

TEACHER'S EDITION

Building Together, Part Two

Household of Faith

Teacher's Edition Introduction

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An Introduction

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22

When a son is born into a family, he spends years growing and learning about his parents, his siblings, and his environment. An older child who is adopted into a family must gather all of that information and process it in a short amount of time in order to feel "at home" and truly become a member of the family. That is the position we find ourselves in when we are adopted into the Household of Faith, the family of God. *For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" Romans 8:15.*

New Christians, and even those who have served God many years, often have misconceptions and unasked questions about Church life, which can lead to misunderstanding and lack of direction or purpose. This course has been designed to give each believer a vision for what God intends His Church to be and a clear understanding of where we fit in His plan. As you pursue this study, keep in mind that God has a definite purpose for our lives together, and that purpose is to build His Church in the earth.

Objective

Upon completion of this lesson, the student should be able to do the following:

1. Define what the universal Church is.
2. List 3-5 scriptures to support definition.
3. Give at least one example of how this is working in the earth today.
4. Be able to explain that the Church was God's original plan.



The Church Finding Your Place in the Big Picture

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than (the blood) of Abel.

Hebrews 12:22-24

Chapter Eleven

Objective:

This lesson is designed to reveal the government of God which exists in and through the delegated authority of His Church.

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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Look at one or all of the scriptures listed here and discuss with students the analogy of the Church which is represented. For instance, Jesus the Bridegroom died for His Bride. It is the greatest love story of all time, and a picture that crosses all generations and cultures.

Bride of Christ, Ephesians 5:22-32

Body of Christ, Ephesians 4:12

City of God, Hebrews 12:22

Flock, Acts 20:28

God's Building, First Corinthians 3:9

Household of God, Ephesians 2:19

Israel of God, Galatians 6:16

Jerusalem, Galatians 4:26

People of God, First Peter 2:10

Temple of God, First Corinthians 3:16

Mount Zion, Hebrews 12:22

Teaching Notes

I. Introduction

- A. Before the foundation of the world, God had a plan for a people
- B. He chose to spread His glory through the Church
- C. The Church is command center of the Kingdom and can not be stopped
- D. More than a group of people meeting on Sunday
- E. Many-membered Body of Christ, includes all believers past, present, and future
- F. Similar to City Hall, though not governed by popular vote
- G. Place in the earth where God's authority is delegated and carried out
- H. Will always have His attributes of mercy, love, and justice
- I. Church has faced many trials through history, but is sustained by the promise of God

Revelation 21:10-11,22-24 —

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper ... And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp (is) the Lamb. And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it ...

Notes

City Hall—Men and women receive authority delegated to them by the people. In the Church, men and women receive authority delegated to them by God. The Church is not based on democracy but on the absolute power and authority of a just and merciful God.

The Church is also referred to as the following:

Bride of Christ, Ephesians 5:22-32
Body of Christ, Ephesians 4:12
City of God, Hebrews 12:22
Flock, Acts 20:28
God's Building, First Corinthians 3:9
Household of God, Ephesians 2:19
Israel of God, Galatians 6:16
Jerusalem, Galatians 4:26
People of God, First Peter 2:10
Temple of God, First Corinthians 3:16
Mount Zion, Hebrews 12:22

The Church

Finding Your Place in the Big Picture

Introduction:

Before the foundation of the World, God established a plan for His glory to be revealed through His people. God does everything by a pattern. He wants His pattern to show life on earth as it is in heaven. His pattern is the Church. When we see the big picture of the Church, we will see where we fit in it.

The Church is much more than one group of people meeting in a storefront on Sunday morning. It is the many-membered Body of Christ and includes all of God's people who are alive today, those who have lived in ages past, and those who are to come. Noah, the Apostle Paul, Billy Graham, you, me, and our great-grandchildren who will one day serve God are all part of the Church universal. In this study, you will notice that the universal Church is always referred to with a capital letter, because it is the Body and Person of Jesus.

The Church is something like City Hall, with the exception that it is not ruled by popular vote, but by the absolute authority of God. It is the place in the earth where His authority is delegated and carried out, always covered by His attributes of mercy, love, and justice. Throughout history, the Church has faced many testings and trials, but She has been sustained by the promise of God Himself that His Bride shall become glorious.

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven

Notes

from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper ...

... And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp (is) the Lamb. And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it ... Revelation 21:10–11, 22–24.

God's Eternal Purpose

From before the beginning of time, God had a plan to share His Goodness with a people. The plan was instituted in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, who walked intimately with God. But, even before man was created, the plan had been interrupted. One third of the angels in Heaven, led by Satan, had rebelled and had been hurled down from God's sight. Satan then set himself to disrupt the Kingdom God was establishing on the earth, but he was destined to fail, *Revelation 12:7-12; Luke 10:18*.

In succeeding generations, God continued to choose various men or families to carry on the plan. Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, and many others fulfilled the purposes of God in their generations, but still they could only present a shadow or foreshadowing of the true restoration plan that God had in mind.

The Plan Revealed

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Jesus is also the First Fruits of the Kingdom and the First Born Among Many Brethren, First Corinthians 15:20; Colossians 1:15,18; Romans 8:29.

Jesus is the Head from whom the whole Body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the Body for the building up of itself in love, Ephesians 4:15,16.

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For we know that the whole creation groans...waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body, Romans 8:19, 22–23.

II. God's eternal purpose

- A. Eternal plan to share His goodness with His people
- B. Instituted in Garden of Eden
- C. Even before creation of man, the plan was interrupted
- D. Satan and one third of angels rebelled
 1. Hurlled down from God's sight
 2. Satan set himself to disrupt the Kingdom God was establishing on the earth
 3. He is destined to fail

Revelation 12:7-12 — And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death. For this reason, rejoice O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

Luke 10:18 —And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning."

- E. God continued to choose various men or families to carry out the plan
- F. They were only a foreshadow of what God had in mind

III. The plan revealed

Isaiah 9:6—For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders;

And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

- A. Prophets had spoken of spiritual kingdom to come
 - 1. Full authority and power revealed
- B. That Kingdom came with Jesus
- C. Jesus said so
 - Luke 17:21**— the Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here' or, 'There' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.
- D. Jesus is the Kingdom of God
- E. Not in Jesus alone
- F. Also in His Body, the Church
- G. Jesus released His life and extended His Kingdom to Church
 - 1. He gave authority to disciples
 - 2. God's full authority and power operating through them
- H. Church is command center
 - 1. Not just spiritual realm
 - 2. All rulers and kingdoms are under Him
 - 3. No one comes into authority in the earth except God allows it
 - Romans 13:1**— Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.
- I. He wants the Kingdom established in more than just a few individuals

IV. The plan at work

- A. First family of creation was thrust from His presence when they sinned
 - 1. They faced lives of toil ending in death
 - 2. They were not hopeless, however
 - 3. Even in that moment, Adam and Eve were given a promise for the future
- B. God cursed the serpent and warned Adam and Eve of consequences of sin
 - 1. Then He promised that the seed of woman would bruise the head of Satan
 - 2. That painted a picture of the Church exercising God-given authority over darkness

Notes

The prophets of the ages had been preaching about a spiritual kingdom which was to come — a Kingdom in which the full authority and power of God would be revealed. That Kingdom was ushered in by Jesus — Emmanuel, God with us.

Jesus Himself told the Pharisees, *the Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here' or, 'There' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst, Luke 17:21.* He was referring to Himself, of course. He is the Kingdom of God.

But, the Kingdom is not in Jesus alone. It is also in His Body, the Church. Jesus released His life and extended His Kingdom into the Church, His chosen followers on the earth, so that God's full authority could be expressed from there. That is why it is imperative that we understand that God's command center is the Church. Not just the spiritual realm, but all the created kingdoms of the earth are under the domain of God. No one comes into a place of authority unless God allows it, *Romans 13:1*. The charge to the Church, therefore, is great.

Although God began His plan with Adam and Eve, He wants His Kingdom established in more than just a few individuals. When the first family of creation disobeyed God's command, they were thrust from His presence and faced with lives of toil and trouble ending in a physical death. They were not left hopeless, however. Even in that moment of separation, God gave Adam and Eve a promise for the future.

God cursed the serpent which had beguiled Eve, and He warned both Adam and Eve about the hard consequences of their sin. But in the midst of the curse, God hinted at a brighter day, when the seed of woman would bruise the head of the serpent. That promise

Notes

painted a picture of Satan one day being crushed underneath the power of a people who walk in God-given authority.

The promise was not for Eve. It was for her children. God required the obedience of one Man, Jesus, to atone for the disobedience of an entire race. Now God requires that the whole Church give Him absolute preeminence. The Church universal in full submission to the authority of God, through the submission of Jesus, has fulfilled the prophecy. Through the obedience of Jesus, the Kingdom was established. Through the obedience of the Church, it will be revealed to all nations.

3. Promise was not for Eve, but her offspring

- C. Obedience of one Man atoned for the disobedience of an entire race
 - D. Now God requires the whole Church to give Him preeminence
 - E. Full submission began with Christ, the First-born of many brethren, and continues with us
- Genesis 3:15** — And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.
- F. Through obedience of Jesus the Kingdom was established
 - G. Through obedience of Church, it will be revealed to all nations

SELF-CHECK

Check Yourself	
	<p>In your own words, define the universal Church.</p>
	<p>How is the Church similar to City Hall in its function?</p>
	<p>How does the Church function differently than City Hall?</p>
	<p>List three scripture references that describe the Church by another name, such as the Bride or Body.</p>

Objective

By the time students finish this study, they should be able to do the following things:

1. Explain that God's purpose is to have a people, the Church.
2. Make a clear statement about the necessity of being joined to a local church.
3. List at least three scriptures that support point number two.



The Local Church

A House Where His Presence Will Dwell

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

First Peter 2:9

Chapter Twelve

Objective:

The purpose of this lesson is to examine the characteristics which mark a house built for His Presence—a local church which will do the will of the Father and proclaim the excellencies of Jesus Christ who is the Head.

9

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Ephesians 4:11-13—And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Teaching Notes

Ephesians 4:15-16—but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

I. Jesus is the Head

- A. Central and supreme
- B. Chief Cornerstone
- C. Lord and Master

Ephesians 2:20—having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself

Notes

The Local Church

A House Where His Presence Will Dwell

Introduction:

When a family decides that it is time to buy or build a house, they design that home to fit the needs of their unique family. Certain features are more important than others, depending on the life-style of the family. Yet, the purpose of the structure is the same. It is to provide shelter, safety, and comfort for the people we love. God's House has a specific purpose, as well.

But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love, Ephesians 4:15-16.

If our goal is to build a local church that accurately expresses the nature of God to the dying world around us, then we must be ready to accommodate certain characteristics of such a Body.

Jesus is the Head

Jesus Christ is central and supreme in the church. That means that each member has given himself totally to the headship or lordship of Jesus Christ and is not merely seeing Him as a "personal Savior" who places no demands upon His followers. Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone of the Building, and He is our Master, *Ephesians 2:20*. Every sermon preached in the pulpit should point to that fact and every action taken by the people, individually or corporately, should come from an intimate relationship with Him.

10

This scripture gives a clear picture of what the local church looks like, and what its function should be. Discuss with students how each of the five-fold ministry gifts within the local church equips the saints for the works of service.

Apostle — builds foundations in lives and churches. Gives vision and structure.

Prophet — sees into the lives of people and into the future God has designed. Helps to set direction.

Evangelist — trains people to be effective witnesses, stirs them to evangelize.

Pastor — covers people with a shepherd's rod of protection, correction, and instruction.

Teacher — brings illumination to the Word of God and His precepts.

Notes

Members of One Another

The church is not built on meetings, doctrines, religion, or rituals. It is built on relationships which are centered in Christ. We are "called out" together as a people, and our relationships must cross national, social, racial, ethnic, and economic boundaries. We must embrace every member that God saves and plants in our midst. We must see what was divided at the Tower of Babel now united at the throne of Jesus.

God did not intend that the fullness of our relationships with one another would only be expressed by staring at the back of someone's head on Sunday morning. He does not want the relationships between shepherds and sheep to consist of a handshake on the way out the door. The first church in Jerusalem demonstrated God's design for a daily life filled with friendships which are centered around Jesus, *Acts 2:46-47*.

This description might seem to fit a small congregation in an intimate setting. It actually describes a church of more than ten thousand members. It was too large to fit in one building and must have met in various locations. Yet the heart-to-heart, family style relationship thrived among them.

The Purpose

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven, Matthew 5:14,16.

being the cornerstone...

