

# Encouragement to Those Starting a Church

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Back in the late nineties, we began to meet together, in a little house, on the south side of San Antonio, with just a hand full of people, and we sought to open up God's Word, we sought to fellowship, exhort one another, and in a short time, we started a little church there. We were initially called South Side Grace Church, and we started with twelve, and very soon just dealing with sin in our midst, we had ten. So we were actually getting smaller, but we kept breaking bread, and fellowshiping, opening up the Apostle's doctrine, we were seeking to boldly evangelize, and pray, and fast, and seek to be faithful to these things; sing, and continue to meet together.

We sought to support missions from the time we just had ten people. We sought to give to the poor. That would be another thing, that a Church, even if you have two or three meeting together, there's a place for helping the poor, after all, when you get together, your supposed to be stirring one another up to love and good works, and you know the kind of good works God is most impressed with, visiting widows and orphans in their affliction, doing those types of things.

So as a small church you can do that. Just being faithful, being faithful. In those early years, we didn't see any additions to the Church for sixteen months, and then it was somebody transferring over to us. We didn't see the first conversions for a number of years, and in fact, James has reminded me that in those early years, we actually were seeing more people die around us, than we were seeing saved. But there was a place just to continue praying, and continue evangelizing, and in the course of time we began to see God faithfully come through, and begin to save, and multiply the spiritual giftedness in the Church, and begin to grow the church numerically. But, sometimes those early years can be very discouraging. It can be very discouraging when you go sixteen months and you've lost two, and added none. That can become very discouraging. But just praying through, and seeking to encourage one another, and stir up one another to love and good works.

Certainly, as discouraging as having two or three meeting together for sixteen months without there being any additions might be, isn't it far more discouraging, if you're all by yourself? I mean, certainly there's a lot more encouragement if your in far away Budapest, and you begin meeting with seven or eight other like minded brothers and sisters, and you don't see God do anything immediately, but you have each other, and I can tell you this in those early days when we started the Church, those Brethren were faithful. They came to the meetings, they gave even of the little that they may have had, we sought to evangelize together, and we were a support, we were an encouragement, we fellowshiped together, we had the things of Christ in common, and that's huge, even though weren't seeing the additions that's ten thousand times better than being out there all by yourself, and not having that encouragement, not having those brethren.

Oh God gave us faithful Brethren in the beginning, and that was such a help. We were able to stay together, there was a unity there, there was a strength that you have where two or

three gather together and Christ is with you, no matter how discouraging that is, it is so much more encouraging, and more hopeful, and more helpful, than if you're out there, and you're by yourself.