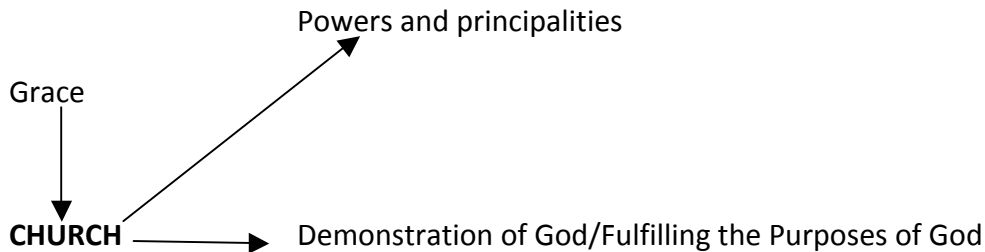


1. NIV Eph 3:8-12 “Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. **His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose** which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

AMP “...the purpose is that through the church, the complicated, many sided wisdom of God in all its infinite variety and innumerable aspects, might now be made known to the angelic rulers and authorities (principalities and powers) in the heavenly sphere.”

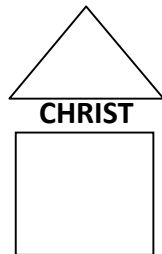
DIAGRAM of Eph 3 principle



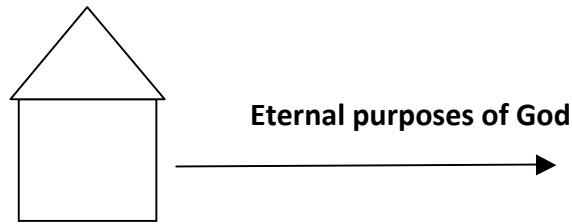
The church exists for the glory and eternal purposes of God, that through the church, God would be demonstrated; that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated to the principalities and powers. This is the eternal purpose of God for creation, and for the church.

DIAGRAMS

Set apart for the purposes of God. Not man centred, not primarily a blessing centre for man, not a ‘meeting our needs’ dispenser, but a dwelling and conduit of God.



Set in a city or region for the purposes of God. God working through His church, to fulfil His purposes in a place.



God is waiting for the corporate church to demonstrate as Jesus did, exactly who and what God is in Himself. The Church living to demonstrate God without regard to herself. When we begin to take God and His word seriously, and realise that this must be fulfilled through the church, then we realise that God is calling us to more than the casual meeting of believers on Sunday. This requires an earnest, daily relationship, and a growing up together.

2. The church needs to be the church as God intended it, the church is a 'we', not a group of disconnected individuals. Unless it is a 'we' it cannot engage in the war that is before her. Hence principalities and powers will do anything to divide the church and divide individuals. Keeping the church from becoming the corporate expression of the life of God that can wrestle angelic powers.

There is a real battle with powers and principalities. A very real war between Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness.

Eph 6:12 "for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms".

2 Cor 4:4 "the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ..."

DIAGRAM OF CHURCH – hearts connected/power of apostolic community/power of oneness

3. The powers of the air recognise authenticity. Acts 19:13-16. Sons of Sceva. "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

The issue is integrity, quality and authenticity of our life together. Powers of the air recognise what is real, the crucified life, the character and life of God Himself. To this they flee in terror. They know when to 'regard' a life.

If the church remains simply a collection of people, meeting occasionally, but otherwise focussed on self, pursuing their own stuff, even spiritual things, then we remain largely ineffective to the powers and principalities. But they are required to recognise an authentic life, a life of heaven- this must be the foundation of God's people.

4. Our call as the church to resist the devil is not dependent upon ‘what we do’, so much as ‘what we are’. It is something in the character of the church. Our victory will be related to the quality and character of the fellowship itself.

The church can see herself as a ‘Sunday thing’, or that it exists to provide people with blessing by meeting their needs, or to provide programs and services. All good, but all at best secondary to a true focus of living to bless God by its very life and character, and living to fulfil the purposes of God. In doing so, bringing Him glory and honour.