II. Members of one another

- A. Not built on meetings
- B. Built on relationships to one another and Jesus
- C. Relationships cross all boundaries
 - 1. national
 - 2. social
 - 3. racial
 - 4. ethnic
 - 5. economic
- D. What was divided at Babel reunited in the church
- E. Not casual relationships
- F. Daily life modeled in the Jerusalem church

Acts 2:46-47—And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

III. Purpose of the local church

- A. To fulfill scripture in specific geographical locations
- Matthew 5:14**—You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- B. To demonstrate Jesus to the world
 1. Through daily life
 2. Through the power of the Holy Ghost
- C. To fulfill the Abrahamic promise of a blessing to all nations

Genesis 22:18—And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.
- D. To know how to conduct oneself in the household of God

First Timothy 3:15— I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

Notes

Local churches are established in order for this scripture to be fulfilled in specific, geographical locations. The world is not peeking in the window during our Sunday services to see if the Holy Spirit is falling upon us. They are not listening at the front door to hear if prophecy is coming forth or if faith is being imparted in the preaching. Although those elements are necessary for the building up of the Body and the equipping of the saints, those experiences are not the way the Presence of God through the Holy Spirit will shine before unsaved men. He shines in our lives. In the way we handle our time, our money, and our relationships.

It is essential that the Presence of God dwell with us during corporate services in order that He can remain with us throughout the week and be evident in our good works. We must build a House that is a dwelling place for His Presence so that we can fulfill the call to our father in the faith, Abraham—a call to be a blessing to all the nations, *Genesis 22:18*.

The remaining lessons in this book will deal with various aspects of local church life. These are important issues to understand as Paul explained to Timothy... *I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth, First Timothy 3:15.*

Check Yourself

The Church is a family. God is the Father of all, and in the church we have fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and children, Titus 2; First Timothy 5:1–2. To teach us how the family should relate and interact, the Bible lists a large number of “one anothers.” Look up the following scriptures and write down what each one says about the way we are to treat one another in the church.

- Romans 12:10 —
be devoted to one another
- Romans 12:16 —
be of the same mind toward one another
- Romans 14:13 —
do not judge one another
- Romans 15:7 —
accept one another
- First Corinthians 12:25 —
have the same care for one another
- Galatians 5:13 —
through love, serve one another
- Ephesians 4:32 —
be kind to one another
- Hebrews 10:24 —
stimulate one another to love and good deeds
- First Peter 5:5 —
clothe yourselves with humility toward one another

SELF-CHECK

Objective

By the time students finish this study, they should be able to do the following:

1. List each of the fivefold ministry gifts of the church and explain briefly their function.
2. Explain the difference between the authority of a fivefold office and "doing the work of" one of the fivefold ministries.
3. Use a scripture reference to list the qualifications of leaders in a local church.



Church Government

Establishing the House Rules

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ...
Ephesians 4:11-12

Chapter Thirteen

Objective:

In order for the Body of Christ to be properly equipped, we must begin to understand the House rules. We must also learn to recognize the people God has placed in authority in the House. Because we are continually gaining new insight into the call and the work of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, this lesson is not meant to focus so much on creating titles or positions as it is designed to help us understand the function of these ministries.

15

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Look at various leaders from the Bible and discuss with students the difference between call and gifting.

Samuel — the call to be a judge, with the gifting of a prophet. He allowed his gift to enhance his call.

Phillip — the call to be a deacon, with the gifting of an evangelist. His gift supported his call. Signs and wonders followed him the way they followed the apostles.

Paul — the call to be an apostle, often displaying the gift of a teacher.

Any of these men could have lost their place in history and their usefulness in the church by following their gifting rather than their call.

15

Teaching Notes

I. Everything needs a head

- A. Corporate America
- B. The family
- C. Every committee

II. God is head over all

- A. Appoints delegated authority in His church
- B. Establishes all authority in the earth
Romans 13:1—For there is no authority except from God
- C. Provides pictures of delegated authority in His Word
 - 1. Family patriarchs
 - 2. Elders of nations

Notes

Church Government

Establishing the House Rules

Introduction:

Every household needs a head. Even in today's "modern" thinking where chores are often divided with an eye toward "equality," and domestic lines are less clearly drawn than a generation ago, someone has to bear the final responsibility for every decision. Corporate America understands that concept, and appoints a CEO to every company and a chairperson to every task-force or committee. That's because the world is following a pattern instituted by God Himself. He is absolute authority over all people, nations, and rulers — yet He has set in place delegated authority to govern His Church, just as He has established earthly rulers to govern world affairs. ...*For there is no authority except from God, Romans 13:1.*

God has spoken clearly in His Word about government. He states specifically that leadership is necessary, and that He has delegated His own authority to certain people who are to serve in leadership. Besides these explicit declarations, God has also shown us in pictures what that kind of leadership looks like. He began with families who were led by Patriarchs, like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Those families then became nations, with elders to lead them. Eventually God called Moses, who became the spiritual leader of a Holy nation. These well-known examples are surrounded by other stories of judges, priests, kings, and prophets who exercised their God-given authority in leadership.

- D. God's delegated authority not chosen by democracy
1. Must be men under authority
Matthew 8:5-9—And when He had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, entreating Him, and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering great pain." And He said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."
 2. God's people recognize those He appoints

3. No other system can replace God's delegation
Numbers 12:1-15 —Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman); and they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard it. Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.) And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, "You three come out to the tent of meeting." So the three of them came out. Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the

doorway of the tent, and He called Aaron and Miriam. When they had both come forward, He said, Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. "Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household; With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?" So the anger of the LORD burned against them and He departed. But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam (was) leprous, as (white as) snow. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she (was) leprous. Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not account (this) sin to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned. "Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb!" And Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "O God, heal her, I pray!" But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut up for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again." So Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again.

See also:
Numbers 14:1-12
Numbers 16:1-35
Mark 3:13, 19
Acts 13:14-23
Acts 26:14-18
Titus 1:5

III. New Testament definitions

A. Elder

1. OT heads of families, by age
2. OT heads of nations by both age & wisdom
3. NT not necessarily by age

Notes

Authority from God

This is not a democratic process. God looks down upon the earth and selects some of those who are submitted to His authority to serve as representatives of that authority. This was a familiar concept to the officer who approached Jesus to secure healing for one of his men. He recognized the authority that Jesus held over sickness, because he, himself, was a man under authority, *Matthew 8:5-9*. Those who desire to serve God will recognize the people who carry His delegated authority. They will follow those people as they follow God. No system devised by man for choosing leadership will ever provide a satisfactory alternative for this God-choosing method, *Numbers 12:1-15; 14:1-12; 16:1-35; Mark 3:13-19; Acts 13; 14:23; 16:1-3; 26:14-18; Titus 1:5*.

New Testament Terms

The New Testament uses a variety of terms to express positions of leadership, and some of those terms are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **Elder** — The word "elder" holds two meanings in the scriptures. The head of a family was called elder, and that referred to his chronological age as well as his position and his wisdom. The leaders of the nation of Israel (the Church) were also called elders. In Church government, the term does not necessarily relate to chronological age, *First Timothy 4:12*. It speaks of an older man, one with the spiritual maturity and experience necessary to lead a local church. This term refers to "who" the leader is.
- **Bishop or Overseer** — This term refers to the leader's responsibility in watching over, protecting, caring for, and tending the people of God. It does not indicate a territorial, governmental position or a

First Timothy 4:12—Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

4. Spiritual maturity and experience to lead

B. Bishop or Overseer

1. Responsibility to watch over
2. Not hierarchy
3. Position of an elder

Titus 1:5-7—For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward...

Acts 20:28—Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

C. Pastor or Shepherd

1. Feeds sheep
2. Indicates what he does as an elder

D. All three words related—Elder, Pastor, Shepherd

First Peter 5:2—Shepherd (pastor or feed) the flock of God which is among you, exercising oversight ... (verb form of "bishop" in the Greek)

E. Deacon—Servant or Minister

1. Servant term in New Testament
2. Not simply one who waits tables
3. Stephen & Phillip are illustrations
4. Anointed, full of Spirit
5. Preach, minister, perform miracles
6. Care for God's people practically and spiritually
7. Same qualifications as elders
8. Differ in local church governmental authority only

First Timothy 3:8—Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain...

Philippians 1:1—Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

Mark 9:35—And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.

9. Female equivalent (unlike elders)

- a. Greek word for deacon describes Peter's mother-in-law
- b. Not a position of government, but anointed area of influence and service

Mark 1:29-31—And immediately after they had come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they spoke to Him about her. And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.

Notes

form of hierarchy. Rather, it is used in the same sense as "elder," and indicates that because of a leader's position as an elder, he cares for God's people as an overseer, *Titus 1:5-7; Acts 20:28*. This term seems to speak of the "position" the leader functions in.

• **Pastor or Shepherd** — This refers to one who feeds the sheep.

The terminology is an indication of "what" the leader actually does in his role as elder and overseer. Scriptures show us that these three words are interrelated. ... *take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost made you overseers (bishops) to feed (pastor or shepherd) the church of God, Acts 20:17-28. Shepherd (pastor or feed) the flock of God which is among you, exercising oversight ... (verb form of "bishop" in the Greek) First Peter 5:2.*

• **Deacon** — This is a "servant" term in the New Testament.

However, it does not mean simply "one who waits on tables." Although the scriptures mention no specific functions for deacons, yet the word itself describes those who are responsible servers in caring for the church. New Testament illustrations of men like Stephen and Phillip indicate that deacons were men anointed by the Spirit and full of the Holy Ghost who preached, ministered, performed miracles, and cared for God's people in both practical and spiritual ways. The moral, domestic, and spiritual qualifications for deacons and elders are the same, *First Timothy 3:1-10; Titus 1:5-9*. The only difference appears to be in the authority they carry in the church. Elders rule, but deacons do not govern in that capacity, *Philippians 1:1*. Another difference is that while the scriptures do not refer to female elders, the Greek word for "deacon" is used to describe Peter's mother-in-law when she arose from her sick bed to serve Jesus and the disciples, *Mark 1:29-31*. It is also used to describe a number of other women in

IV. The Team Concept

- A. Bible shows leadership as a team
- B. Every team has a leader
- C. Leader and team members submit to one another
- D. Examples in scripture
 1. Elders in every church
Acts 14:23—And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed
 2. Elders in Jerusalem
Acts 15:22— Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas...

Acts 16:4—Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.

3. Elders in Ephesus
Acts 20:17—And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.

4. Let the elders rule
First Timothy 5:17— Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

5. Call for the elders of the church
James 5:14—Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

6. The elders which are among you
First Peter 5:1—Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed...

7. Ordain elders in every city
Titus 1:5—For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you...

8. Obey them that rule
Hebrews 13:17—Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Notes

the Bible. None of these women were in a place of rulership, but in an anointed area of influence and powerful ministry or service.

The Team Concept

The Bible also clearly illustrates that eldership and leadership in the church functions as a team. Every team must have a leader, and someone on the team will assume final authority and leadership. That leader, however, will be fully submitted to other members of the team. This team concept is described in the following verses:

- Elders in every church — *Acts 14:23*
- Elders in Jerusalem — *Acts 15:4-23; Acts 16:4*
- Elders of Ephesus — *Acts 20:17*
- Let the elders rule — *First Timothy 5:17*
- Call for the elders of the church — *James 5:14*
- The elders which are among you — *First Peter 5:1*
- Ordain elders in every city — *Titus 1:5-11*
- Obey them that rule — *Hebrews 13:17*

The Five-Fold Gifts

Paul speaks in Ephesians about the ministry gifts that Jesus left with His disciples at the time of His ascension into Heaven. Ephesians four describes apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, who have been given to equip the church. Their primary function is to train, enable, motivate, discipline, and instruct the church to carry out the work of ministry of building up the Body of Christ, *Ephesians 4:11-12*. Paul says that these gifts have been given until the Church reaches the stature God intends for Her. Since we do not believe that the Church has yet become the perfect Bride, we

V. The Five-Fold Gifts

- A. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers
- B. Primary goal is to equip the Church to maturity
Ephesians 4:11-13—And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.
- C. Still in operation because fullness has not been reached
- D. Every elder is a five-fold calling, not all five-fold callings are elders

- E. Leaders will operate primarily in one but may do work of others when needed
- Ephesians 1:1**—Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.
- Galatians 1:1**—Paul, an apostle not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead...
- Second Timothy 1:11**—for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.
- First Peter 1:1**—Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia...
- First Peter 5:1**—Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed...

