

## What You Must Do In 2008

Franklin Church of Christ  
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December 30, 2007  
AM Assembly

### Introduction:

Over and again you hear people talk about goals. To get anywhere, we have to have some. What are our goals at the Franklin Church of Christ? No doubt we could list goals in various ways, but allow me to express our main goal in an understandable way. Our goal is to fill this building with saved people and then move on to some other location to fill with saved people. We have spent a great deal of God's money to build this. Frankly, it was a waste to do so if we are going to allow it to sit slightly more than half full. We cannot simply wave a magic wand and add another 200 people to the congregation. To do so, we will need more elders, deacons and evangelists. We also want to support more non-local evangelists to be involved in saving people in other places. These goals may seem lofty, but remember **Ephesians 3:20-21**. God can do more than we ask or think.

It is too easy to think of these goals in congregational terms subconsciously removing ourselves from the picture of attaining these goals. Our goal, however, will only be reached by your individual work. So, as we look into a new year, let us look at what you must do in 2008. You must make plans in three areas: personal growth, aggressive evangelism and congregational involvement.

### Discussion:

- I. Plans for personal growth.
  - A. **Ephesians 4:15-16** points out that a local body is only as strong as what the individual joints supply. Congregational growth begins with your growth. You must plan to grow in three areas.
  - B. You must improve your prayer life. We are to pray without ceasing (**I Thessalonians 5:17**). Wherever your prayer life is now, make plans to improve it. Maybe you need to start praying individually. Maybe you need to simply pray more. Maybe you need to start praying with your family or with your brethren. Whatever your individual need for improvement is, make it.
  - C. **I Peter 2:2** says, "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow..." (ESV). This directive applies to all of us. So, you must improve your Bible study. How much time do you spend in your Bible? How do you read your Bible? Wherever you are in your study habits, you need to improve them. Maybe you need to start reading every day. Maybe you need to spend more time reading. Maybe you need to improve how you read. Whatever your individual need for improvement is, make it.
  - D. You must plan to actively participate in every assembly and class of this congregation. We have learned from the Jerusalem church that success comes from devotion to worship and learning (**Acts 2:42**). Don't allow Satan to convince you that missing won't hurt you. Plan to be at every assembly, class, meeting, singing and special service this congregation has. In fact, plan to be early, so you don't miss any part of it. And do more than simply attend, participate actively.
- II. Plans for aggressive evangelism.
  - A. The Great commission was not a suggestion (**Mark 16:15**). It was a command. Additionally, unless people are converted we will not really grow. Note three areas of improvement.
  - B. You must invite and recommend this church to more people. Don't be caught up in your fears of personal rejection. Selflessly look at people's souls and let them know what is going on here. We will not find the one in a hundred who will become a Christian by trying to figure out who is the one and then inviting him. We find the one in a hundred, by inviting the hundred. Make a personal goal to invite 100 people to this congregation in the next year, only two people per week. Invite family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, cashiers, people you stand next to in line, etc. Look at their souls and their eternity and this will be an easy goal to accomplish.
  - C. Once someone has accepted an invitation, they will worship with us as our guest. That one in a hundred is going to show up here to see if we have what he is looking for: Love (**John 13:35**). They will not see our love if we are so caught up in talking to one another that we let them get away without a word. If we are going to save more souls, we have to pay attention to the souls who come. You must meet and greet at least one guest at every assembly.
  - D. Finally, there is no evangelism unless someone teaches someone else (**Romans 10:13-15**). If this congregation is going to effectively evangelize our community, you must increase your ability to teach others. I understand that by the end of 2008 actually conducting a study may be

an unattainable goal for some. Many of us believe we simply cannot teach. Perhaps, at present, you are correct. If you can conduct a study, then do so. If you cannot, then grow so you can in 2009. You must understand the great commission was given to you as well as to preachers (**Matthew 28:19-20**). It is not an option. Your goal for the year may not be to have an actual study with someone. Maybe your goal will be to focus on personal study so you can better defend what you believe. Maybe it will be to go with someone who is conducting a study. Maybe you can learn how to use a prewritten series of studies. Maybe you need to memorize scriptures that will help you teach. Whatever the case, you must make goals to evangelize and teach.

### III. Plans for congregational involvement.

- A. We must make goals and plans of congregational involvement, going beyond the attendance about which we spoke earlier. Again, there are three areas of improvement.
- B. The first of these areas is something I really do not want to talk about, because there are so many ways it can be taken incorrectly. I have to talk about the contribution. No one really likes to talk about money. However, it is a necessary part of our plans. If we are going to reach our goals congregationally, you and I must increase our contribution. We want to be able to support more evangelists. We want to be able to do more work locally, using newspaper, radio, television. We want to be able to help brethren in need whenever the need arises. This can only happen through your contribution. I would like to simply say, "Every one needs to increase their giving by such and such percent." However, I recognize that doesn't really hit at the heart of the matter. Nor does it explain what each of us really needs to do. Each of us needs to review our giving and improve it. Perhaps you need to start giving. Perhaps you need to increase your giving by a certain percent. Perhaps you really haven't given as you have been prospered and you need to increase 100%, doubling your contribution. Remember **II Corinthians 8:12**. God expects from us according to what we have, not what we don't have. At this time of year perhaps we can be honest about what we have when we consider the money we devoted to decorations and gifts. We have a great deal. Each of us needs to consider our giving, wherever you are take that step up and grow.
- C. When we studied the Jerusalem church two years ago, we learned that our elders and preachers cannot meet the needs of every member in this congregation. One of Jerusalem's keys to success was their relationship with one another from house to house (**Acts 2:46-47**). It is one thing to talk in theory about doing things from house-to-house, it is something completely different to actually do it. If this congregation is to grow, you must do something with other Christians from house to house on a regular basis. Accept the invitations of others, but do not wait for them. You make plans to do something with other Christians.
- D. Finally, as we learn to relate with one another from house to house and to work in circles of influence, if we are going to grow, you must serve others. **Ephesians 4:11-12** demonstrates that the work of ministry is not exclusive to elders and preachers. Rather, it is their job to equip us to serve. This congregation will grow based on that which every joint supplies (**Ephesians 4:15-16**). What are you supplying? According to **Romans 12:6-8** and **I Peter 4:10-11**, each of us has different abilities and gifts from God. Our obligation is to use them to serve each other. This week, examine yourself and see what you are good at. What gifts and abilities do you have? How can you use those gifts to serve others? Do not leave out any ability. Can you cook, clean, sew, do woodwork, cut grass, visit hospitals and nursing homes? Can you make phone calls or write notes of encouragement? Can you invite people into your home for encouragement? Can you lead a group study or prayer circle? Can you spend time with someone simply listening to their problems, advising them, encouraging them and praying with them? Can you give someone a ride to worship? Use all of these gifts and abilities to serve others.

### Conclusion:

Satan wants you to believe this is too much. But remember, God's hand is with us (**Acts 11:21**). By His strength and power we will reach our goals (**Ephesians 3:20-21**). To do it, we need you to do your part in 2008. Take time this week to establish your goals. Then get with a brother or sister in Christ to help hold you accountable. Finally, follow through. It will be an exciting year.