

10 Essential Qualities for the Jesus-Driven Church

In Romans 8:29, the Word of God teaches us that believers were predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Since the book of Romans was written to the church in Rome, we understand the subject of the verse as the corporate body of Christ. Hence, local congregations are called to become Christlike in their methodology, mission and essence. Although numerous attributes can be unpacked, in this article, I am narrowing the focus to 10 qualities every Jesus-driven church must have.

1. There is a spirit of joyful service. Jesus taught that the greatest in the kingdom is the one who serves (Matt. 23:11). He modeled this when He knelt down and washed the feet of His disciples (John 13). This was totally against the Greco-Roman ethos of His day, which taught that humbling oneself before others who were not your superior was inappropriate and unacceptable. Consequently, the Jesus-driven church will celebrate voluntary service for the good of others.

2. There is an expectation of the miraculous. When the apostle Peter was preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, He described Jesus as the One who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38). Thus, Jesus was equated with the miraculous power of God when men were describing Him. Jesus even told His followers that He expected them to do greater works than He did (John 14:12). The Jesus-driven church will have in its culture a corporate faith that expects the miraculous.

3. There is a sense of divine mission and purpose. When Jesus preached His first sermon, He read from the prophet Isaiah's passage that prophesied His mission (Luke 4:18 from Isa.

61:1-2). He was a man on a mission, who had objectives and goals from day to day (Luke 13:32). He told Pilate that His life's purpose was to testify to the truth as the King (John 18:37). In light of this, the Jesus-driven church will have a compelling vision and ignite a sense of purpose and mission among its congregants.

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4. There is ample discipleship. As we read the four Gospels, it is evident that the main focus Jesus had in His ministry was pouring into His 12 and then His 70 disciples (Luke 9:1, 10:1). A local church conformed to the image of Christ will also base its whole ministry on making disciples and not just attracting crowds.

5. There is genuine fellowship and community. Jesus did not merely teach His disciples, He lived among them and lived life with them. He shared His pain, ate with and prayed with them (Luke 14:14-46). The Jesus-driven church will also have as a core value the practice of genuine fellowship and community.

6. There is a focus on the Father. Jesus was always in the bosom of the Father and was described from the beginning as being with God. John 1:1 and John 1:18 both reveal how intimate Jesus was with His Father. Jesus said that He and His Father were one and that Jesus only speaks what His Father gives Him and always does what pleases His Father (John 8:28-29, 10:30). Consequently, those in a Jesus-driven church will walk in a spirit of adoption as sons of the living God and cry out of the abundance of their heart "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15c). This kind of church runs counter to the orphan spirit in the world and ministers healing to the brokenhearted and disenfranchised of society.

7. Prayer is a priority. Jesus made a regular practice of

arising before dawn to pray (Mark 1:35). His disciples realized that the secret of His power was prayer, which is why they asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). The Scripture describes the days of His humanity as a time when He offered up prayers with loud cries and tears (Heb. 5:7). Since Jesus was a man of regular, fervent prayer, the Jesus-driven church will also be a community of much fervent prayer.

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8. Patience and perseverance are attributes. The Bible tells us that Jesus endured with patience the cross because of the joy that was set before Him (Heb. 12:2). Even though He was born God the Son, He did not minister or do any miracles the first 30 years of His life. This took great patience (Luke 3:23). Any church that conforms to Christ Jesus will be a church with a strong ethic of patience in the midst of tests and suffering.

9. They adopt a way of life, not a religion. Jesus said, "I am the way." He did not say, "I am the religion" (John 14:6). The early church described their journey in Christ as a life and a way (Acts 5:20, 24:14). Churches that are overly legalistic, ritualistic and religious (attempting to follow Christ based merely on rules and regulations) are not mimicking Christ but man-made religion (Gal. 3:3, Col. 2:16-23). Obviously, the Jesus-driven church will express its relationship with Him in an organic, relational way.

10. The church speaks truth to power. While the goal of many contemporary pastors and leaders is to avoid cultural conflict to become "relevant," the Lord they claim to follow spoke truth to power. Even a cursory reading of Scripture demonstrates how He purposely healed people on the Sabbath. This was an affront to religious leaders (Mark 3:1-5, John 5). He spoke about His kingdom to a Roman leader named Pontius Pilate (John 18:36-38). He also rebuked religious leaders for putting their traditions ahead of the word of God (Mark

7:1-23). The Jesus-driven church will never water down the truth but reflect adequately the whole counsel of God in its values, words and mission.

There are many other things we can say in regard to being conformed to the image of Christ; however, if we attempt to walk in the 10 points above, we will leave a powerful imprint on the world around us.

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