- B. Prophet
- Ephesians 2:20**—having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone...
- Ephesians 3:5**—the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit...
- Acts 11:28**—And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world.
- Acts 13:1**—Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers...
- Acts 15:32**—and Judas and

- Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message.
1. Definition: to bubble or gush forth
 2. God's mouthpiece
 3. Works alongside apostles in foundational ministry
 4. Receives revelation for God's people
 - a. direct
 - b. warn
 - c. inform
 - d. edify
 - e. exhort
 - f. console
 5. Sometimes foretells future events
 6. Others may prophesy without holding office of prophet

VI. Definitions of Five-Fold Ministries

- A. Apostle
1. One who is sent

Ephesians 4:11— And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers...

First Corinthians 12:28—And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.
 2. Appoints and trains leaders

Acts 14:23—And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.
 3. Establishes churches
 4. Strengthens existing churches
 5. Helps to administrate leadership
 6. Helps formulate doctrine
 7. Helps to administrate churches
 8. Functions like a father while establishing a church
 9. Becomes more like a grandfather once church is self-governing

Notes

should fully expect to see all of these gifts still operating today. Every Elder in a local church should be either an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher. However, every person who is called to one of the five-fold offices is not necessarily an elder.

The following titles are not given for the purpose of recognizing a specific leader and his call, but to help explain the need for leadership and to show the variety of ways in which leadership will function. In fact, these ministries will overlap one another at various times. Although each leader may "do the work of" one or more of these gifts, they will not operate primarily in more than one, *Ephesians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Second Timothy 1:11; First Peter 1:1; 5:1.*

• **Apostle** — "One who is sent," *Acts 14:23; Ephesians 4:11; First Corinthians 12:28.* Apostolic ministry typically functions in these areas: Appointing and training leaders; establishing churches; strengthening existing churches; serving and strengthening leaders; formulating doctrine; serving churches. Although the apostle will function in positional authority, like a father, during the process of establishing churches and leadership, he will eventually move to a place of influential authority, more like a grandfather, leaving the church in the hands of local leadership.

• **Prophet** — "bubble up and gush forth," *Ephesians 2:20; Acts 15:32; Ephesians 3:3-5; Acts 11:28; 13:1-2.* A prophet is God's mouthpiece, speaking on His behalf, and will generally provide the following functions: Works alongside apostles in foundational ministry; receives revelation to direct, warn, inform, edify, exhort, and console God's people; sometimes receive revelation to foretell future events. It is possible for others in the church to prophesy without holding the ascension gift office of "prophet."

• **Evangelist** — "one who proclaims good news," *Acts 6:5; 8:26-40;*

C. Evangelist

Acts 6:5—And the statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip...

Acts 8:26— But an angel of the Lord spoke to Phillip saying, "Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza."

Acts 21:8—And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea; and entering the house of Phillip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.

1. One who proclaims the good news
2. Philip is an example
 - a. From masses to lone eunuch

b. Not a one-man show, he called Peter and John to help in Samaria

3. Carry the gift and impart it to the Church
4. Teach the Church to evangelize

IV. Pastor

- A. One who feeds and cares for the sheep
Ezekiel 34:12-16—"As A shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to

their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down in good grazing ground, and they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares the Lord God. "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgement."

- B. Pastor as the guy who runs the church is wrong concept
- C. One-man leadership forces pastor to carry all five gifts
- D. Pastor is member of a team
- E. Heart for sheep like evangelist's heart for lost
- F. Lays down his life for sheep and knows them by name

John 10:10-15— The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

- G. A relationship, not a job description
- H. Knows the sheep's names, besetting sins, and current stage of growth
- I. Laughs with sheep, cries with them, plays with their children
- J. Intimate relationships with sheep require more than one pastor for large churches

Notes

21:8. Phillip's ministry is the best scriptural example of this gift at work. A servant who was able to preach the message of salvation to the masses, or to one lone man on a desert road, Phillip was continually bringing the unsaved in from the fringes of the Body of Christ and making them a part of the Church. He was not a one-man show, though. He called Peter and John to come and help him in Samaria, for instance. A true evangelist is one who not only carries the gift himself, but is also able to impart and teach other members of the Body how to function in evangelism. That is essential equipment for an evangelist, because we are all called to proclaim the good news.

- **Pastor** — "one who feeds and cares for the sheep," *Ezekiel 34:12-16*. The traditional understanding of a "pastor" is that he is the guy who runs the church — at least as much as the deacon board allows. In our man-made concepts of leadership, we have assigned the word "pastor" to men whose actual gifting may be as teachers, prophets, apostles, or evangelists. We have then expected that one-man pastor to become a five-fold gift to the local church!

The concept of team leadership is more in line with scriptural examples. The pastor or pastors of a local church are men who have a heart for the sheep the way an evangelist has a heart for the lost. Following the example of Jesus, *John 10:11-14*, the pastor lays his life down for the sheep, and knows them by name. Pastoring is a relationship, not a job description. A true pastor will know not only the names of his individual sheep, but also their specific needs, their besetting sins, and their current stage of growth in God. He will laugh with them, cry with them, and play with their children. He will rejoice over their victories and weep over them in

V. Teacher

John 20:16—Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher.)

- A. One who is skilled and gifted in the exposition of the Word of God
- B. All five-fold leaders should be able to teach
- C. Office of teacher includes a specific anointing to teach
- D. Jesus the Teacher enters the room when a teacher speaks
- E. Brings an anointing to understand in the congregation
- F. Teaches in a way people can grasp and understand

VI. Jesus is all in all

- A. Apostle, Prophet, Pastor, Teacher, Evangelist
- B. He appoints those to govern His Church
- C. He equips them to fulfill their call
- D. The Church recognizes those who are called
- E. The Church responds to those who are called

VII. Other gifts to the Church

- A. Numerous others, such as musicians and helps
- B. Person may function in a grace without holding a governing office
- C. Church not governed by earthly pattern
- D. Church belongs to God
 - 1. His government
 - 2. His gifts
 - 3. His callings

Notes

prayer. Because the call to pastor involves such intimate friendship with the people under his care, no man can truly pastor a mega-church alone. Large congregations require a team of pastors who function under the leadership of the head pastor.

• **Teacher** — “one who is skilled and gifted in the exposition of the Word of God.” Although all those who function in a five-fold gift should be able to teach, and many members of the Body will teach at specific times, the teacher carries a specific anointing to teach. When he steps forward in prayer and calls for Jesus as Teacher to descend upon a meeting, an anointing for understanding enters the room in an almost tangible way. *John 20:16*. The teacher then puts forth the Word of God in a manner that people can easily grasp and apply to their own lives. He follows the example of Jesus, who is the greatest Teacher who ever lived.

Jesus Christ is also the chief apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor — and He is a servant of all. He has appointed people to govern His Church, and He has given them gifts to enable them to fulfill their call. The Church, in turn, recognizes these callings in specific men and women and responds accordingly. Besides those mentioned here, the Church also needs gifted psalmists, musicians, helps, administrations, hospitality, givers, those who show mercy, and much more. People may function in the grace of a gift without holding the office or authority. The Church is not to be governed by the systems that earthly organizations are governed by. The Church belongs to God, and it is His government, His gifts, and His callings which we acknowledge.

SELF-CHECK

Check Yourself	
	<p>Look at the list of "qualifications for elders" in Titus 1:6-9 and list the necessary characteristics in a man called by God to exercise authority in the House.</p>
	<p>1. <u>above reproach</u></p>
	<p>2. <u>husband of one wife</u></p>
	<p>3. <u>having children who believe</u></p>
	<p>4. <u>not accused of rebellion</u></p>
	<p>5. <u>not self-willed</u></p>
	<p>6. <u>not quick-tempered</u></p>
	<p>7. <u>not addicted to wine</u></p>
	<p>8. <u>not pugnacious</u></p>
	<p>9. <u>not fond of sordid gain</u></p>
	<p>10. <u>hospitable</u></p>
	<p>11. <u>loving what is good</u></p>
	<p>12. <u>sensible</u></p>
	<p>13. <u>devout</u></p>
	<p>14. <u>not self-centered</u></p>
	<p>other possible answers: holding fast the Word, able to exhort in sound doctrine, able to refute those who contradict</p>

Objective

By the time students complete this study, they should be able to do the following:

1. Give two or three scriptural examples of the necessity of church membership.
2. Explain in a brief statement that church membership is more than a name on a roll book.
3. Be able to state some of the responsibilities and privileges of church membership.



Church Membership

Taking Your Place at the Table

God makes a home for the lonely.
Psalm 68:6

Chapter Fourteen

Objective:

This lesson is designed to clear up some of the common misunderstandings about what church membership actually is. It is also meant to encourage new believers to become active members of a local church, with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities.

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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Look at examples of churches in the Bible and discuss the people who were members there. What were their lives like? What unique problems did their leadership face? What unique responsibilities did the people have? How are we like them today? Use these churches for discussion, and add some of your own.

- Noah and the Church of the Ark, Genesis 6.
- Moses and the Wilderness Church, Exodus 36-40, the great building project.
- David and the Church of the Distressed Debtors who were Discontented, First Samuel 22:2.

Teaching Notes

I. Called into a family

- A. Not a natural birth
- B. Called to leave solitary life and become part of church
- C. A spiritual joining with physical characteristics
- D. Views on membership vary today
- E. In some nations, citizens become members of State Church at birth
- F. Some local churches take that same route with infant baptism
- G. Some people consider themselves members because their name is on a roll, even if they never attend or support
- H. Others feel a structured membership is too confining for a spiritual body

II. Universal Church

- A. Every believer through the ages
- B. Past, present, and future

Notes

Church Membership

Taking Your Place at the Table

Introduction:

We are not born into the family of God in the same way that we are born into natural families. Yet, God has called each one of us to leave our solitary life-style and become a member of the particular "family" or local church that He has in mind for us. It is a spiritual joining, but it has physical marks which can be seen and recognized.

At some point in the early history of the Church, the question of membership became confused. Today, views on the subject cover a wide range of opinions. In some nations, children become official members of the State Church when they are born and registered as citizens, just as they become a member of their natural family. Some local churches take that same stance, baptizing infants into the church at birth. Other people consider themselves members of a church because their name is on the roll — even though they attend only on Easter or Christmas Eve.

On the opposite side, some people believe that any attempt to "register" believers or organize a "membership" is too worldly or unscriptural, and so they shun the whole idea. In order to clear up some of those misconceptions, we simply have to remember who the Church really is.

The Universal Church

Every believer throughout the ages who has been known by God is a part of the Universal Church. Moses is a member, and so is Abraham. You and I are members with them, and so are any of our great-grandchildren who will one day bow their knee and become

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obedient to the faith. It is a timeless generation, not bound by laws of nature.

Hebrews chapter twelve refers to the universal Church when it speaks of the "great cloud of witnesses" who surround us, cheering us on in our race. This is the Church of Jesus Christ in its entirety — past, present, and future.

On the Local Level

Within this universal Church, local expressions of the Body of Christ meet in various geographical locations. The apostle Paul wrote to specific groups of people in specific places when he addressed his letters to the churches at Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, and so on.

The local church is a group of called-out people who have been given authority from God to express His life in a city or region. Church membership, then, must be considered an issue of the local church and must be viewed in that context.

Early Church Records

Both the Old and the New Testament indicate that even in the earliest days of the Church, there was some method of numbering and identifying God's people. God told Moses to number the people in the wilderness, *Numbers 1:1-2*, and that began a pattern.

Throughout the history of the nation of Israel, it was always apparent who was a member and who was not.

Jesus set the example for us in the New Testament by choosing twelve apostles and recording their names. Later he chose seventy

C. Great cloud of witnesses

Hebrews 12:1—Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

III. The local level

- A. Local expressions of universal Body meet in various geographical locations
- B. God has given authority to express His life in a specific region
- C. Church membership is a local issue

IV. Early records

- A. Some method of numbering the people in earliest records
- B. God told Moses to number the people
Numbers 1:1-2—Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, "Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head from twenty years old and upward, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies."
- C. Through the history of Israel, it was important who was a member and who was not
- D. Jesus set the New Testament example by recording names of apostles, and numbering the seventy
Luke 10:1—Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others...

