



## KISS The Church Planter

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Someone once gave this great word of advice, **“Keep it simple, stupid;”** otherwise known as the K.I.S.S. principle. Other than being a bit uncouth, it’s not bad advice on the surface.

It is fair to say that there has never been a time in church history when there has been more available to the church and its leaders. Tyndale was martyred for his simple commitment to providing a common man’s translation of the Bible. Original language and Latin translations of the Bible were available to a few scholarly types, but beyond that little was available to the common man. Today we have publishing companies galore. Conferences, radio, television, internet, computer software programs, electronic gadgets of every conceivable and inconceivable type; putting the resources of entire biblical libraries literally in the palm of your hand, all available to the church planter. In the midst of all this, there is a subtle danger. In a strange way, all these inventions and advancements in technology can become distracting and draining on limited resources.

Paul spoke of “simplicity.” A certain singularity of focus in one’s life and ministry. Consider this passage from 2 Corinthians 11:3, for example:

*“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere [simplicity] and pure devotion to Christ.” (ESV)*

*“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” (KJV)*

The key word here is **ἁπλοῦς** (haplotes), which conveys singleness, hence *simplicity*; also translated as *liberality, simplicity, sincerity*.

### Four Simple Priorities in Ministry

As I see it there are four simple priorities in the ministry:

1. The sufficiency of God’s word – the Bible. – 2 Tim 3:16, 17
2. The sufficiency of the Holy Spirit – our personal Teacher. – 1 John 2:27
3. The sufficiency of the Gospel – 1 Corinthians 15
4. The sufficiency of the local church – the pillar of truth – 1 Timothy 3:15

The American church in particular can get caught up in the American

cultural idolization of technology – which drives us to have the “latest” and “the best” the market has to offer. Whether it’s the latest gadget or the newest and most exhilarating conference; we can find ourselves expending incredible amounts of time, energy and resources – all limited – on such pursuits.

The simplicity of the church can be seen in its early formation, as describe in Acts 2:42-47 , where the early church centered on the simplicity of Acts 2:42-47 : *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*

### **Key Components of Simplicity in Ministry**

An expanded view of the churches simplicity in full ministry function can be seen in Acts 13 . It is simply profound. In Acts 13:1-5 , we see the following. This New Testament church is a model for all church planters. Here are the key components of that wonderful church.

First of all, note that nothing is said of the church building, or the size of the congregation. The church was clearly ministry driven – simply given over to the sovereign ministry of the Spirit of God through the word of God.

Allow me to demonstration the profound simplicity of this church in outline form:

- Its Men
- Its Multiple (plurality) leadership
- Its Multicultural character
- Its Ministry unto the Lord, according to the word, and directed by the Holy Spirit.
- Its Mission outreach
- Its Message – always the simple and profound gospel.
- Its Multiplication

#### **Its Men - In servant-leadership**

Large or small, every church must focus its ministry on the training of men. Children’s ministries and women’s Bible studies are all very important to the life of a church, but the fact is that many a local church falters for a lack of adequate men in leadership.

#### **Its Make-up - Multiplicity**

This church featured multiple (plurality) leadership and a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic mix of people. In stark contrast to the Jewish dominated

church in Jerusalem (which had had its own tensions between the Jewish widows and the Hellenistic – Jew with Greek background - widows), Antioch was clearly multiethnic and multicultural. Among its stated leaders; Barnabas (Jew, with Greek background), Simeon Niger (Gentile of northern Africa ), Lucius (Greek), Manaen (Greek), and Saul (the former Pharisee of Pharisees). What a mix! Additionally, from this mix of leaders, plurality of leadership is self-evident; “prophets and teachers” is plural.

Increasingly, our communities are changing in their ethnic makeup. Cultural crossover was endemic to the church in Antioch , and even when it may not be readily apparent, every area has its diversity in cultural nuance. Multicultural and multiethnic composition of a church is not necessarily evident by skin color, alone. The Lord Jesus was not a respecter of persons, and neither should His church be.

