



pag. 6

how to build a church

Welcome!

Welcome to Growth Groups 2006 – and if you're new to our church* this year, welcome to mpc as well. Growth Groups are a key part of what we do to build up and encourage one another in our church family, so we're keen to encourage everybody to join one.

Your growth group is the place where you get to –

- Share life's joys and sorrows together
- Pray together
- Help each other in practical ways
- Investigate the bible together
- Encourage one another to live authentic Christian lives
- Serve together

Your Leaders

Your growth group leaders are appointed each year by the church ministry team and elders. They are carefully chosen to lead growth groups, because first and foremost, they care about your progress as a growing follower of Jesus. We're also confident that they care about working hard at understanding and applying God's word. They take part in Leaders Meetings throughout the year, previewing the studies, and giving feedback on how each group is traveling. Leaders will also seek pastoral input from the ministry team when they feel they need advice in how to best care for group members in particular situations.

Please value and care for your leaders as they care for you! Keep these words in mind from Hebrews 13:

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith... Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

* Some parts of our regular "Newcomers Guide" have been integrated into this study booklet especially for those who are new to mpc. If your group has no newcomers this year, feel free to skip over these sections.

Growth Group Projects

This year we're encouraging each group to take on a special project. It's up to your group to choose the project, and work out how to do it. Here are some ideas:

- a) **Support (and teach) a school Religious Education class.** You'll need at least one person with the time and talent to take a weekly class at a local school. The rest of your group can pray for and support the work.
- b) **Support and pray for the Langham Partnership mission organization** as they support the training of "two-thirds world" church leaders.
- c) **Actively support and pray for our current link Missionaries,** Nicky Stock in Pakistan, and Ian and Chris Case working with WEC in Brisbane. Write group letters, send regular emails, put together a gift pack – anything you can think of to help and encourage.
- d) **Get involved with supporting new missionary contacts Paul and Helen Douglas and Ian and Meg Hazelton.** They're heading to China and Africa respectively, and this year everything will be new to them. It would be a great time to establish contact.
- e) **Support and pray for our local Brisbane mission (Wilston)**– look for ways to help and encourage Stuart and Cathy Atkinson as they minister at Wilston Presbyterian Church. Contact them regularly and discover their needs. Work out ways your group can help them by providing resources, time or energy. Go to their working bees! Look especially for ways to personally encourage and support the Atkinsons.
- f) **Support and pray for our local Brisbane mission (Kenmore)** – look for ways to help and encourage Steve and Lyndal Blencowe as they plant a new church at Kenmore. Contact them regularly and discover their needs. Work out ways your group can help them by providing resources, time or energy. Look especially for ways to personally encourage and support the Blencowes.
- g) **Care for the Care Team.** Look for ways to encourage and help our On-Call Care Team members. Offer them your support and assistance in practical ways; pray for their ministry

Take some time now to chat about the options. Are there any that stand out?

mpc study guide – week of Feb 1

How to Build a Church

Getting to know Titus

Paul's letter to Titus is short and to the point. Read it through in one sitting, noticing the repeated words and ideas and the underlying logic.

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—

a faith and knowledge resting on the *hope of eternal life*, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior,

To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—

not overbearing,
not quick-tempered,
not given to drunkenness,
not violent,
not pursuing dishonest gain.

A

B

C

D

E

Rather he must be
hospitable,
one **who loves what is good**,
who is *self-controlled*,
upright,
holy and
disciplined.

F

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught,
so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine
and refute those who oppose it.

G

For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group.

H

They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach--and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply,

so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.

I

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. *They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him.* They are detestable, disobedient and **unfit for doing anything good.**

J

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You must **teach** what is in accord with sound doctrine.

K

Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise,

L

teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, **but to teach what is good**. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands,

M

so that no one will malign the word of God.

N

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by **doing what is good**. In your **teaching** show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned,

O

so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

P

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted,

Q

so that in every way they will make **the teaching** about God our Savior attractive.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. **It teaches us** to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live **self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age**, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, *eager to do what is good*.