- E. It is recorded that 500 were present at His ascension
First Corinthians 15:6—After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time...
- F. U.S. requires certain church records be kept
 1. Financial, etc.
 2. Not invisible or mystical

V. Qualifications for membership

- A. Church is not an institution
- B. Not a community service organization
- C. Not attained through natural birth
John 1:12-13—But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- D. Membership in the church does have requirements
 1. Repentance
 2. Evidence of both repentance and confession make one a member of universal Church
 3. On a local level, membership in universal Church is practical and can be seen

Notes

more, *Luke 10:1*. Someone took time to count and record that over five-hundred of the brethren were present when Jesus ascended into Heaven, and somewhere their names may have been recorded, *First Corinthians 15:6*.

It is obvious that the scriptures contain evidence of some kind of accounting of membership. In the United States, legal requirements stipulate that proper records of membership be kept in relation to church funds, holding of property, taxes, and so forth. This cannot be an invisible, mystical method of record keeping. It must be tangible.

Qualifications for Membership

Despite the best efforts of man to prove otherwise, the Church is not an institution to be joined the way we join a community service organization, nor is it something we can attain through natural birth. The Church is made up of those ... *who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, John 1:13*.

This is a membership with requirements, however, and the primary requirements are the same as those for salvation. As Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost, we must *repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, Acts 2:38*. All who are drawn by the Spirit of God and confess Jesus as their Savior enter the kingdom of God and become members of the Universal Church. Evidence of that membership is the main requirement for membership in a local church.

On the local scale, this membership is practical and can be seen. The Book of Acts is an excellent instruction manual for church

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membership, and it details the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of those *who have been added to the Church, Acts 2:47*.

Membership in Action

Anyone who wishes to become a true member of a specific local church must consider the following things.

- **Vision** — Members must have an understanding of the vision God has given the primary leader, and they must express a willingness to flow in that vision. Moses had a clear vision of where God wanted to take His people, but hardened hearts prevented many of the people from following and supporting that vision. As a result, they died in the wilderness and never entered the Promised Land.
- **Oversight** — Membership requires that we recognize the God-given authority of the eldership of that local church and that we be willing to submit ourselves to them for our development and growth. Ephesians four makes it clear that leaders are given for the sake of equipping the saints. According to the Book of Hebrews, the leaders of the House keep watch over the souls of the members as ones who will give an account. The scriptures admonish members, *therefore, to let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you, Hebrews 13:17*.
- **Relationships** — Church membership, quite simply, is the fruit of giving our lives to one another. The model found in the Book of Acts is still the heart of friendship that God intends for us today. It is His plan that we be *continually devoting ourselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer, Acts*

Acts 2:47—And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

VI. Membership in Action

A. Vision

1. Members must understand vision given by God to leadership
2. Must express a willingness to follow that vision
3. People died in wilderness for not following Moses' vision

B. Oversight

1. Recognize God-given authority in leaders
2. Submit to it
3. Leaders keep watch over members souls to give an account
4. Members must let them do so with joy

Hebrews 13:17—Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

C. Relationships

1. Modeled in the Book of Acts
Acts 2:42—And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

2. Sheep and shepherd must be true friends

John 10:14—I am the good shepherd and I know My own, and My own know Me.

3. Leaders must be friends first

4. Body must interact properly

First Corinthians 12:20—But now there are many members, but one body.

D. Instruction

1. Leaders given commission to teach

2. Members also responsible to teach

Hebrews 6:11-12—And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

E. Support

Acts 2:44—And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common...

1. Early church members took care of one another

2. Not legalistic, but love

3. Men full of Holy Spirit were appointed to administrate the giving and caring

4. Financial support flows from heart to heart relationships

VII. Conclusion

A. Members of local church believe in Jesus and are part of Universal Body

B. Each member is committed to a specific group of believers

C. That group meets regularly in a geographical location

D. They are submitted to God's delegated authority leading in that setting

E. Local church is storehouse where members bring offerings

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2:42. It is also in God's plan that the sheep and the shepherds be true friends. Jesus says ... *I know my sheep, and am known by My own, John 10:14*. It is right that the leaders of a local church be close friends together and have close friendships among the other members as well. The members of a body must interact with one another to function properly, *First Corinthians 12*.

• **Instruction** — Leaders in the local church are given direct commission to teach and instruct. That responsibility also rests upon individual members of the church. We are all to be ... *imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises, Hebrews 6:12*.

• **Support** — *Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, Acts 2:44*. In the early church, the members took care of one another. This action was not the result of some legalistic teaching; it was simply the heartfelt response of those who had been touched by God. Before long, men full of the Spirit were appointed to administrate the giving and the distribution of money and goods "to those who had need." Financial and material support of the church flows from the heart to heart relationships the members feel for one another and for the leadership.

In Conclusion

Members of a local church, then, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are therefore members of the universal Body of Christ. Each individual member is committed to a specific group of believers who meet regularly in a local setting — and is submitted to God's delegated authority operating within that group. A member considers the local church as the storehouse to which he carries his

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tithes and offerings and from which he receives protection, counsel, teaching, fellowship, encouragement, correction, and practical support.

Once a believer has decided to commit himself to all the responsibilities of membership in a local church, he will also receive all the benefits and blessings that membership produces. He becomes a member of the family, born not of blood or the will of man, but of God.

- F. Place where members receive protection, counsel, teaching, fellowship, encouragement, correction, and practical support
- G. Once a member commits to the responsibilities of membership, benefits are also received
- H. He becomes member of the family, born not of blood or the will of man, but of God

SELF-CHECK

Check Yourself	
	<p>Read Acts 2:42-47. Using that passage as a model, list some specific ways you can begin to implement these principles into your own life.</p>

Objective

By the time students finish this study, they should be able to do the following:

1. Make a brief statement that explains discipline as a positive experience, not negative.
2. List the appropriate steps a believer takes when he sees a brother continuing in sin, and give a scriptural reference.
3. Explain that the primary purpose behind discipline is restoration.



Church Discipline

Receiving the Father's Correction

Chapter Fifteen

Objective:

Because this area of church life has been the focus of much discussion and dissension, this lesson has been designed to present a clear, concise picture of godly discipline as it is to be exercised within the context of the local church.

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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

God has been disciplining his people from the moment of the first sin until now. In the Old Testament, He often did it face to face. Now He works through the Church for the same purpose of restoration. Read and discuss one or all of the following examples of the Father's discipline in action.

Exodus 7-12 — The discipline of the plagues on Egypt. Note that Pharaoh did not turn under discipline, and his heart was hardened.

Numbers 12:1-6 — Miriam's discipline for rebellion. Note that Miriam's time of discipline prevented the entire camp from moving on with God until she was cleansed.

Second Samuel 24:1-17 — David's discipline for numbering God's people. Note that David recognized that falling into the wrathful hands of a merciful God was the best consequence of his sin.

Teaching Notes

I. Introduction

- A. Discipline does not seem pleasant
Hebrews 12:11—All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
- B. Chaos would reign in a family without rules which are enforced
- C. God's House would be in chaos without similar discipline
- D. God established rules, which are stated in the Bible
- E. God delegated authority to enforce those commandments when necessary
- F. The purpose for discipline is always restoration
Hebrews 12:11— afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
- G. Discipline is necessary, because sin exists
- H. People tend to see church discipline as manipulative instead of orderly
- I. Paul was not worried about offending people by the exercise of discipline
Ephesians 5:11—do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them.

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Church Discipline

Receiving the Father's Correction

Introduction:

Discipline is not a pleasant word. In fact, the Bible itself says that *all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness, Hebrews 12:11*. Within a family, chaos would quickly reign if rules were not established and enforced through discipline. The same is true for God's family. He has established the rules, which we find in the Bible, and He has delegated authority on the earth to help administer His discipline when needed. The purpose of discipline in the family and in the Church is always for the sake of restoration and a return to *the peaceful fruit of righteousness*.

Discipline is necessary. The scriptures make that clear, and personal experience will bear witness. If you don't think so, spend an evening with five children whose parents don't believe in "interfering with their free expression."

Yet, even people who understand discipline in their own homes can tend to see it as a form of manipulation or control in the church. Some go so far as to suggest that church discipline borders on cultism. But, more commonly, church members express their dissension in more subtle comments like, "I don't think they should have handled it like that," or "something about it just doesn't feel right."

Those who coddle such thoughts would have been in deep trouble if they had been a member of the church in Ephesus when Paul told them not to *participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness*,

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but instead even expose them, Ephesians 5:11. They would have been similarly upset when Paul told Timothy to deliver Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme, First Timothy 1:18-20.

The Father's Heart in Discipline

God is not standing in heaven with a thunder bolt in one hand waiting to zap anyone who disobeys a commandment or curses a brother. Peter may have had that kind of picture in mind when he asked Jesus how many times to forgive an offending brother — suggesting that seven times might be generous. Jesus replied that Peter should forgive seventy times seven. *Matthew 18:21-35.*

In another gospel account, Jesus says *if your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times saying, "I repent," forgive him, Luke 17:3-4.* These passages clearly illustrate that instead of a vengeful God who is watching for an opportunity to strike, we serve a Father whose heart is longsuffering, merciful, and forgiving.

Sometimes, however, the most merciful thing the Father can do is discipline His children. In fact, the Bible says that *he who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently, Proverbs 13:24.*

The Purpose of Discipline

The purpose of discipline is two-fold, and it is well illustrated by the actions of the apostle Paul in his relationship with the church at Corinth. When Paul learns that one of the brothers is living in

First Timothy 1:18-20—This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

II. The Father's heart in discipline

- A. God is not waiting to zap us with lightning
- B. Peter had a shortsighted idea of forgiveness—Jesus was longsuffering
Matthew 18:21-22—Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."
Luke 17:3-4—Jesus said if your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you saying, "I repent," you shall forgive him.
- C. Sometimes, the most merciful thing a father can do is administer discipline
Proverbs 13:24— he who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

III. Purpose of discipline, illustrated by Paul at Corinth

- A. Immoral brother removed to prevent sin from spreading through Body
First Corinthians 5:6—a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.

- B. Weak members could have been tempted into immorality by his example
 - C. His flesh delivered to Satan to drive him back to God
First Corinthians 5:5—deliver this one over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
 - D. Next letter shows that discipline brought restoration
Second Corinthians 2:6-8—Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.
 - E. James reaffirms instruction to restore when repentance comes
James 2:13—For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.
 - F. Church is required to discipline and then mercifully restore the repentant one
- IV. The process of discipline**
Titus 3:10-11—Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.
- A. Go to a sinning brother in private
Matthew 18:15—And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

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sexual immorality, he tells the church to remove the immoral brother because *a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough*, *First Corinthians 5:6*.

In this passage, Paul is pointing out that discipline is necessary for the protection of the other members of the house. If the brother is allowed to continue in his sin with no consequences, the weak or immature members will be tempted to follow his example, and sin will reign.

The primary purpose of discipline, though, is explained in the previous verse, when Paul says that he has decided to *deliver this one over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*, *First Corinthians 5:5*.

In his next letter to the church at Corinth, Paul reveals that the discipline has accomplished the desired result. Referring to one who has been under the Lord's discipline and has now repented, Paul tells the church to restore him — *to forgive and comfort him, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow*, *Second Corinthians 2:7*.

James reaffirms that instruction when he writes, *for judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgement*, *James 2:13*. The church, then, is required by God to discipline the erring believer, yet the responsibility to mercifully restore the repentant one is equally as great.

The Process of Discipline

Church discipline is a process, which takes place in stages, allowing the full work of the Holy Spirit to take place in the believer's heart and allowing time for him to find the gift of repentance. The following process is outlined in Titus 3:10–11 and Matthew 18.

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1. If your brother sins, go to him and reprove him in private. The scriptures are clear that this must be done in a right attitude by those who are spiritual, *Galatians 6:1*. At this point, it is not necessary to reveal the sin to "a few close friends, for the sake of prayer." This is a private matter and may be easily resolved. If so, you will have won a brother.
2. If he fails to listen, go again and take one or two witnesses with you, so that every fact may be affirmed. This is not a "good cop/bad cop scene" or an opportunity for gossip. The offending brother is still a brother rather than an enemy, and the purpose is still restoration without embarrassment or unnecessary discomfort to the offender.
3. If he refuses to listen to this small delegation, the time for discomfort has come. Tell it to the church. That does not mean you are to stand up during Sunday morning announcements and reveal the man's sin. Rather, you are to go to the elders of the church and report what has been done and what attempts have been made for restoration. At that point, the matter becomes one for the shepherds to deal with.
4. If he refuses to listen to the leadership of the church, they will decide how to exercise the necessary discipline and how to make that discipline known to the church and what the steps for restoration will be.

Throughout this entire process, the goal of restoration remains.

Brethren, if anyone among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins, James 5:19–20.

