

Biblical Counsels on Church Buildings

1. Church buildings should be built to glorify God not Man

The Tower of Babel

“Then they said, ‘Come let’s build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world.’ But the Lord came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. ‘Look!’ He said. ‘The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! Come, let’s go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won’t be able to understand each other.’ In that way the Lord scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. – Gen 11:4-8 (NLT)

Spiritual health of the congregation is more important than buildings

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, pretenders (hypocrites)! For you are like tombs that have been whitewashed, which look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything impure. Just so, you also outwardly seem to people to be just and upright but inside you are full of pretence and lawlessness and iniquity. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, pretenders (hypocrites)! For you build tombs for the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous” - Matt 23:27-29 (AMP)

“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.” – Psa 127:1 (NIV)

Church buildings should be practical, functional places for community

“And all this time our ancestors had a tent shrine for true worship, made to the exact specifications God provided Moses. They had it with them as they followed Joshua, when God cleared the land of pagans, and still had it right down to the time of David. David asked God for a permanent place for worship. But Solomon built it. Yet that doesn’t mean that Most High God lives in a building made by carpenters and masons. The prophet Isaiah put it well when he wrote:

‘Heaven is my throne room, I rest my feet on earth. So what kind of house will you build me? Says God. Where can I get away and relax? It’s already built, and I built it.’ – Acts 7:44-50 (MES)

“Heaven’s my throne, earth is my footstool. What sort of house could you build for me? What holiday spot reserve for me? I made all this! I own all this! God’s Decree. But there is something I’m looking for: a person simple and plain, reverently responsive to what I say.” – Isa 66:1,2 (MES)

“But who can really build Him a worthy home? Not even the highest heavens can contain Him! So who am I to consider building a Temple for Him, except as a place to burn sacrifices to him?” – 2Ch 2:6 (NLT)

2. Prudent Planning

The importance of proper feasibility study and planning in new developments

“But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, ‘there’s the person who started that building and couldn’t afford to finish it!’” – Luk 14:28-30 (NLT)

“Do your planning and prepare your fields before building your house.” – Pro 24:27 (NLT)

Remember all plans work according to God’s will.

“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” – Pro 19:21 (NIV)

3. The Importance of having Church buildings

A Memorial to the Truth

“Then I said to them, ‘You see the bad situation we are in – how Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates are burned with fire. Come, let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a disgrace.’ Then I told them of the hand of my God which was upon me for good, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, ‘Let us rise and build!’ So they strengthened their hands for the good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed us to scorn and despised us and said, ‘What is this thing you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?’ I answered them, ‘the God of heaven will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem.’” – Neh 2:17-20 (AMP)

Stabilises/Establishes the Work in an Area

“He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne for ever.” – 1Ch 17:12 (ASV)

“He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.” – 1Ch 22:10 (KJV)

An Inheritance for future Generations

“Driving out nations from before you, greater and mightier than yourselves, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is this day;” – Deu 4:38 (AMP)

“When you have come into the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, and possess it and live in it,” – Deu 26:1 (AMP)

4. Location, Design and Construction

Church should be well located, Design and Construction to be orderly

“...and build an altar unto Jehovah thy God upon the top of this stronghold, in the orderly manner, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt-offering with the wood of the Asherah which thou shalt cut down.” – Jdg 6:26 (ASV)

5. Member Contribution

Church buildings should not be built at no cost to the congregation; rather contributions should be seen as an offering to the Lord

“And Araunah said, ‘Why has my lord the king come to his servant?’ “To buy your threshing floor,’ David answered, ‘so I can build an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped.’ Araunah said to David, ‘Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering and here are the threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. O king Araunah give all this to the king.’ Araunah also said to him, ‘May the Lord your God accept you.’ But the king replied to Araunah, ‘No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.’ So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.” – 2Sam 24:21-24 (NIV)

Leaders should lead congregational giving by example

“With great pains I have provided for the house of the Lord one hundred thousand talents of gold¹, one million talents of silver², and bronze and iron beyond weighing, for there is so much of it; timber and stone too I have provided. To these you must add more. You have an abundance of workers: stonecutters, masons, carpenters, and all kinds of artisans without number, skilled in working gold, silver, bronze, and iron. Now begin the work, and the Lord be with you.” – 1 Chr 22:14-16 (NKJV)

“And David the king said unto all the assembly, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great; for the palace is not for man, but for Jehovah God. Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for the *things of gold*, and the silver for the *things of silver*, and the brass for the *things of brass*, the iron for the *things of iron*, and wood for the *things of wood*; onyx stones, and *stones to be set*, stones for inlaid work, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. Moreover also, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, seeing that I have a treasure of mine own of gold and silver, I give it unto the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, wherewith to overlay the walls of the houses; of gold for the *things of gold*, and of silver for the *things of silver*, and for all manner of work *to be made* by the hands of artificers. Who then offereth willingly to consecrate himself this day unto Jehovah? Then the princes of the fathers' *houses*, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers over the king's work, offered willingly; and they gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand darics, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and of iron a hundred thousand talents. And they with whom *precious stones* were found gave them to the treasure of the house of Jehovah, under the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly to Jehovah: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.” – 1Ch 29:1-9 (NKJV)

¹ Approximately AUD\$186.8 Billion in 2012

² Approximately AUD\$32.5 Billion in 2012

6. Reciprocal Solidarity

Children of Gad & Reuben helping the other Tribes

“And they said, If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to us for a possession; bring us not over the Jordan. And Moses said to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to the war, and shall you sit here? And discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which Jehovah has given them?”

“And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones: but we ourselves will be ready armed to go before the children of Israel, until we have brought them to their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. We will not return to our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.”

“And Moses said unto them, If you will do this thing, if you will arm yourselves to go before Jehovah to the war, and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before Jehovah, until he has driven out his enemies from before him, and the land is subdued before Jehovah; then afterward you shall return, and be guiltless towards Jehovah, and towards Israel; and this land shall be for you your possession before Jehovah.” – Num 32:5-7, 16-18, 20-22 (NKJV)

7. Case Studies

Tower of Babel – Genesis 11:1-9

King David wanting to build a Temple – 2 Samuel 7:1-29

Ezra rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem – Book of Ezra

Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem – Book of Nehemiah