

FAMILY BIBLE HOUR

4 June 2017

“The Compelling Community”
Lesson 5: Preach to Equip Your Community

“Where does supernatural breadth and depth of community come from? How do we cultivate it? The answer is simple. Supernatural community comes from supernatural faith, which comes from God’s Word. Your church needs to hear God’s Word.”

1. Read Ephesians 4:11–12. According to this verse, whom did God give to the church to equip the saints? Why should the leaders of the church equip the saints? What do properly equipped saints do?

“Christ gave the church ministers of the Word not to effect change, but to equip others to effect change. The Sunday morning sermon isn’t the finish line for Word ministry, it’s the starting line. It is the beginning of the real work, as your congregation takes God’s Word and puts it to work through the week.”

When discussing the topic of preaching, the average church member may be tempted to think that the discussion has little to do with them. “Pastors preach, members listen.” But if preaching is as central to a church as Scripture suggests it is, surely it is something we should all be thinking about.

Properly Approaching Preaching

Biblical preaching is in many ways a conversation. Church members have as great a responsibility to properly receive and respond to preaching as preachers have to preach. If you will be properly equipped by the preaching of the Word to do the work of the ministry, you must think very carefully how you approach the preaching of the Word.

2. The principles that the Bible gives for sound preaching should be turned around and applied conversely to sound listening. Discuss some of the principles listed below.
 - a. “Whoever speaks [must speak] as one who speaks oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11). In light of this text, how should you approach listening to a sermon?
 - b. Paul warned Timothy about people who would “not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions” (1 Timothy 4:3). The Thessalonians, by contrast, “received the word in much affliction” (1 Thessalonians 1:6) and “accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word

of God, which works in you believers” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). See also James 1:21. How should we approach preached truths that do not sit well with us?

- c. When Paul evangelised the unbelieving Bereans, they famously “received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so” (Acts 17:12). Luke considered this to be a “noble” thing (v. 11). To what degree do we share this “noble” responsibility to examine whether what is preached is true?

- d. Having meekly received the preached Word (James 1:21), what must we do with it (James 1:22)? With what urgency should we obey James 1:22 (see Hebrews 3:15)?

Congregational Responsibility

- 3. In the church at Pergamum (Revelation 2:12–17), false teachers were present—those who held the teaching of Balaam and the teaching of the Nicolaitans. But it is interesting that Jesus addresses *the church* and tells *the church* to repent. What does this say about congregational responsibility in the preaching it supports?

- 4. James 1:22 informs us of the need to change based on the preaching that we hear. But if we take Ephesians 4:11–12 seriously, is the change we are seeking only personal change? What is the church member’s responsibility in helping other church members to change in response to the preaching? What does this look like practically?

Preparing for Preaching

- 5. In the context of BBC, what are some ways that you can practically prepare your heart ahead of time for the preaching you will hear on Sunday?