1. Done in a right attitude, by one who is spiritual

Galatians 6:1—Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

2. At this point, a private matter may be resolved – Not to be shared "for sake of prayer" with larger body
 3. If he turns, you have won a brother
- B. If he fails to listen, take one or two with you

Matthew 18:16—But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.

1. Not a good cop/bad cop deal
 2. Not an opportunity for gossip
 3. Purpose is still restoration with minimum discomfort
- C. If he refuses to listen to two or three, the time for discomfort has come.

Matthew 18:17—And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church...

1. Not a Sunday morning announcement
 2. Take it to the elders
 3. Report what steps have been taken
 4. Leave it in their hands
- D. If he refuses to repent when confronted by church leadership, trust them with the final step

Matthew 18:17— and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

1. Leaders will decide the terms of discipline
 2. Leaders will decide how to notify church of discipline
 3. Leaders will decide what steps will be necessary for future restoration
- E. Through the whole process, the goal of restoration remains

James 5:19–20—Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

SELF-CHECK

Matthew 6:33— But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

Mark 12:30— And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

Exodus 20:3— You shall have no other gods before Me.

Matthew 5:22— But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

Ephesians 5:18—And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

Exodus 20:15— You shall not steal.

Check Yourself	
	<p>In First Corinthians 5:9, Paul is careful to point out that his command to “not associate with the immoral one” does not mean we are to avoid the sinners of this world. On the contrary, we are to bring our light into their darkness, which God will judge. The “immoral one” mentioned here is a brother, a professor of the faith who is living a life of unrepentant sin, and the church is to judge him. Paul then lists specific sins which require discipline. Use your Bible and a dictionary to define the following terms from this passage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Covetous — an insatiable desire for worldly gain 2. Idolater — worshipping anything other than God 3. Reviler — one who speaks abusively of others 4. Drunkard — one who drinks to a state of intoxication 5. Swindler (Extortionist) — one who cheats or tricks another out of money or property <p>What scripture passages would you use to turn the brother from these specific sins?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 6:33 2. Mark 12:30, Exodus 20:3 3. Matthew 5:22 4. Ephesians 5:18 5. Exodus 20:15

Objective

By the time students finish this study, they should be able to do the following:

1. List five or six things that are expressions of worship and support their validity with scripture. For example: singing, shouting, dancing, kneeling.
2. Explain briefly that worship is a heart response from a child to a Father, a creature to the Creator — not a duty.
3. Find a deeper expression of worship in their own life.



Praise and Worship

Celebrating the Father's Love

Chapter Sixteen

Objective:

This lesson is designed to encourage all disciples to approach the throne of God as His children and to give Him the worship and praise that is due.

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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Use this time as a practical lab to discover new styles and expressions of worship. Try some of these simple methods to break out of man-made molds.

1. Sing a song in your prayer language. Use a well-known tune with unknown words for those who are hesitant.
2. Read a thanksgiving psalm out loud. When God is referred to, make it personal. For instance: "The Lord is my Shepherd" translates to "You are my Shepherd."
3. Sing a prayer of petition or thanksgiving. Again, use a well-known tune if you like.
4. If a class member is having trouble with new expressions of worship, reach back for a children's song with actions and break the barrier.
5. If your class is already comfortable with free worship, ignore these suggestions and just use the time to worship before beginning the lesson.

Teaching Notes

I. Introduction

- A. Children respond when their father comes home
 - 1. Atmosphere changes with his presence
 - 2. Children rush to greet him with shouts of glee
 - 3. They dance, pull on him, kiss him, laugh
 - 4. Eventually they climb on his lap and snuggle down
- B. That is worship
- C. Volumes have been written on the subject
 - 1. Psalms is viewed as a praise book
 - 2. Entire Bible is filled with worship and praise
 - a. depicted in lives
 - b. commanded by Jesus and disciples
- D. Importance of worship not hidden from enemy
 - 1. Satan tempted Jesus by asking for His worship

Matthew 4:8 — Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me."
- E. Worship establishes a relationship
- F. Worship brings us into submission
 - 1. We are influenced by what we submit to
 - 2. We are directed by what we submit to
 - 3. We are ruled by what we submit to
- G. Satan would have been willing to give Jesus the world
 - 1. Jesus would have been influenced, directed, and ruled by Satan then
 - 2. God's plan would have failed

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Praise and Worship

Celebrating the Father's Love

Introduction

Small children have an immediate response when their father comes home from work. Even before they see his face or hear his voice, they seem to know that he has entered the house. The very atmosphere seems to change, and immediately, the children rush to greet him with shouts of glee. They dance around his feet, pull on his sleeves, and smother him with kisses — and that is praise. A little later, when things calm down, the children are ready to climb up on their father's lap, lay their heads against his chest, and listen to his words. That is worship.

Entire volumes have been written on the subject of praise and worship, and all of them fall short, because the subject is too big to be contained in one book. Although we tend to think of the Psalms as the "praise book" or hymnal of the Bible, the Bible is actually filled from cover-to-cover with praise and worship. It is depicted in the lives which are recorded there, and it is commanded in the teachings of Jesus and the disciples.

The importance of worship is not hidden from the enemy camp. When Satan was tempting Jesus in the wilderness, he offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if He would simply fall down and worship Satan, *Matthew 4:8-11*. When we worship someone or something, the worship establishes a relationship between us. Worship brings us into submission, and we are influenced, directed, and ruled by that to which we submit. So, Satan would have been willing to give Jesus the world, knowing that

*quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson —
"The gods we worship write their names on our faces..."

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Jesus would become just like him, and God's plans would be destroyed.

Who We Worship

We live in a day and age when worship has been diverted from God and given to everything from cylinders of glass to convicted felons who play a mean guitar. Even those of us who deny such outward idols often fall into the habit of worshipping ourselves.

This worship in wrong places is demonstrated in a variety of ways — in how we spend our money, what we do with our time, who comes up in our conversations, where we focus our attention, and a myriad of other ways. Any of those areas diverted to something besides God will become worship, and the writer of the Psalms has a warning for us about that.

Referring to those who make gods of silver and gold, the writer says that those who trust these gods will soon become like them — *having mouths, but they cannot speak; eyes, but they cannot see; ears, but they cannot hear... Psalm 115:4-8.*

But, the Bible does make it abundantly clear Who we are to worship. During his amazing revelations, the Apostle John came face-to-face with a magnificent angel who had come straight from the presence of God, and immediately John fell down to worship. But the angel, who was also a created being designed by God for a specific purpose, stopped John, saying, *See that you do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; Worship God, Revelation 22:9.*

II. Who we worship

- A. Today worship has been diverted from God
 - 1. Worship crystals
 - 2. Felons who play great guitar
 - 3. Worship ourselves
- B. Worship in wrong places demonstrated in many ways
 - 1. How we spend money
 - 2. What we do with our time
 - 3. Who comes up in our conversations
 - 4. Where we focus or attention
- C. Any of those things diverted from God becomes worship
 - 1. Psalms says that those who trust in such gods will become like them
Psalms 115:4-8— having mouths, but they cannot speak; eyes, but they cannot see; ears, but they cannot hear.
- D. Bible makes it clear Who we are to worship
 - 1. John came face to face with an angel and wanted to worship
 - 2. Angel commanded John to worship God and view angels as fellow servants
Revelation 22:8-9 —See that you do not do that; I am a fellow servant of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God.

III. The effects of worship

- A. All worship belongs to God
 - B. By worshipping Him, we give voice and heart to what was His before foundation of world
 - C. Amazing things happen in worship
 - 1. We live in an unseen realm, but we feel the effects of war around us
 - 2. Praise and worship are weapons
 - a. King Jehoshaphat faced the strength of three combined armies
 - b. King Jehoshaphat sent the singers first into battle
 - c. When they arrived, God had already won the battle
- Second Chronicles 20:21-22**—And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, “Give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.” And when they began singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed.
- 3. King David an example of a worshipper
 - a. Sang in hills as shepherd boy
 - b. Danced like madman in streets while bringing the ark home to welcome presence of God
 - c. Sang through reign as king
 - d. Recognized that worship was key to God's heart
 - e. Passionate for knowing God's heart
 - f. Intimate friendship was born of worship

IV. When we are to worship

- A. Some religions appoint specific hours, days, and dates

Notes

The Effects of Worship

All worship belongs to God. He deserves it; He already owns it; It is His. By worshipping Him we are simply giving voice and heart to something that has already belonged to God before the foundation of the world. And, amazing things take place when we worship.

We live in an unseen realm, where spiritual forces are at work around us in ways we seldom understand. We do feel the effects of the war going on around us, though, and the Bible demonstrates that praise and worship are weapons in our arsenal. When King Jehoshaphat and his people went out against the strength of three combined enemy armies, they sent the singers first. The worshippers went ahead of the army and sang praises to God all the way. When they reached the field of battle, the enemy armies had already been destroyed, and the spoil was waiting, just as God had promised, *Second Chronicles 20*.

King David was also a worshipper. From the early days as a shepherd boy singing alone in the hills, through his kingly reign in Jerusalem when he danced like a madman in the streets to welcome the presence of God, David recognized that worship was the key to finding God's heart. And he was a man who was passionate for knowing God's heart. The relationship between David and God was one of intimate friendship, born of worship, *Psalms 30*.

When We Are To Worship

Some religions appoint specific hours, days, and dates for worship. The Christian faith defines a specific time for worship, too

B. Christianity defines specific times, too—ALWAYS

1. at all times
2. continually
3. while I have my being
4. every day
5. as long as I live

Psalm 34:1 — I will praise the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalm 104:33 — I will sing to the Lord as long as I live, I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

C. Our lives are worship

V. How we worship

A. With everything we are or hope to be

B. Several specific demonstrations

1. By lifting our hands — universal sign of longing to be held by parent. Also a sign of surrender

Psalm 28:2—Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to Thee for help, When I lift up my hands toward Thy holy sanctuary.

Psalm 63:3-4—Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise Thee. So I will bless Thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name.

Psalm 134:2—Lift up your hands to the sanctuary, And bless the Lord.

Psalm 141:2—May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

2. By clapping our hands — rhythm instruments created by God

Psalm 47:1—O clap your hands, all you peoples...

Psalm 98:8—Let the rivers clap their hands...

3. With musical instruments — from lutes of Biblical times to digital keyboard today

Psalm 150:3-6—Praise Him with the trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals.

4. With singing

- a. In the Spirit
- b. with new songs
- c. with prophecy
- d. with prayer

Psalm 149:6—Let the high praises of God be in their mouth...

Colossians 3:16—Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Ephesians 5:19—speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord...

5. By shouting

- a. Hallelujah means to cry aloud
- b. Shouts of triumph and joy in Bible

Psalm 47:1—Shout to God with the voice of joy.

Psalm 66:1— Shout joyfully to God, all the earth...

Psalm 81:1—Shout joyfully to the God of Jacob.

— always. *At all times, continually, while I have my being, every day, as long as I live* — are common terms in reference to worship in the scriptures. Our lives are to be a worship unto God.

How We Worship

This issue has been the subject of much controversy in the Church. Yet the answer is quite simple. We worship God with everything we are or ever hope to be. Several specific ways to worship outwardly are detailed in the scriptures, and they include the following.

- By lifting our hands. This is a universal signal from children who are longing to be held by their parents. It is also a sign of surrender, *Psalm 28:2; 63:3-4; 141:2; 134:2; First Timothy 2:8.*
- By clapping our hands. Hands are like rhythm instruments created by God, and should be used to praise Him, *Psalm 47:1, 98:8.*
- With musical instruments. The psalmists refer to trumpets, lutes, harps, and cymbals as instruments of praise in Old Testament times. Today we can add electronic keyboards and digital synthesizers to the list of tools of praise, *Psalm 150:3-6.*
- With singing. Our voices were the first instruments of praise created, and we are commanded to have the high praises of God upon our lips. We praise Him in the Spirit, with new songs, prophecy, prayer, etc... *Psalm 149:6, Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19.*
- By shouting. The word "hallelujah" means to cry aloud or break out into a cry. The psalms give instruction for shouting unto God with a voice of triumph and shouting joyfully to our God, *Psalm 47:1; 66:1, 81:1.*

Notes

6. By standing

- a. Common form of respect for those deserving honor
- b. Shows alertness in ranks of army

Psalm 135:2—Praise Him, You who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God!

Psalm 134:1—Behold, bless the Lord all servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord!

7. By dancing

- a. David overcome with joy when ark came home
- b. Miriam after crossing of the red sea led nation into worship with dancing

Second Samuel 6:14—And David was dancing before the Lord with all his might...