The reality here is that there will be a very real struggle with our own flesh and our own unwillingness. Our enemy is ‘individualism’, and one of ‘abdicating responsibility’.

5. We are called the ‘body of Christ’. We can look at the Church of Acts, and look to the lifestyle of community, the sharing of goods, the meeting daily, etc, as if these are the keys to unity and the keys to power of God. But these are the fruit, they are all secondary to the essence of oneness and unity. Oneness of heart. It is people of one heart and one mind producing the life described in Acts. Oneness that is not by human endeavour but by a work of the Spirit, a work of grace. One heart with God and each other. Covenant relationships producing a powerful family unit.

6. We are called to work and move as one, not as a group of disconnected individuals. Our ministry and calling as a church, is first and foremost in oneness. Unity of heart and mind and purpose. Individualism is not Christ’s intention for Church.

7. In the natural we are all born into ‘family’. We are not born into isolation or as an individual. In the family unit we are meant to be nurtured, cared for, encouraged, matured, and one day to be released into our own life and reproduce that family unit, and yet still connected to the original family unit. In the spiritual, we are the same. We are born again into a spiritual family –One spirit, one faith, one baptism, one Lord. In the context of spiritual family, we are meant to be cared for, encouraged, matured and released.

And yet culture can rule us causing us to live as individual believers, that occasionally come together for a meeting, for teaching, or fellowship, or encouragement, or spiritual growth, etc. But church is meant to be far more than this.

8. Our calling and ministry is corporate, found in its fullness in community and connection with others. Expressed and found in God in the Trinity.

We have individualised things and **emphasised our own slices**, and in that lost the dynamic and power of the full spectrum of the life of God.

The provision of God for our life and purpose are linked in with the people God has called us to walk in covenant relationship with. Everything in this world is interconnected and linked divinely for their mutual benefit and resourcing, working in conformity to God’s ultimate plan.

It will take great humility to embrace our connectedness as a family of God; to walk close with others in our identity in Christ; and live out our **slice of the spectrum of God, and how it relates to family**. It will be challenging to serve in covenant with others, and to share our life and ministry with the larger body.

9. Ekklesia –Greek word, which we now translate as church. It means ‘those gathered to accomplish something’, or a ‘group of people who are called out for a purpose’.

God calls people, He orders them in time and place, according to His purpose.

Father God-----Son/Jesus-----many sons

Spiritual father-----many sons

Sons are called to be like their father, and to express the father’s purposes. To express his life and character and message.

10. We are called to ‘covenantal community’ and not ‘convenient christianity’. God’s intention for His body is to walk in covenant with Him, and in covenant with each other.

In covenant relationships we commit ourselves to relationship regardless of the circumstances. When the excitement of a new relationship wears off, we begin to see flaws and faults, and that’s when we decide whether we will stick together, fully committed, no matter what. Covenant is based on the grace of God, and always gives.

The wisdom of the world is based on self interest, ‘what’s in it for me if I do this?’ But the wisdom of God is sacrificial. It does not rest on the benefit that one receives, but on the benefit that God receives.

Covenant people stick together through thick and thin, they pray instead of running out the door, and they realise that no one is perfect, we all make mistakes.

Keeping covenant relationship is painful. It is inconvenient. It costs. It means laying down your life. It is a faith that costs you everything. It is a faith in something greater than your own life.

We can easily live in the place where our faith is directed toward our own benefit. God commits Himself to people, and the command is to commit ourselves to one another. If God does it, we should too. Covenant is at the cost of your life.

To grow in covenant is to focus on the purposes of God and the maturing of the body/family. It is embracing a purpose greater than us and other than us. It is embracing fully the ultimate purposes of God.

We must move from carnal, immature relationships (what's in it for me) to ones of the heart and Spirit. The motive changes. Moving from what this person or church can do for me, to recognising God's work in bringing us together.