### **Its Ministry Focus - "Christward"**

It was not preoccupied with “how can we make our ministry relevant to the culture,” but rather, “how do we most faithfully minister *to the Lord*?” The ministry was *to the Lord* (v.2), *of the word* (v.1), and directed by *the Holy Spirit* (v.2). This spiritual dynamic – this spiritual devotion – was evident in that the church collectively, leadership and congregation, fasted unto the Lord (v.3). They were willing to set aside physical and material preoccupation for purposes of maintaining spiritual priorities.

### **Its Mission Outreach - From within**

Because of this Spirit-mindedness, the church set a pattern of *building up* and *sending out*. They had a missionary fervor. *Its Missionaries* were the product of its ministry, from the pool of its leaders, namely Barnabas and Saul. At this point in time, Barnabas was, of course, the revered patriarch of the church, and Saul was the “last on the list.” Nevertheless, this was the selection of the Holy Spirit, and the local publicly acknowledged this commission and *sent them out*. They were sent by the church, and by the Holy Spirit.

What becomes evident at this point is *its Mission* . The local church at Antioch understood its mission. It was not just a “missions program,” rather its mission was its ministry. Not more or less important, but just as important as its other ministry priorities. It had a *local* and a *global* outreach.

### **Its Message - Simple yet profound**

The outstanding characteristic of the church at Antioch was the consistency and clarity of its message. The message of the church was simple and profound; Jesus Christ, the only Savior, and Man’s condition a lost sinner. The same message that was being proclaimed locally in Antioch was the very same life saving message being declare by the mission expansion of the church through its supported missionaries. Simple? Yes. Also, profound.

### **Its Multiplication**

Because the church was focused on these simple priorities, the result was

growth by spiritual multiplication. Its multiplication took place locally and globally, as well. The missionary journeys of Barnabas and Saul, soon expanded to Paul and Silas, and Barnabas and John Mark (Acts 16:5). The New Testament, of course, features the development of the churches deployment and doctrine. Every New Testament book after Acts is written to local churches and/or leaders of local churches. That's pretty simple, and yet profound, as well.

### **Simplicity and Complexity - simple profundity**

The biblical truth that we have, and the spiritual resources that are ours in Christ Jesus, make any gadget or electronic "wow machine" pale in comparison to the inherent supremacy of God's word which we possess.

- God's word never needs updating or reprogramming.
- God's Spirit is never out of touch or out of range
- God's Gospel is relevant for every age and every generation
- God's program of the local church is revolutionary in every community and culture in which it is planted and in which it is faithful to the proclamation of God's truth.

The apostle Paul put it this way, when he said, "*This one thing I do...*" The focus of Paul's heart is revealed in Philippians 3:1-14 . By way of practical application, don't become reclusive or out of touch. But, in your attempt to keep up to date, practice a measure of self-control and moderation. What works in your physical diet, works in the ministry also. Set limits, and be content. Know what you can afford and be a wise steward accordingly. You don't *have to have* the latest gadget. You don't *have to attend* the latest conference or seminar. There is always next year – or, even better, the Lord may come back!

Ministry today is often marked by "flurry and hurry," a rush of activity from one meeting to another, one counseling session to another, one service to another. If we are not careful and personally disciplined, we will succumb to the trap of the tyranny of the urgent, leading to the tyranny of the unimportant.

A few resources have been of personal encouragement to me over the years. These include the books, *Tyranny of the Urgent and Freedom From the Tyranny of the Urgent*, by Charles Hummel, and *Intimacy with the Almighty*, by Charles Swindoll. By far, however, the best time I've ever spent has been spent alone with the Lord. It never costs me a thing, except time and a heart to be with Him, and to listen to His voice in His word. K.I.S.S.

I hope these thoughts are of some help to you. Feel free to call upon me anytime. I am here to serve, simply and in a limited way. I am just an [e-mail click](#) away – Oh, there's technology, again!

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