Exodus 15:20-21—And Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out wafter her with timbrels and with dancing.

8. With bowing or kneeling

Psalm 95:6—Come let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

VI. Conclusion

- A. Worship is part of our priestly ministry
 - B. Released things in the heavenlies
 - C. Draws us closer to the Father
 - D. Makes dramatic changes in our lives
 - E. We are living in a day when we are learning to worship in spirit and in truth
- John 4:24**—God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Notes

- By standing. This is a common means of respect for those who deserve honor and a sign of alertness among army ranks. The Bible refers to those who praise and worship God, *standing by night in the house of the Lord, Psalm 134:1; 135:2.*
- Dancing. David was so overcome by worship when the ark returned to Jerusalem that his dancing display horrified his wife, (she was cursed with barrenness thereafter) and after crossing the Red Sea Miriam led a dance that swept an entire nation into worship, *Second Samuel 6:1-16, Exodus 15:20-21.*
- Bowing or kneeling. Those who love God are instructed to *come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, Psalm 95:6.*

Worship is a part of our priestly ministry. It releases things in the heavenlies, draws us closer to the Father, and makes a dramatic change in our lives. We are living in a day when Jesus' words to the woman at the well are being fulfilled in His Church. We are learning what it means to worship *in spirit and in truth, John 4:24.*

SELF-CHECK

Check Yourself	
	<p>Worship is the dividing line for many Christians. We may be willing to confess Him with our mouth, and follow His teachings in our life, but until we begin to worship Him in spirit and in truth, we have not become His true disciples. Look at the following people in the Bible and list one example of their worship. Style may differ from culture to culture, but spirit and truth remain the same.</p> <p><i>Answers will vary. These are examples.</i></p> <p>Abraham: Sacrificed Isaac as worship, Genesis 22:5—14.</p> <p>Joshua: Follows Moses up the Mountain, Exodus 24:13.</p> <p>King David: Bringing back the ark to Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6:13–15.</p> <p>Paul: Went up to the temple for purification upon his return to Jerusalem, Acts 21:26.</p>

Objective

By the time students finish this study, they should be able to do the following:

1. Recognize that our money, time, families, and lives belong to God.
2. Give at least one scriptural reference for giving tithes and offerings to God.
3. Explain briefly that all tithes and offerings are to be brought into the storehouse of the local church.



Stewardship Providing for the Needs of the House

For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, I Corinthians 6:20.

Chapter Seventeen

Objective:

This lesson is designed to help God's children see clearly that our money, our time, our families, and our very lives belong to God. It is also meant to help us learn to better administrate God's Kingdom by being good stewards of His money, His time, His family, His talents and His Church.

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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Talk with students about some practical issues of stewardship, such as the following.

1. Do I tithe on my net or gross? Answer: Gross; taxes are just a bill like electric and water.
2. What if I can't afford to tithe? Answer: You can't afford not to. Take out the tithe before you pay anything else and see what God will do. Give personal testimonies or ask for personal testimonies from class.
3. If I have been robbing God, what should I do now? Answer: Repent, and then ask God how you should make restitution like Zaccheus did.

Teaching Notes

First Corinthians 6:20—For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

I. Introduction

- A. Parents teach children about money with an allowance
 - 1. They divide allowance into categories: offering, savings, expenses
 - 2. Remainder is given to child as MINE!
- B. Bible teaches a different concept
- C. According to scripture, everything is God's and nothing is mine
- D. We are servants
 - 1. Born as slaves of Satan and toil for years with no hope of redemption
 - 2. Jesus set up another Household
 - 3. He paid the price with His life to purchase children of God
 - 4. Now we are bond-servants to Christ.
- E. We are not owners of this world's goods — nor even our lives
- F. God owns us and everything else
- G. He graciously allows us to steward or administrate what He has created
- H. Stewardship is not optional
- I. It is a duty
- J. God does not look lightly on those who refuse it

Matthew 25:18,26-28—But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground and hid his master's money... But his master answered and said to him, "You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents."

Notes

Stewardship

Providing for the Needs of the House

Introduction

When parents teach their children how to handle money, they commonly divide the child's allowance into categories. They tell the child to set aside so much for tithe, so much for savings, and so much for expenses. The remaining change is then tucked into the child's hand. Consequently, he learns early in life to call that money "MINE!" But the Bible teaches a different concept. According to the scriptures, nothing is mine, and everything is God's.

We are servants. Every member of the human race is born as a slave to the prince of darkness, who is Satan, and many spend years toiling for him with no hope of redemption. But Jesus has set up another Household. He paid the price of His own life to purchase the children of God and bring them into His kingdom as sons and daughters. Now, according to the Apostle Paul, *we are bond-servants to Christ, Philippians 1:1*.

That picture simply illustrates the fact that we are not owners of this world's goods, nor even of our lives. God owns us; He owns everything, and He has graciously trusted us as stewards, or administrators, of that which He has created.

This stewardship is not an optional accompaniment to life in the Kingdom. It is a duty, and God does not look lightly upon those who refuse to fulfill it. In fact, the parables indicate that such a one will be "cast into the outer darkness," *Matthew 25:14-30*.

On the other hand, God has also promised reward to those who steward His affairs well. *Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from*

- K. God promised rewards to those who steward well
Proverbs 3:9-10—Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.
- L. Ultimate promotion to rule and reign with Him forever
Revelation 3:21— He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
Revelation 22:5—And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of

the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever.

II. What we are to steward

- A. Our lives
Deuteronomy 30:19-20— ...So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is you life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.
Acts 17:25—He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things.

- B. Our abilities
James 1:17—Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.
- C. Our time
Proverbs 10:27—The fear of the Lord prolongs days...
- D. Our possessions
First Chronicles 29:14—For all things come from Thee, and from Thy hand we have given Thee...
- E. Our finances
Deuteronomy 28:12-14—The Lord will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the Lord shall make you the head and not the tail, and you only shall be above, and you shall not be underneath, if you will listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I charge you today to observe them carefully, and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

III. What a good steward looks like

- A. Because he is trusted with things of high value, he must prove to have character to steward
1. faithful
 2. steadfast
 3. dedicated
 4. dependable
 5. worthy of trust
- First Corinthians 4:1-2**—Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.
- B. We can only have those traits by obeying His Word

Notes

the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine, Proverbs 3:9-10. Not only does God promise rewards in this life to the faithful steward, but ultimately those who follow His example and instructions will be promoted to places of honor at His side, where they will rule and reign with Him forever, *Hebrews 12:1-3; Revelation 3:21; 22:5.*

What We Are To Steward

The Bible gives specific examples of the goods we are to manage, and they include the following.

- Our lives. *He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; Acts 17:25; Deuteronomy 30:20.*
- Our abilities. *Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights... James 1:17.*
- Our time. *The fear of the Lord prolongs days... Proverbs 10:27.*
- Our possessions. *For all things come from Thee, and from Thy hand we have given Thee, First Chronicles 29:14.*
- Our finances. *The Lord will... bless all the work of your hand... The Lord will make you the head, not the tail... Deuteronomy 28:12-13.*

What a Good Steward Looks Like

Because the things entrusted to us are so valuable, a good steward must prove to be faithful, steadfast, dedicated, dependable, and worthy of trust, *First Corinthians 4:1-2.* We can only accomplish those traits by obeying the Word of God and keeping His commands.

- C. Obedience is vital to proper stewardship
- D. God promises to bless those who obey
Deuteronomy 15:5,6—If only you listen obediently to the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today. For the Lord your God shall bless you as He has promised you...
- E. To be faithful, we must trust God absolutely
- F. Must believe that He is faithful and rewards
Hebrews 11:6—believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.
- G. Put our hope in Word of God itself
Malachi 3:10—“Prove me not in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

IV. Tithes and offerings

- A. Jacob vowed to tithe
Genesis 28:21-22—The Lord shall be my God. And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house; and of all that Thou dost give me I will surely give a tenth to Thee.
- B. Tenth is called a tithe
- C. Principle laid down in Old Testament and supported in New Testament
- D. Jesus scold Pharisees because even though they paid tithe they neglected other matters
Matthew 23:23—Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness.
- E. Giving of first fruits is act of worship
- F. Shows that everything we have belongs to God
- G. Not sufficient to give tithe, pay bills, then see remainder as MINE!
- H. God is source of everything
 1. Our strength to do work
 2. Our abilities and gifts
 3. All our income
- I. Beyond tithe, we inquire of Him about offerings and other uses of His money

Notes

Obedience is also vital to proper stewardship. Once again, following God's Word is the only path to obedience, and He promises that if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God ... *(He) will bless you just as He promised you, Deuteronomy 15:5,6.*

In order to obey and to be faithful, we must trust God absolutely. We must *believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him, Hebrews 11:6.* We must put our hope in the Word of God itself, which says, *'Test me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows,' Malachi 3:10.*

Tithes and Offerings

Jacob made a vow, saying, ... *'This stone which I have set up as a pillar will be God's House... and of all that thou dost give me I will surely give a tenth to Thee,' Genesis 28:21-22.* This tenth is called the "tithe," and it is a principle laid down in the Old Testament and supported in the New Testament. Jesus scolds the Pharisees because even though they have paid their tithe, they have neglected other matters of the law, *Matthew 23:23.*

This giving of the first-fruits of our income to the Lord is an act of worship, and it signifies that everything we have belongs to God. It is not sufficient to offer God ten percent, pay our bills, and then hoard the remaining cash in our hand as "our money." God is the source of all our strength to work, all our abilities and gifts, and all of our income — therefore, all the income we produce belongs to Him. Beyond the tithe, we must inquire of Him concerning other offerings or uses for "His money."

- J. When we obey in tithes and offerings, we are declaring Him faithful to His promises
- K. Our love and faith grow as He honors those promises
Deuteronomy 14:22-23—You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. And you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.

V. Purpose of the Tithe

- A. Brought to storehouse of local church
Malachi 3:10—Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house...
- B. Provides for practical needs of church under direction of leaders
 1. Salaries
 2. Building maintenance
 3. Mission outreach
 4. Special projects
 5. Brotherly care
- C. Indicates trust in God and leaders

- D. Tithing during financial strain gives God a chance to show His power and fulfill His Word
- E. Come to give with right heart, even in difficult circumstances
 1. Cheerfully
 2. Willingly
 3. Generously
 4. Lovingly
 5. Thankfully

Second Corinthians 8:1-2—Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

Second Corinthians 9:7-13—Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed... Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. Because of the proof given by this ministry they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all... Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

	Notes
<p>When we obey God in this area of tithe and offering, we are declaring that we believe He is a God who keeps His promises. Our reverence and love for Him will then grow as we see Him honor His Word, <i>Deuteronomy 14:22-23</i>.</p> <p>Purpose of the Tithe</p> <p>The Bible states that tithes and offerings are to be brought into the storehouse, the local church, <i>Malachi 3:10</i>. There they provide for the practical needs of the House of God. Salaries, building maintenance, mission outreach, special projects, and brotherly care are all funded from this source under the direction of the local church leadership. Bringing our resources to the storehouse indicates not only our trust in God, but also our faith in the leadership to hear God and properly distribute His resources for the advancement of the Kingdom.</p> <p>Many people believe that they can not afford to tithe, due to a heavy debt load or unexpected expenses. On the contrary, tithing during financial difficulty gives God a chance to show His mighty power and fulfill His Word. It is an expression of faith in God's ability to intervene supernaturally in difficult, or even impossible, circumstances. Therefore, when we come to God with our tithe or offering, we are to come cheerfully, willingly, generously, and with a loving and thankful heart, <i>Second Corinthians 8:2; 9:7-13</i>.</p>	
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SELF-CHECK

Check Yourself	
	<p>The following attitudes often hinder our stewardship of God's resources. In the space below each statement, write a sentence or two explaining what is wrong with the statement. Include scriptural support. If you hear yourself speaking in any of the statements — repent, and begin to give again.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It may not work.2. My time is too limited to give it to the Church.3. After I pay the bills, there is nothing left.4. God doesn't need or want my money because He owns the cattle on a thousand hills.5. I will give a bundle to the church when God blesses me with a raise or the winning ticket in the Reader's Digest Sweepstakes.

Objective

By the time students finish this study, they should be able to do the following:

1. Explain that prayer is not a recitation or a want list, but a constant communion.
2. Give three or four scriptural examples of different types of prayer.
3. Briefly describe the reasons for fasting and give some practical guidelines for fasting.



