

# THE EXTERNALLY FOCUSED CHURCH

## Isaiah 58

*"We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give."* Winston Churchill

No one would argue that Christians shouldn't serve. Jesus said he had come to serve, not to be served. The early church was characterized as serving. Service is, and should be, the identifying mark of individual Christians as well as the whole church.

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* Mark 10.45

### DEFINING AN EXTERNALLY FOCUSED CHURCH

*Stop doing wrong,  
learn to do right!  
Seek justice,  
encourage the oppressed.  
Defend the cause of the fatherless,  
plead the case of the widow.* Isaiah 1.13-17

*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
to loose the chains of injustice  
and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free  
and break every yoke?  
Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe him,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?* Isaiah 58.6-8

Externally focused churches ask, "Whose lives are different because of this church?"

### WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?

***The first group comprises those on the margins.***

*He [God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.* Deuteronomy 10.18-19; 14.28-29; 24.19-22; 15.10-11

***The second recipient of the externally focused church's energy is the city.***

*'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'* Jeremiah 29.11

*Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters: find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.* Jeremiah 29.4-7

### CHARACTERISTICS OF EXTERNALLY FOCUSED CHURCHES

**First**, externally focused churches are convinced that **good deeds** and **good news** can't and shouldn't be separated. Acts 10.36-38; Luke 9.10-11

**Second**, they see themselves as vital to the health and well-being of their communities.

**Third**, they believe that ministering and serving are the normal expressions of Christian living.

**Fourth**, externally focused churches are effective in sharing the Gospel.