

4 Characteristics of Lighthouse Churches

A lighthouse church is presence-based, not dependent upon the show, the slick presentation or any particular formula or program.

Focused on seeking and experiencing the presence of God, worship in a lighthouse church is no “in and out in an hour” affair, but lasts as long as it takes to open people up to the real presence of God. Both leadership and laity value the pursuit of the presence for the honor of the Lord and will not stop until a genuine encounter with God has been achieved.

Freedom for God to Move

God is free to move in any way He chooses. Leadership gets out of the way and allows out-of-the-box things to happen that have not been planned for. Historically speaking, unusual, messy, out-of-the-box manifestations and occurrences have punctuated every visitation of the Spirit that has ever impacted this culture.

Wise leaders of lighthouse churches therefore show themselves willing to absorb a degree of messiness. History amply demonstrates that when controlling leadership or a religious spirit suppress manifestations, both the number of salvations and the incidence of miracles diminish. This culture needs and hungers for miracles and the tangible evidence of power. In days to come, words alone will not do.

A Culture of Honor

In a lighthouse church, both leadership and laity cultivate a culture of honor. Honor by definition ascribes worth, value and significance to people. Lighthouse churches do this for every individual without exception, no matter who they might

be, where they come from or what their condition. From top leadership to the lowest of the laity, respect, encouragement and uplift prevail.

This can only work within the context of community, a commitment to one another in honor. Lighthouse churches work hard at relationships and at ministry structures and strategies that foster relationships, knowing that relational love stands at the heart of the Kingdom of God.

A Healing Atmosphere

Lighthouse churches cultivate a healing atmosphere and diligently pursue specific healing ministries, both for the physical body and for life's hurts in order to demonstrate the love of God and His restorative power to a world in need.

Refocus for Intimacy with God

It would seem that in days to come we must stop seeking the signs, wonders and prophecies. Such a quest puts the focus in the wrong place. Becoming a lighthouse church cannot be about hungering after power as I see so many of my fellow revival seekers doing. As the events of recent years amply demonstrate, the mere presence of power does not necessarily lead to the creation of an atmosphere of love and safety that both the saints and the world can rely upon.

The goal of our pursuit for these crucial days must be intimacy with God, oneness with His heart. We must plumb the depths of Paul's affirmation when he wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Power is a byproduct of that affirmation. Signs and wonders result from it. This single affirmation forms the basis for all we aspire to become and all we aspire to do.

Conclusion

Let the lighthouse churches arise. Let them gather in the refugees out of a philosophical system that cannot work, that can only wound its adherents, because it disregards and violates the principles on which God built this universe.

A lighthouse church is a prophetic church—a prophetic people—because of the impact it makes upon the society around it and upon the individuals who avail themselves of its ministries. “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Is. 55:11). Let the prophetic impact be made!

*Excerpted from The Prophetic Church. **R. Loren Sandford** (., Fuller Theological Seminary) is senior pastor of New Song Church and Ministries in Denver, Colorado. He speaks internationally and is a past director of Elijah House, an international ministry of counseling founded by his parents, John and Paula Sandford. Loren has also released 14 CDs of original music.*