Prayer Calling Home

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

Chapter Eighteen

Objective:

This lesson is designed to illustrate prayer as the only form of communication between children of God and our Father. It is hoped that the nature of prayer and the necessity of prayer will become evident, and that prayer itself will take proper place in our lives.

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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Talk to your students about examples of fasting in the Bible, such as Daniel and the Hebrew children. Give personal testimony about fasting and discuss practical details such as the following:

1. Partial fast of certain foods or food groups.
2. Preparing for a total fast.
3. Wearing an appropriate countenance while fasting.
4. Breaking a fast carefully.

Suggested reading: Arthur Wallace, *God's Chosen Fast*.

Teaching Notes

I. Introduction

- A. Communication is essential to relationships
- B. Families grow through communication
- C. Prayer is not words, It is relationship
- D. Personal relationships are not based on daily quotes of wish lists
- E. Friendships are based on time, conversations, activity, quiet, and experiences beyond words
- F. Our relationship to God is that diverse

II. Importance of prayer

- A. Not an option
- B. Never finished—A constant part of our lives
Romans 1:9—For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers making request ...
- C. Not reserved for pastors or intercessory prayer teams
First Timothy 2:8—All men everywhere are to pray...
- D. Jesus showed the pattern
 1. Even in busyness, surrounded by multitudes crying for ministry, he went aside to pray

Notes

Prayer

Calling Home

Introduction:

Communication is essential to relationships. When boy meets girl, communication takes place before courtship can begin. And communication must continue if the marriage is to thrive. As the family grows, so do the levels of communication. Infants are comforted by the sound of their mother's voice, and children calm down when Dad says the storm will blow over. Eventually we learn that no matter how old we get nor how prestigious our job; no matter how big our bank account or how exciting our career — sometimes we just need to call home

Prayer is not words. Prayer is relationship. Our personal relationships are not based on a series of poetic phrases, nor are they held together because we take time each day to quote to one another our wish-lists. Friendships and relationships involve time, conversation, activity, quiet, and experiences that words can never measure. Our relationship with God is much the same, and our communication with Him through prayer will be just as diversified.

Importance of Prayer

Prayer is not an option. In fact, it is a commandment, and we are commanded to do it without ceasing, *Romans 1:9*. That means that we are never finished praying; it is a constant part of our lives. Nor is it reserved for the pastor and the elders or the intercessory prayer team. *All men (and women, and children) everywhere are to pray, First Timothy 2:8*. Jesus Himself provided our example in prayer. Even in the busyness of a life which was surrounded by

2. Most important activity of His day

III. Aspects of Prayer

A. Confession

1. Acknowledge our fallen condition and confess our need for Him

2. Attitude should be our constant companion

Nehemiah 1:6—let Thine ear now be attentive and Thine eyes open to hear the prayer of Thy servant which I am praying before Thee now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Thy servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against Thee; I and my father's house have sinned.

Psalm 32:1—How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!

Psalm 52:1—Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The lovingkindness of God endures all day long.

3. Do not confess like the Pharisee, but the Publican

Luke 18:11-13—have mercy on me a sinner

4. Always involves repentance and forgiveness

5. Attitude toward brother will affect relationship to Father
Matthew 5:23-24—If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the

altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

B. Worship

1. Appropriate response to understanding of Who God is

2. Such discovery will send us humbly to our knees

Psalms 34:1-3—I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear it and rejoice. O magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together.

Psalm 145:3—Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable.

C. Meditation

1. Enjoying God's company

2. Think, reflect, ponder, wait quietly

3. Gain God's perspective on our relationship with Him and all areas of our lives

4. Possibly, all aspects of prayer should be birthed from this

D. Petition

1. Making requests known to God

2. Involves personal needs and desires

3. If we have meditated on God and are in right relationship with Him, our petitions will come straight from His heart

John 15:7—If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.

multitudes of people asking to be healed, fed, and taught, Jesus found time for the most important activity of the day. ...*He Himself would (often) slip away to the wilderness and pray, Luke 5:16.*

Aspects of Prayer

Prayer takes many forms and involves a number of attitudes and actions. Among those aspects of prayer, the following are included:

- **Confession.** We acknowledge our sinful, fallen condition before God and confess our need of Him. This attitude should be our constant companion, *Nehemiah 1:6-7*. The model for confession is not the pharisee who said, "thank God I am not a Publican." The model is the Publican, who said, "have mercy on me, a sinner," *Luke 18:11-13*. Confession also involves repentance and forgiveness. Here is where our attitude toward our brother will affect our relationship with our Father, *Matthew 5:23-24*.
- **Worship.** Worship is the appropriate response to our understanding of who we are and who God is. Such a discovery will send us to our knees in adoration and humble praise, *Psalms 34:1-3; 100; 145*.
- **Meditation.** This is the place where we simply enjoy God's company. We think, reflect, ponder, and wait quietly before Him. In meditation, we gain God's perspective on our relationship with Him and on every area of our lives. Possibly, all other aspects of prayer should be birthed out of this time with God.
- **Petition.** There is a place for making our requests known to God. Petition involves personal needs and desires. If we have meditated on God and are in right relationship with Him, then even our petitions will come straight from His heart. *If you abide in Me, and*

Notes

- E. Thanksgiving
 1. Like worship
 2. Remember God's faithfulness, goodness, lovingkindness
 3. Express gratitude in variety of ways, one is prayer

First Thessalonians 5:18—in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- F. Intercession
 1. Petition for others
 2. Guided by Holy Spirit who sometimes speaks through us

Romans 8:26—For we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.
- G. Prayer in the Spirit
 1. Empowered by Holy Spirit to pray

First Corinthians 14:14-15—For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also.

IV. Prayer and fasting

- A. Voluntary abstaining from food or food and water
 1. For specific period of time
 2. Purpose is to seek God with special intensity
 - B. Not an attempt to twist God's arm
 - C. Not an attempt to appear holy before men
 - D. A vehicle to help direct our hearts and minds toward him with no distractions
- Isaiah 58** — (A fast that God has chosen.)
- E. Fast when directed by Spirit of God
- Luke 4:1-2**—And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry.
- Acts 13:2-3**—And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then when

they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

- F. Bible records astounding results from prayer and fasting
 1. A nation delivered from death

Esther 4:16—"Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

 2. City of Ninevah saved

Jonah 3:8-10 —"But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his

hands. "Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that we shall not perish?" When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do (it).

3. Demons cast out

Matthew 17:14-21—And when they came to the multitude, a man came up to Him, falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic, and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water." And I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him." And Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverted

Notes

My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you, John 15:7.

- **Thanksgiving.** Like worship, this is the place where we remember God's goodness, faithfulness, and lovingkindness to us. We express that gratitude in a number of ways, and all of them are prayer, *First Thessalonians 5:18.*
- **Intercession.** This is a form of petition for others. It is guided and aided by the Holy Spirit, who sometimes speaks through us *for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for (us) with groanings too deep for words, Romans 8:26.*
- **Prayer in the Spirit.** The Baptism of the Holy Spirit empowers us in prayer. *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is (the outcome) then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also, First Corinthians 14:14-15.*

Prayer and Fasting

Fasting is the act of voluntarily abstaining from food, and sometimes even water, for a specific period of time in order to seek God with special intensity. It is not an attempt to twist God's arm, nor to appear holy before men, but rather it is a vehicle to help direct our hearts and minds toward Him without distraction, *Isaiah 58.*

We should fast when we have been directed by the Spirit of God, *Luke 4:1-2,* or when we know individually that we need to, *Matthew 6:16-18.* We will also fast at times when the entire local church is called to fast for special occasions, meetings, decisions, or needs, *Joel 1:14; Acts 13:1-4.*

The Bible records some astounding results when people have prayed and fasted for specific situations. Some examples include:

generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you. "But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

4. Elders ordained

Acts 14:23—And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with

fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

5. Will of the Lord revealed
Acts 9:9-16—And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Behold, (here am) I, Lord." And the Lord (said) to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many

about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

V. Instructions for Prayer

- A. Never boring or duty
- B. Vital relationship with Father
- C. Unnatural to our carnal nature
- D. Never stirred on a natural level, only spiritual
- E. Subdue flesh and bend will to obey God and keep life with God alive
- F. Soft lights, sweet music, and quiet room is no help unless the Spirit rules
- G. Can not fool God
- H. Selfish prayers, big words will not touch our Creator
- I. In humility and honesty
- J. Remain in a constant attitude of prayer
 1. Ruth Graham, wife of Billy Graham, calls it "praying on the hoof"
- K. Scripture also directs us to specific, set aside times of prayer
Luke 18:1—Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart ...
Acts 3:1—Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth (hour,) the hour of prayer.
Daniel 6:10—Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.
- L. Old Testament saints prayed
- M. Disciples prayed
- N. Jesus prayed
Luke 5:16—But He Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.
- O. Let us do the same

Notes

- A nation was delivered from death, *Esther 4*.
- The city of Ninevah was saved from divine wrath, *Jonah 2-3*.
- Demon spirits were cast out, *Matthew 17:14-21*.
- Elders were ordained, *Acts 14:23*.
- The will of the Lord was revealed, *Acts 9:9-15*.

Instructions for Prayer

Since prayer is the voice of our relationship with God, it is vital to our existence. It should never become a boring ritual, something we "have to do." Unfortunately, prayer is one of the most unnatural things we can do. Our carnal man is never interested in praying, because it is a totally spiritual experience. We will never be stirred on the natural level to pray — only on the spiritual level. In order to obey the command and keep our life with God alive, we must subdue our flesh and bend our will. The natural realm is no help at all. No matter how soft the lights, sweet the music, and quiet the room, we will never pray unless the Spirit rules.

We can not fool God. Selfish prayers, or look-how-many-big-words-I-know prayers will never put us in touch with our Creator. Real prayer is done in humility and honesty. The Bible teaches that we should be in an attitude of that kind of prayer always — praying "on-the-hoof" as Ruth Bell Graham describes it. But, scripture also illustrates that we should have scheduled times of regular prayer, *Luke 18:1; Acts 3:1; Daniel 6:10*. The Old Testament saints did. The disciples did. And most importantly of all, so did Jesus. *But He Himself would (often) slip away to the wilderness and pray, Luke 5:16*. Let's do the same.

SELF-CHECK

James 4:1-4—What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; (so) you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; (so) you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend (it) on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Matthew 6:5-8 —“And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. “Therefore do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him.

Psalm 138:6—For though the LORD is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly; But the haughty He knows from afar.

Matthew 5:23-24—“If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

Hebrews 12:15-17—See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that (there be) no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a (single) meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

James 1:5-7— But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men

generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

First Peter 3:7—You husbands likewise, live with (your wives) in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Check Yourself	
Look up the following scriptures to discover the hindrances to prayer that we need to remove from our lives.	
1. James 4:1-4	Hindrancel: friendship with the world
2. Matthew 6:5-8	Hindrancel: praying to be seen by men
3. Psalm 138:6	Hindrancel: haughtiness
4. Matthew 5:23,24	Hindrancel: offense against a brother
5. Hebrews 12:15-17	Hindrancel: root of bitterness
6. James 1:5-7	Hindrancel: doubt
7. First Peter 3:7	Hindrancel: dishonor

Objective

By the time students complete this study, they should be able to do the following:

1. Use scripture to show that a true evangelist is not a traveling lone ranger, but a member of the Household of Faith — one who equips the saints for the work of service in evangelism.
2. Write a brief synopsis of their own testimony for sharing.
3. List three ways they can do the work of an evangelist this week.



Evangelism Inviting Friends for Dinner

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19–20

Chapter Nineteen

Objective:

The goal of this lesson is to destroy the legalistic fear which seems to surround evangelism today, and replace it with an understanding that true evangelism is friendship. It is introducing a new friend to your Elder Brother, Whom you love, and knowing that your friend will love Him, too.

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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Use this time to break up into groups of three or four and role play. Let each student take a turn at being the evangelist in whatever setting you assign. Maybe the group represents a group of office workers on break, or family members at a funeral. Put people in situations they may really face every day. Then give them three to five minutes to introduce their Elder Brother by sharing something from their own lives.

Teaching Notes

I. Introduction

- A. Happy children multiply at dinner time
 - 1. They are always bringing home friends
 - 2. Pretty soon guests come uninvited because your house is so much fun
 - 3. Guests become more like family than visitors
 - 4. They end up bringing guests of their own

- B. We are born of Adam
 - 1. Corruptible seed
 - 2. We can never find salvation on our own
 - 3. We are dead in sin

Ephesians 2:1-5—And you were dead in your trespasses and sins ...But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved...

