

## It's Not Up to Us

The council had gone over the figures a half dozen times, and now two hours into this discussion they were no closer to an answer than when they started. "I think it's time to table this conversation and move on," the pastor said. "It's pretty obvious we aren't going to come to a solution here tonight. We each seem to have our own ideas of whether we want our congregation to grow and move forward." The council president nodded in agreement and was about to make a motion to adjourn when Fred Larson spoke up.

Fred hadn't said anything during the meeting. He was a quiet man who always went out of his way to avoid confrontation. Fred said, "The pastor just made the point that I believe we have all been missing during this long discussion about our ability to expand our sanctuary. Let me say it in a different way. The pastor said we couldn't agree on whether WE want to grow and move forward, but I submit to you that it's not up to us."

John, the council curmudgeon, shot back, "Well, who else is going to make that decision? We're the church council and it's up to us." "No," said Fred, "the decision whether to build an addition is not up to us. It doesn't make any difference what WE want. It's what God wants that matters here! We are just the custodian's of this house of God and I don't ever recall reading where he wanted it to cease growing. Everywhere you look in the Good News, Jesus is asking you and me to reach out and spread the gospel. You can't do that if you are going to stop growing and using the argument that it's not in the budget. We have to plan to grow. That's what God wants us to do!"

"Thank you for saying that Fred," said the pastor, "Growth is a part of the Great Commission for us to each personally grow through our love for God and then pass that love on to our family, neighbors and friends. We can't decide to stop growth – that only leads to decline."

"In view of what you just said, pastor, I want to hear a motion to have a planning committee look into the costs for the addition," said the president. "I'll move that," said the old curmudgeon, John. "Second," said Fred.

"I move we adjourn", he added. "Now that's the way I like to have meetings go." "And that's the kind of witness I love to hear," said the pastor. "Let's close with the Lord's Prayer."



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