

# **Porpoise Filled Life (Church) (God's Plan)**

*His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 3:10*

## **The Basic Bible Truth**

God established the concept of the church for a specific reason. It was not just something that happened, it was planned meticulously and with great care. God's design is for Christians to take advantage of all that the church has to offer the believer. We are to gather together in a corporate setting and worship and experience life as a body—different parts, but working as a whole.

## **The Object**

A Harbor Porpoise

(And Since You Will Not Be Allowed To Capture A Harbor Porpoise And Bring It For Show-And-Tell, I Highly Recommend Some Pictures)



A number of years ago, pastor Rick Warren became a household name when he published his literature "The Purpose Driven Church". I'm not a huge fan of those kinds of materials, so I developed this lesson as a gentle spoof of the concept. It's more along the lines of the books that I have seen called "Everything I Needed to Know About Life I Learned From My Dog". This lesson takes some observations of the lowly harbor porpoise and forces them into a mold I called "The Porpoise Driven Church".

## **The Lesson**

First of all, let's establish one basic fact. I am not a marine biologist. All that I know about Harbor porpoises is based on Wikipedia articles and other online information sites that I have visited. I have made some very broad generalizations and pressed them into a mold to generate a list of characteristics that I believe should define the New Testament church.

1. Harbor porpoises are mammals. They may live in the salty ocean water, but they are not classified as fish. Mammals give birth to live young and are warm-blooded and tend to care for their young for at least a short while. Churches also give birth to live young. Those who we lead to a saving knowledge of Jesus are babes spiritually. They need care. We are told to disciple them, not just bring them into the kingdom. Often, it is our warm, caring attitudes that draw people into our church in the first place as unsaved individuals. They see our lives and are fascinated and drawn to the joy that we exhibit in our lives. They desire that kind of fulfillment in their lives as well.
2. Harbor porpoises breathe air. They dive and can stay down for a certain period of time, but they must resurface continually for a breath of oxygen. They cannot hold their breath indefinitely. They must surface and take a deep breath to continue their lives. It is interesting how often the Holy Spirit is referred to in terms like "breath". It is no coincidence. His presence in our lives keeps us alive spiritually. We must have His indwelling to survive. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit at salvation, but we are filled by Him continually every day. And like the porpoise, it is up to us to decide how often we want to take a deep breath.
3. Harbor porpoises have fun. I've seen them racing along ahead of or beside a boat in the ocean. They seem to enjoy riding the bow wave as the ship pushes through the water. A healthy church also has fun. I've seen too many sour church members in my life. Our existence as Christians should be a joyful experience. And that joy should be evident to the world. It is one of the drawing cards that the church has to lay on the table—"Come on in and have a genuinely good time here!"
4. Harbor porpoises are gregarious creatures. As God created all things in Genesis, He stopped at the end of each day and said, "It is good." When He got to the point of creating man, He stopped for a moment, and the Bible says that God looked at the one man and said. "It is not good.... " God had not created women yet. You see, we are creatures created with the capacity and need for relationship. That is not found any purer or cleaner than in the church. We have the opportunity to socialize with people who we would probably never rub shoulders with were it not for our church relationship. There is another unique characteristic of the church that often goes by unnoticed in our world today. Loyalty. God values loyalty. Belonging to a church instills a certain amount of that character trait. That is good. It teaches us the concept of loyalty. Our world would be better off if loyalty were still a virtue taught in schools. Were loyalty the norm, divorce would be very rare. Were loyalty the norm, churches would not struggle to stay alive. And our ultimate loyalty is to God. He will never forsake us. We should never forsake or take Him off of the number one place in our hearts.
5. Harbor porpoises are not aggressive creatures. I would hesitate to get into the water with a 120 pound shark or barracuda. But I would be perfectly comfortable swimming next to a 120 pound harbor porpoise. Though they technically have the upper hand in the water and could strike with deadly force, they do not. They will shy away from confrontation. The church likewise should not be a body that strikes out or even strikes back at those who would cause the church harm. We defend our faith, we defend our right to exist and preach the Good News, but we do not retaliate or get even with those who cause us difficulties. The church exists to spread the Good News and take care of those who need care. We tend to overlook the second part, because government has stepped into an area that the church was failing with. It is one of our primary reasons to exist. To care the widows and orphans and elderly who have no one else.

So that is the Porpoise Driven Church, according to me. (My sincerest apologies to Rick Warren.)

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