

## Lone Hill Church

# Marks of Maturity

There are levels of maturity (Phil. 3:12-16; i.e., perfect, v. 12, and mature v. 15; cf. Mt. 12:23; Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Cor. 2:14-3:3; 1 Jn. 2:12-14). There is an ultimate maturity or perfection which we finally attain in glorification (Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Jn. 3:2-3). There is a functional maturity which is progressive and fruitful (2 Pet. 1:4ff.) but not perfect (cf. Phil. 3:12-16). Hebrews 5:10-14 points to this functional maturity.

a) Christian functional maturity is the twofold development of understanding (Col. 1:9ff.) and practicing (Mt. 28:19) holiness and righteousness (Eph. 4:24; Heb. 12:15). It is the level of spiritual growth measured by our understanding and practice of distinguishing between what is righteous and unrighteous (Heb. 5:14). Further, maturity is distinguished by the ability and practice of feeding oneself the solid food of God's Word (Heb. 5:12-13). In addition, the mature teach and train others to attain this level of maturity (Heb. 5:12).

b) Specific goals recommended for guiding someone to functional maturity:

### 1. Personal Walk

Daily prayer and daily time in the Word with the result that one experiences an ever-increasing awareness of Christ's presence, is walking in the power of the Spirit, and has a growing knowledge of God and obedience to His Word (Acts 2:42, 46-47; Ps. 5:3; 55:17; 1 Thess. 3:10; Mark 1:35; Deut. 17:19; 11:19; Col. 4:16).

### 2. Doctrinal Education

Doctrinal Education represents the ability to feed one's self and to teach others from the solid food of God's Word (Heb. 5:11-14; 2 Tim. 3:13-17). Reflective of this, one should have the solid discipline of daily Bible reading, and the ability through the study of Scripture to answer questions of the faith. In addition, the mature should have a clear knowledge and understanding of the fundamental doctrines (e.g. Eph. 4:3-6, 13; Heb. 6:1, 2; Acts 2:42) represented in our Statement of Faith.

### 3. Kingdom Priorities

To avoid conformity to the world and realize our call to be transformed into the likeness of Christ, we must daily manage our lives by the priorities of God's Kingdom. Prioritizing the development and demonstration of such things as (1) character (Mt. 5:3-12), (2) witness (13-16), (3) righteousness (17-48), (4) living in the presence of God (6:1-18), (5) freedom from anxiety and materialism (19-34),

(6) caring relationships (7:1-12), and (7) fruitfulness (13-29) establish God's Kingdom and righteousness as the top priority in each disciple's life. The result of living out these priorities will be a developing and visible Christlike character and lifestyle which exhibits an investment in the work of the Kingdom by a wise and balanced management of time, fruitful use of gifts, and financial giving which demonstrates both financial freedom and faithfulness to the cause of Christ and the work of His Church (cf. Matt. 7:19-21, 33; Eph. 5:15-17; 1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:7; 9:6-15; Rom. 13:8, 11-14).

#### **4. Family Development**

Daily prayer with and for one's family, especially spouse and children, so that they and your relationships with them are growing and maturing in Christ (Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18).

#### **5. Fellowship Involvement**

(1) Weekly faithfulness in worship and (2) involvement with a small group and (3) one to one discipling relationships, so that personal growth, equipping, love, accountability, and belonging are being experienced (Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 2:42, 46-47; 20:7; Heb. 5:11-14; 2 Tim. 2:2; Eph. 5:19).

#### **6. Personal Ministry**

Recognition of one's spiritual gift(s) which results in consistent involvement in a personal ministry (1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Cor. 12:7; Rom. 12:6-8).

#### **7. Evangelistic Activity**

Equipped to witness and to share the Good News (1) one's testimony, (2) a personal presentation of the Gospel, and (3) a prayer-saturated plan of relationship cultivation, so that regular prayer for the lost is offered, weekly witness is given, and people are being disciplined into Christ (Rev. 12:11; Mark 5:19; Acts 1:8; 2 Tim, 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Pet. 3:15; Col. 4:6; John 13:34-35).

There are also marks of corporate maturity in the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:12-16). These too have both a progressive nature and an ultimate perfection in mind (unity in faith and in knowledge, attaining to the fullness of Christ, stability in doctrine and understanding, loving evangelism, the proper working of each part of the Body, growth and building up the Body in love).