

Forward Focus

The Lord is the Builder

In 2 sermons in April 2016 we looked at what the Bible teaches that particularly applies to the context we are living and ministering in. You can find these sermons online at www.emmanueltolworth.org.uk. Below is a summary of what was preached in the first of these sermons.

Psalm 127:1-2 The Lord is the Builder

These verses give us a warning and an encouragement. The warning is against a 'Solo Build' mentality.

Solo Build

No church decides to build without the Lord yet the 'solo build' way of thinking can creep into a church. What does a church look like that has slipped into this?

Numbers are everything: We will need some way of measuring our ministry, of determining 'success', and the easiest way is through attendance figures.

We must find the 'Silver Bullet': We will feel we need to find the thing that will increase our numbers whether that is doing what we used to do or progressing on to something new.

We must do what they do: If we find a church that is growing numerically we must copy them because they are clearly onto something.

Anxiety: It's all down to us so we must make the right moves.

Lack of Prayer: Well why would we pray if it's all down to us anyway?

Now don't mishear what I am saying, it is not wrong to keep a track on numbers, it is good to have a strategy and to learn from other churches. However obsessing about these things can indicate that we think the success of Emmanuel church is in our hands, that it is a solo build.

So what's the encouragement...

The Lord is the Builder

If we are depending upon the Lord to build His church, as he promises he will, then it will look like the following:

Trust in God's methods: We will trust that his methods are right. He says the gospel is powerful for salvation (Rom 1:16), so that is what we will proclaim even if it is offensive to some.

Dependence on God in Prayer: Prayer will be at the top of our priorities. Our prayer gatherings will be in our diaries and we won't let other good things take us away from them.

Joyful Labour: Our service of God will not be driven by anxiety that we might fail, but rather by a confident joy that we can try things and see how the Lord blesses them.

Watchful and Thankful: We will always be looking to see how the Lord is at work among us, how he is building us up. As we see how he is at work we will grow in gratitude.

Peaceful Trust: That the future of the church, and particularly Emmanuel church, is safely in His hands.

Brian Lara, the West Indian cricketer, recently sent a text to the West Indian team just before a big match, which said '...play hard and leave the results to the man above.' Well there is some wisdom in that as we seek to minister at Emmanuel trusting in the Lord to build His house.

Or you could look to Proverbs 3 verse 5:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

As we go forward we need to trust God that he is the one who will build His church.