

Intro:

In our text this week, 1 Timothy 3:14-16, we read a beautiful description of the church from the Apostle Paul. He stacks up three metaphors that give us clear picture of the purpose and mission of the local church. Some scholars see this description as the center piece of the whole letter.

Questions:

1. The first metaphor Paul uses to describe the church is the “household of faith.” Discuss how the church is to be a spiritual family.

–What implications does this have for how we view fellow Christians from different cultures / ethnicities?

–Consider practical ways that you can treat and interact with brothers and sisters at CrossPointe as family members.

2. Secondly, Paul says the church is where the living God dwells (v15). In this statement, he is picking up on Old Testament language in which the writers wanted to remind the people that the one true living God, although omnipresent, dwells among his people in special and powerful way.

–In our church culture, gathering for worship on a Sunday is part of the tradition many of us grew up in, and this is a good thing. But, consider how Christians and churches are often susceptible to just going through the motions when they gather for worship and forgetting that the God of all things is present in their meeting?

–Consider practical ways individual Christians and the local church can cultivate a better awareness of the reality of God’s presence when we gather together.

3. Finally, Paul says the church is a pillar and buttress of the truth. This imagery would have surely make the average Ephesian citizen think about the towering columns that held up the Temple of Artemis dedicated to the greek goddess Diana. In this, Paul is saying that the church exists to lift up the message of the gospel, which he then breaks into with a liturgical hymn in v.16 about the work of Christ.

–Many people in our culture come to a church with a consumer mindset (“what can this church do for me?”). But, here, Paul speaks of the purpose of the church as lifting up the message of Christ, rather than making everyone feel served. How does this biblical orientation challenge the mindset of much of our culture about what a church should be?

–Consider practical ways the ordinary Christian can help their church live more on mission to put the gospel on display.