

The Kind of Church that Heals: Relationships and Structures that Reach the Heart

Even with the redeeming power of our Savior at work among believers, church leaders are faced with the realities of a fallen humanity. Immaturity, broken relationships, psychological wounds, and painful patterns from the past, often crowd their way into even the most sincere efforts of Christian faithfulness. Pastoral counseling, along with the recent addition of Christians trained in psychotherapy and psychiatry, have proven to be valuable allies in the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. But what about the church body? Are there things it can do and be to become a truly healing community? How can the teaching ministry, worship, leadership, and relationships contribute to creating an environment of healing?

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I. Introduction

A. The church is called to be a place of healing

B. How are we doing at this?

II. What are the specific hindrances to your church actually being a healing community?

“I suspect that Christians sitting dutifully in church congregations, for whom “going to church” means doing a variety of spiritual activities, have been given resources that if released could powerfully heal hearts, encourage the depressed to courageously move forward, revitalize teens and children with new and holy energy, and introduce hope into the lives of the countless people who feel rejected, alone, and useless. Maybe “going to church”, more than anything else, means relating to several people in your life differently. Maybe the center of Christian community is connecting with a few....I suggest that it’s time to take a hard look at what really gets passed back and forth in our relationships and to ask what is being withheld that, if given, could change lives....But what does that mean? What does a community of a connected few look like? Will it happen through the good activities that for most people define church life? Can we go on relating to our family and friends as we have and expect it to happen? Or is something more needed?”

Larry Crabb
Connecting

III Beyond the individual work done in the office of the pastoral counselor and therapist, what can the church be and do in order to flourish as a healing community?

A. The model of church life

B. Leadership modelling

C. Teaching ministry

D. Relationships

1. Formal

2. Informal

E. Expectation of reaching beyond oneself

F. Leadership training