

Characteristics of Churches Transformed by EHS

A church that integrates EHS principles and tools reflects the characteristics described below. EHS does not attempt to define everything about a biblically healthy church, but it highlights and combines key areas that are frequently overlooked. You will notice that several themes recur in different sections due to the overlapping, integrative nature of EHS. Developed over a twenty-year span, these elements are not a checklist to be accomplished. Instead, they describe a life-journey with Christ.

SLOWED DOWN SPIRITUALITY

- 1 The rhythms and pace of people's personal lives are slower and more deliberate. People operate out of a contemplative activism, with *doing for* Jesus flowing out of *being with* Him.
- 2 Sabbath is encouraged, respected, and valued as a key spiritual formational discipline.
- 3 Church history serves as a rich well of experiences and practices that deepen our relationship with Jesus.
- 4 Scripture is a primary place where people commune with and are transformed by Jesus.
- 5 Prayer is first about a lifestyle of loving union with Jesus.
- 6 Spirituality is integrated into all of life--family, sexuality, relationships, recreation, etc.
- 7 Silence is foundational to remaining centered in Christ.
- 8 Discernment of God's will through sensitivity to what is happening inside of us (consolations and desolations), along with Scripture and wise counsel, is a central focus.
- 9 A theology of delight is thoughtfully applied--personally and corporately.

INTEGRITY IN LEADERSHIP

- 1 Leaders and pastors lead out of a deep interior life with Christ.
- 2 For married leaders, our relationship with our spouse is our highest call and first vocation.
- 3 Each leader experiences Scripture as a deep well for their own soul, and not simply as a tool for teaching others.
- 4 The work of church governance (e.g., the Elder Board) flows out of a discernment process to determine God's will when making strategic decisions.
- 5 Leaders remain connected to others, yet calmly differentiate their "true selves" from the demands and voices around them. They discern the unique desires, vision, and pace the Father has given them.
- 6 The church, and especially its leadership, is aware of the complexity of dual roles in building community.
- 7 Leaders preach and live out of truth, not pretense, spin, illusion, or exaggeration.
- 8 Spiritual authority allows and gives permission for people to ask questions and say "no."

"BENEATH THE SURFACE" DISCIPLESHIP

- 1 We go back to go forward, breaking the negative patterns from our families of origin and cultures that hinder us from following Jesus.
- 2 Limits are acknowledged and respected.
- 3 There is a profound awareness of and appreciation for our brokenness.
- 4 A healthy love of self that results in good self-care is integrated with our love for God and others.

- 5 The measure of a mature spirituality is love, humility, and approachability, not gifts, power, or success.
- 6 We each make radical, intentional life adjustments to cultivate a relationship with Jesus and not live off of the spirituality of others.
- 7 Losses and disappointments are seen as opportunities to meet God and ourselves.

SKILLFUL COMMUNITY

- 1 Deep listening is an indispensable practice for loving others well.
- 2 We check out our assumptions and expectations rather than “mind reading.”
- 3 A new language informs our culture, enabling people to respectfully articulate their wants, needs and differences (e.g. “I’m puzzled”).
- 4 The skills and nuances of “clean fighting” have been mastered.
- 5 There is a healthy sensitivity to overfunctioning and underfunctioning.
- 6 We pursue the unity of the church by respecting individual differences (i.e., valuing different viewpoints, choices, and spiritual journeys).
- 7 Sharing out of our weaknesses and vulnerabilities is encouraged.
- 8 People are invited to take responsibility for their lives without blaming others.

PASSIONATE MARRIAGES AND SINGLENES

- 1 Both singleness and marriage serve as reminders of our present and eternal marriage to Christ.
- 2 Married couples answer the call to become a living sign and wonder of God’s love for the world.
- 3 Our oneness/union with Christ becomes inseparable from our oneness/union with our spouse.
- 4 Singles answer the call to become a living sign and wonder of God’s love for the world.
- 5 We talk openly about how the relationship between Christ and His church is to be reflected in each person’s sexuality.
- 6 We differentiate between “using” and “loving” by distinguishing the interior movements of the heart.
- 7 We embrace a marriage paradigm of two differentiated, separate individuals as the pathway to oneness.

MISSIONAL WORKERS

- 1 People witness to Jesus Christ out of listening to God, relational integrity, and their own on-going transformation.
- 2 People have a deep sense of God’s call to “full-time ministry” in their spheres of work.
- 3 We build God’s kingdom in our workplaces, bringing order out of chaos and developing healthy communities.
- 4 The “sacred” versus “secular” compartmentalization of work and spirituality has been eliminated.
- 5 New skills and a new language for loving well are brought into the workplace.
- 6 Slower and more deliberate rhythms for practicing Jesus’ presence at work are developed.
- 7 The evils of racism, classism, and sexism are addressed out of the deep foundation of the gospel.
- 8 Practical steps are taken to give and serve others out of, and within, our places of work.