R

S

These, then, are the things you should **teach**. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

T

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Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

U

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

v

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things,

w

so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to **devote themselves to doing what is good**. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

x

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

y

As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need.

z

Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

Some group discussion questions:

- a) Paul and Titus are in the church-building business. Take a closer look at the first few sentences of the letter (paragraphs **A** and **B**). Paul says that faith and knowledge are built on the hope of eternal life, which in turn rests on the foundation of God's long-ago promises to Israel.

What is this "faith and knowledge" meant to lead to?

What has Paul's role been in bringing this about?

Did you notice? Paul's job is to bring God's word to light by **PREACHING**. And that ultimately leads to **GODLINESS**. (See the paragraph marked **R** and **X** for examples.)

These two ideas are scattered all through the letter... because they're important. The product of our preaching and teaching isn't meant to be a head full of facts – it's meant to be a life that's pure, honourable and good in every way. That's what "godliness" looks like.

- b) As you think about your own growth as a Christian, can you recall times when hearing God's word has produced faith and knowledge, and then godliness?

If that hasn't been your experience, where has the weak link been in the chain?

What can you do to change this?

Leading by Example

- a) Paul has left Titus in Crete with a job to do. What is it, and why is it important? (Read paragraphs **D** to **G**.)

- b) List the qualities an overseer (or 'elder') should have, and should not have. How would you summarise the character of a person like this?

Meet our MPC Elders

All Presbyterian churches are led by a group of elders drawn from members of the congregation. (New elders are typically nominated by the existing elders (otherwise known as "The Session") and then elected by members.) Because of passages like Titus 1, there's a careful process of selection – objections to the 'life and doctrine' of each candidate are invited. Elders make decisions about the overall direction of our church, the shape and structure of the ministry team, and other ministry issues. Some of our elders are actively involved in pastoral care roles and visiting.

Our elders are currently:

John Miles	Norton Russell
Matt Lyndon	Don Anderson
Rob Hanson	Peter Burns
John McClenahan	Steve Begg
Gary Hanson	Phil Campbell



Please pray regularly for our elders and leaders. If you take part in the election of elders in the future, make sure you take the process seriously. Our elders play a key role in setting the tone for our church.

Our church is also served by the Ministry Team (Phil, Garnet and Matt), Growth Group Leaders, a management committee (who look after our property and funds) and an on-call Care Team (phone 04009 32009 any time.)

Watch your step!

c) Read sections **G** to **J**. What other important role do elders have?

d) What is the nature of the false teaching Titus is facing? Why is it such a problem?

Circumcision, Jewish myths, arguments about the law – they're all symptoms of a desire to stick with the old ways of Jewish religion. In spite of all the rules, rituals and regulations, Judaism was no help in changing the heart. That's the beauty of Paul's gospel; and it's a message he wasn't going see diluted by false teachers. Elders were to be on the front lines of the defense.

e) What sort of false teaching do our own elders need to watch for?

Summary: How to Build a Church

- * Start by preaching the gospel – a message that **changes hearts!**
- * Expect lives to change as **people grow in godliness.**
- * Choose **leaders** who will lead by example.
- * Make sure the leaders **protect** the gospel against false teachers.

Upcoming Events at MPC

Pool Parties are coming up on Sunday Feb 12th. For those who have signed up, you'll be told on Sunday whose house you are going to. If you haven't signed up as a guest, t's not too late. Just let Rob Hanson know on 3851-1474, or ask your group leader about phoning through a group booking! Don't forget your swimmers and lunch!

AGM – We're holding our church Annual General Meeting on Tuesday Night, 28 February, starting at 7.30pm. This is an opportunity to hear more about the life of our church and ask questions.

Photo Directory Update – If you're new to mpc since last year's photo directory, we'd love to include you. Bruce McClenahan and Ron Gibson will be taking photos for the last time on Sunday. If your details have changed since last year, please update them on the draft directory which will be on display. Everyone needs to check and sign off on the draft – your entry will only be included with your permission.