (NLT)** <sup>42</sup> *All the believers **devoted** themselves to the apostles' **teaching**, and to **fellowship**, and to **sharing** in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to **prayer**.* <sup>43</sup> *A **deep sense of awe** came over them all, and the apostles performed many **miraculous signs and wonders**.* <sup>44</sup> *And **all the believers** met together in **one place** and **shared everything they had**.* <sup>45</sup> *They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.* <sup>46</sup> *They **worshiped together at the Temple each day**, **met in homes for the Lord's Supper**, and shared their meals with **great joy and generosity**—<sup>47</sup> *all the while **praising God** and **enjoying the goodwill of all the people**. And **each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved**.**

3. The church **must** be a place that inspires, encourages, equips, and promotes continual personal growth.

**Ephesians 4:11–16 (NLT)** <sup>11</sup> *Now these are **the gifts Christ gave to the church**: the **apostles**, the **prophets**, the **evangelists**, and the **pastors** and **teachers**.* <sup>12</sup> *Their responsibility is to **equip God's people to do his work and build up the church**, the body of Christ.* <sup>13</sup> *This will continue until we all come to such **unity in our faith** and **knowledge of God's Son** **that we will be mature in the Lord**, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.* <sup>14</sup> *Then we will **no longer be immature like children**. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.* <sup>15</sup> *Instead, we will speak the truth in love, **growing in every way more and more like Christ**, who is the head of his body, the church.* <sup>16</sup> *He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. **As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love**.*

4. Every Christian church should be a continually **growing disciple** of Jesus.

5. Growth **begins** when we are saved.

**1 Peter 2:1–3 (NLT)** <sup>1</sup> *So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech.* <sup>2</sup> *Like newborn babies, you must **crave pure spiritual milk** **so that** you will **grow into a full experience of salvation**. **Cry out for this nourishment**, <sup>3</sup> *now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.**

6. Spiritual growth is the mark of a mature saint.

Psalm 92:12–14 (NLT) <sup>12</sup> But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon. <sup>13</sup> For they are transplanted to the LORD's own house. They flourish in the courts of our God. <sup>14</sup> Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green.

## 1. You should be growing and developing in all areas of life

Luke 2:52 (NLT) *Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.*

1. **Spiritual growth**—Growing in faith, trust, and reliance on God's promises through prayer, worship, study of the Word, and participation in ministry.
2. **Character growth**—We are to act like Jesus more every day.
3. **Relational growth**—Cultivating healthy and loving relationships by practicing forgiveness, grace, and compassion. Building unity and fellowship within the body of Christ.
4. **Mental and Emotional growth**—Cultivating peace and joy, renewing your mind by focusing on God's truth, overcoming fear, doubt, and distractions.
5. **Stewardship growth**—Learning to manage time, talent, and resources for God's glory. Practicing generosity and faithfulness.
6. **Endurance growth**—Standing firm in the face of trials, growing stronger, and trusting God.

## 2. Personal growth is the result of intentional effort

**Salvation is instantaneous but personal growth requires a lifetime of devotion.**

1. Digesting the **Word of God**.
2. **Connecting with others** for mutual benefit.
3. Fostering intimacy with God through **prayer and worship**.
4. Maturing in character by **yielding to the Holy Spirit**'s activity in your life.
5. Focusing on **responsibility** and **opportunity** to advance God's work through **serving** and **sharing**.
6. Developing the mind of Christ will guard against **cynicism**, **discouragement**, and **compromise**.

## 3. Lack of spiritual growth has catastrophic results

1. **Spiritual stagnation and immaturity** are the result of limited or no growth.
2. Lack of growth results in vulnerability to **temptation**.
3. Lack of growth **diminishes** your spiritual effectiveness.

The three major hinderances in the church are **immaturity**, **insecurity**, and **irresponsibility**.

2 Peter 3:18 (NLT) *Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.*