



Good Morning, Church!

By Rev. Dr. Carl K. Ellis, Founder and Executive Director
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Being the Body of Christ and Working Together so Small Membership Churches Thrive

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“To walk alone is possible, but the good walker knows that the great trip is life and requires companionship.”

~ Bishop Camara

I believe that small membership churches can thrive when we walk together as the body of Christ and reach out with God’s love and grace to our communities. We need to be realistic, knowing that the road will be difficult after years of decline. There will be days when we try new programs that fail, and we must be willing to dust ourselves off and try again. We will need to let go of the past and be open to blending new ways with the old ways of doing church and welcoming new neighbors with God’s love and grace.

If we are to thrive, we must remember that one person can't do it on their own. I have watched churches flourish when a charismatic pastor brings instant growth to a church, only to see the growth disappear when he or she moves to a different church. I have also seen churches grow because of a strong patriarch or matriarch, only to have the church fall apart when he or she moves away or dies.

Healthy churches are like healthy bodies. Just as we need every part of the body to be working, we need every member to be helping the church to thrive. As Paul said, “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” ~ I Corinthians 12:27.

As the body of Christ, everyone is important. Just as we need all the different parts of our physical bodies, we need everyone in the church. We embrace diversity and are willing to embrace our differences. If one person continues to demand their own way, others are excluded, and the church will suffer.

Healthy churches listen to all the voices and work for the good of all, not just one person. As Paul says:

“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does

not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

~ I Corinthians 13:4-7

As the body of Christ, we remember Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, and the laborers are few.”

People of all ages are looking for authentic relationships and communities where they discover the loving support of God. Our nation, communities, churches, and families have been torn apart by hate. Many people are looking for a safe place where they can be nurtured and grow. The small membership church, also called the family church, is a place where people of all ages can find the support, love, and grace to help them grow and discover the love of God.

Yes, small membership churches thrive and are the body of Christ as we share God’s love with our church family, communities, and world.



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