

Talk Is Cheap

What a basic training graduation taught one church about devotion

There is a moment at every military graduation when the formation stops moving and the whole field goes quiet at once. Pastor Kevin Taylor stood in the stands last week and watched it happen. His granddaughter Kendra, who had counted down the days to basic training by preparing for it every single day, stood in that formation. The unity, he said later, the common commitment to the mission, the purpose, the devotion.

On Sunday he stood in front of our church and told that story with obvious pride. Then he did the thing good preachers do with a story like that. He turned it around and looked at us through it. Do we, as Christ followers and members of this church called Fellowship Bible, demonstrate devotion?

Nobody answered out loud, which is its own kind of answer.

The message that followed was the sixth installment of a series on the heart of a healthy church, and it arrived at the series' center. A healthy church is comprised of healthy members. You can attend without being involved, he said, but you cannot be involved without attending. Attendance is a seat. Involvement is a body. The church has plenty of seats, and it is starving for bodies.

The heart of a healthy church is not built on spectators.

DEVOTION · ACTS 2:42

Then he read the verse the whole morning stood on. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42. Three thousand new believers, in the

same city where their savior had been executed less than two months earlier, and the record of their response is a schedule. Teaching. Each other. The table. Prayer. Continually. The main thought of the day came straight out of that word: the heart of a healthy church is not built on spectators, consumers, or casual attenders. It is built by Spirit filled believers who devote themselves to Christ, to the fellowship, and to the mission of the gospel.

What does devotion even mean, he asked. His answer was heavier than the churchy way we usually use it. A comprehensive, all inclusive, all encompassing commitment. Dedication. Consecration, the idea of being set apart as holy. A lifestyle of worship and service. And then, without raising his voice, he said the sentence people repeated in the hallway afterward: there are many cultural Christians who are more devoted to their bowling league than they are to being involved in their local church.

The middle of the message went to the cost. Jesus said anyone who would follow him must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow. Not carry a literal cross, Pastor Kevin was clear about that, the disciples never did and Jesus never corrected them. The dying is internal. It shows up externally. Paul's version is the one worth memorizing: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the price behind all of it got one unguarded sentence: it cost Jesus Christ his life. He freely paid it.

After the message, a member of our church told us what his own version of the daily yes has looked like. Seventy hours organizing a garage he had avoided for years. A box of Nutter Butter cookies kept in his desk drawer, opened every day, smelled, and refused. A football team whose captain now prays out loud at a public school dinner table. Then he asked us the question that will outlast the cookies. Are you infatuated with church, or do you love it? Infatuation wears off when the shine does. Love stays for the boring parts.

Talk is cheap. That was the sentence that opened the door, and it is the sentence worth carrying into the week. Not as an accusation. As permission. Nobody has to perform devotion perfectly. Everybody has to demonstrate it somewhere: one meal, one no to the cookie, one name in one prayer, one seat traded for a place on the field. The soldiers in that formation were not more

capable than we are. They were simply devoted, and you could see it. That is our heritage, Pastor Kevin said. That is our history, and that is our calling.

A sermon-derived reflection on the September 6, 2026 message at Fellowship Bible Church of Tucson, written by Vessel Media as an independent content concept. Watch the full message on FBC Tucson's YouTube channel, Sundays at 10 AM at 6700 E Broadway Blvd.