- 4. Adam was separated from God
- 5. Passed that separation to offspring
- 6. We have been separated so long we are accustomed to that unnatural state
- 7. We love the darkness rather than the light

John 3:19—And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.

- C. God did not leave us loving the darkness
- D. He took the initiative to bring us back to Himself
- E. He sent Jesus and created a brand new race
- F. Those who believed in their heart, repented of their sin, and confessed with their mouth now born of incorruptible seed—new creatures in Christ

Romans 10:9—that if you confess with your mouth Jesus (as) Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved...

Galatians 3:26-29—For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

- G. That is the Good News
- H. As His Church, we carry the awesome responsibility of broadcasting it to the dying world

Romans 10:14—How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

Notes

Evangelism

Inviting Friends for Dinner

Introduction:

Children who come from a stable home, where loving relationships exist, always seem to multiply at dinner time. Everybody wants to bring a friend home to share the supper fun — and pretty soon, friends start showing up even when they aren't invited! Before long, these guests become more like members of the family, and before you know it, they are bringing friends home for supper, too!

Because we have been born of our father Adam and are made from corruptible seed, mankind can never discover the plan of salvation on our own. We are, in fact, dead in sin, *Ephesians 2:1,5*. Because Adam disobeyed God, he was separated from His Creator, and that sin passed on to all his offspring, bringing the human race heartache, misery, and spiritual blindness. We have been separated from God for so long that we have become accustomed to the "unnatural" state, and we actually love the darkness rather than the light, *John 3:19*.

But God did not leave us there. He took the initiative to bring us back into fellowship with Himself by sending Jesus Christ to be the Head of a brand new race. Those who have believed in their heart, repented of their sin, and confessed with their mouth are born of incorruptible seed, new creatures in Christ, *Romans 10:9; Galatians 3:26-29*.

That is the "Good News." And we, His Church, carry the awesome responsibility of broadcasting it to the dying world. *How*

Notes

then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? Romans 10:14. God has chosen His Church as the instrument through which the good news shall come to the suffering masses. When we see the multitude through Jesus' eyes, we are filled with His compassion and are compelled to tell them, "He is the Way!"

Every believer has the commission and the privilege to spread the word. The gospel is a people-to-people message — simple, yet powerful. Those who have been touched by His Grace are more than willing to obey the command, *freely you have received, now freely give, Matthew 10:8, First Peter 2:9.*

We hold the secret of life, and we are delighted to give it away to those we love. But, in order to do so, we must understand some basic assurances that we as believers have.

- All who believe are enabled through Christ to testify of Him, *Acts 1:8*. "I won't know what to say," is no longer an excuse, because the Holy Spirit Himself has promised to speak through us.
- We do not have to be intellectual giants with persuasive words, *First Corinthians 1:26,27*. The message that Jesus saves is simple and persuasive on its own. All we have to do is tell our own story.
- The work of grace that God has done in us will be our motivation to carry the news wherever we go, *Acts 8:4*.

The Good News

When we spread the news, we are really telling people several specific facts. Regardless of the method we use or the words we

- I. God chose the Church to deliver good news to those who suffer
- J. When we see the multitude through Jesus' eyes, we are filled with compassion and compelled to point them to Him
- K. Every believer has this commission and privilege
- L. Gospel is a people-to-people message
- M. Simple, yet powerful
- N. Those who have been touched by grace are willing to obey
Matthew 10:8—"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, freely give."
First Peter 2:9—But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light
- O. We hold the secret to life
- P. We are delighted to give it away to those we love
- Q. To do so, we must understand some basic assurances of the believer
 1. All who believe are enabled through Christ to testify
Acts 1:8—but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.
 2. No need for persuasive words or giant intellects
First Corinthians 1:26-27—For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.
 3. Work of grace that God has done in us is our motivation to carry the news wherever we go
Acts 8:4—Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

II. The Good News

- A. Bad news—you are a sinner
Good news—Jesus saves
- B. You are now made righteous in Christ
Romans 4:5—But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness...
- C. You are no longer under condemnation
Romans 8:1-2—There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
- D. You are now being conformed into the image of God
Romans 8:28-29—And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren...
- E. You now have peace with God
Romans 5:1—Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...
- F. You now have access to the Father
Romans 5:2—through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.
- G. All this is Good News to those who have lived in darkness
- H. Anyone who has been eating the refuse from the table is overjoyed to sit down and dine with Father and the family

III. Evangelists in the Bible

- A. We are in good company
- B. Men and women through the ages have led the way
- C. Jesus devoted the primary thrust of his ministry to evangelism
Luke 4:18-19—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are

downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

Luke 4:43—But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose."

Matthew 11:5 —the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Luke 8:1—And it came about soon afterwards, that He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him...

D. He sent out the disciples to do the same

Luke 9:6—And departing, they (began) going about among the villages, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

E. Early church recognized their responsibility to evangelize

Acts 5:42—And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Acts 8:12—But when they believed Phillip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

Notes

choose, we are saying the following things to a person who has repented from sin and submitted to the Lordship of Jesus:

- Bad news—you are a sinner. Good news—Jesus saves.
- You are now made righteous in Christ, *Romans 4:5*.
- You are no longer under condemnation, *Romans 8:1-2*.
- You are now being conformed into the image of God, *Romans 8:28-30*.
- You now have peace with God, *Romans 5:1*.
- You now have access to the Father, *Romans 5:2*.

For those who have been living in darkness and death, this is very good news indeed. Anyone who has been eating the refuse from the table of sin will be overjoyed to join the Father and His family at the banqueting table.

Evangelists in the Bible

When we step out in faith to fulfill this call, we are in good company. Men and women down through the ages have led the way for us to follow in evangelism. Jesus devoted the primary thrust of His ministry to evangelism, *Luke 4:18, 43; Matthew 11:5; Luke 8:1*; and He sent out His disciples into the same ministry, *Luke 9:6*.

The early church recognized its responsibility in evangelism, *Acts 5:42; 8:12; 13:32*. And the apostle Paul was ready to preach the gospel anywhere, any time, *Romans 1:15; First Peter 3:15*. He gave special commendation to the churches at Rome and Thessalonica for their efforts to evangelize their communities and the areas beyond, *Romans 1:8, First Thessalonians 1:8*.

The role of the five-fold gift of the Evangelist is not to win the world on his own. His role is to equip, teach, and train the saints to

Acts 13:32—And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers...

F. Apostle Paul was ready anytime, anywhere

Romans 1:15—Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

First Peter 3:15—but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence...

G. Paul commended the churches at Rome and Thessalonica for efforts to evangelize their communities and beyond

Romans 1:8—First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

First Thessalonians 1:8—For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

H. We have been filled with Holy Spirit and empowered to do the same

I. We spread the Good News with our words, lives, and friendships

J. We become fellow workers with Christ and fulfill the Great Commission **Acts 1:8**—but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Matthew 28:18-20—And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

First Corinthians 3:8-9—Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

do the work of evangelism. The evangelist belongs to the church, just as the other five-fold gifts do. We have each been filled with the Holy Spirit and are empowered to spread the good news with our words, our lives, and our friendships. That is how we become fellow-workers with Christ and fulfill the Great Commission of preaching salvation through Christ and making disciples of all men, *Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20; First Corinthians 3:8,9.*

Notes

SELF-CHECK

Check Yourself	
	<p>Who told you? Write a short essay describing how you first heard the Good News and who told you.</p>

Objective

By the time students complete this study they should be able to do the following:

1. State briefly God's intention for the family.
2. Give scriptural references that describe the proper role of husbands, wives, and children.
3. Explain why strong churches make strong families instead of the other way around.



Family Night Taking it Home to Your House

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name ... Ephesians 3:14-15.

Chapter Twenty

Objective:

This lesson is designed to help each individual member find their proper role and position in the family and each family find their proper place in the church.

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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Using the first paragraph of the student text, talk with students about how some Bible heroes would be labeled as dysfunctional today. Why did their difficult circumstances propel them into destiny instead of destruction? What choices did they make that influenced that outcome?

Teaching Notes

I. Introduction

- A. Dysfunctional families in the Bible
 - 1. Joseph brought up by step mother
 - 2. Moses raised in foster home
 - 3. King David had rebellious children
 - 4. Peter lived with his mother-in-law
- B. Yet, they all represent God's plan for relationships
- C. He designed the family and has a plan for how it should work
- D. Each of the above people fulfilled the purposes of God in their generation
- E. Their less-than-perfect families were often a vehicle for God's plan
- F. Family is a picture of God's plan for relationship with His people
- G. Church is family of God
- H. Because we have allowed world to twist our picture of family and of church, both have become weak and ineffective in many instances
- I. Key to strong families is strong churches
- J. Adam and Eve's children did not go bad until parents left fellowship with God in the garden—their local church
- K. God established order in family patterned after order in church
- L. To maintain order, someone has to lead
- M. God delegated leadership to husband
Ephesians 5:23-25—For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...

Notes

Family Night

Taking it Home to Your House

Introduction:

Joseph was brought up by his stepmother, and Moses was raised in a foster home. King David's son was rebellious, and Peter lived with his mother-in-law. Almost every family listed in the Bible could be labeled as "dysfunctional" according to the guidelines of our society. Yet they all represent the relational plan of God on the earth. He designed the family, and He has a plan for how it should work. Each of these people went on to fulfill the purposes of God in their generation, and their less-than-perfect families were often the vehicle by which that work was done.

God has designed the family as a picture of his intended relationship with His own people, and He refers to His Church as the family of God. But, because we have allowed our own picture of family and of church to be twisted by the world, both have become weak and ineffective in many instances.

The key to strong churches is not strong families. That is putting the order in reverse. Rather, the key to strong families is a strong Church. Adam and Eve's children did not go bad until they broke fellowship with God and left the garden — their local church.

Within the family, God established an order that is perfect and patterned after the Church. To maintain order, a leader must be assigned, and in the family, God has given that role to the husband.

The Husband's Role

For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church ... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the

- N. Key words above are “head” and “love”
- O. Husbands charged to follow Christ’s example as the Head by loving to the point of sacrifice

II. The call to lead

- A. Must be a man under authority first
 - 1. Authority at home is derived from husband’s submission to Jesus

2. Line of authority demonstrated by centurion **Matthew 8:8-10**—But the centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. “For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it .” Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.

- 3. Remembering that will prevent a dictator mentality
- B. Must understand God’s plan for order and maintain it at home
 - 1. When a man lead’s with diligence, family fulfills destiny **Romans 12:8**—or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.
- C. Lead as Jesus the Great Shepherd leads His people
 - 1. Leading implies that husband has definite goals & plans born from vision
 - 2. Without vision, a man’s family will perish and he will be a blind guide **Proverbs 29:18**—Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained... **Matthew 15:14**— “Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”
 - 3. Leading is people-based; cannot be based on rules for rule sake
 - 4. Sabbath was made for the man. **Mark 2:27**—And He was saying to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>church and gave Himself up for her ... Ephesians 5:23,25.</i></p> <p>Note the key words in this scripture: “head” and “love.” Husbands are charged to follow Christ’s example as the head by loving to the point of sacrifice. To do that, he will need to understand some basic principles, such as the following:</p> <p>The Call to Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A man in authority, must be under authority. Any authority a man carries in his home is derived from his own submission to Jesus Christ. This line of authority is demonstrated by the Roman centurion who spoke with Jesus and was described as having “great faith,” <i>Matthew 8:8-10</i>. Remembering this will prevent a man from becoming a domineering dictator who exercises his authority with harshness. • He understands God’s plan for order and then maintains that order in the home. When a man follows God’s direction to “lead with diligence,” <i>Romans 12:8</i>, his family has the potential to become all that God intends. • He leads his family just as Jesus the Great Shepherd leads His people. Leading implies that the husband has a definite direction and definite goals, which requires vision. Without vision or direction, a man’s family will perish or cast off restraint, <i>Proverbs 29:18</i>, and he will be a blind guide, <i>Matthew 15:14</i>. Leading is also a people-centered activity and cannot be based on rules for the sake of rules. That attitude can lead to “man being made for the Sabbath” instead of “the Sabbath being made for man,” <i>Mark 2:27</i>. 	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Notes</h2>
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- D. Husband must recognize difference between authority and value
1. His position does not make him more valuable
 2. All members are equal in God's eyes, simply have different roles
 3. Partnership of two spiritually-equal humans, but man bears responsibility to lead the partnership in God-glorifying direction

III. The call to love

- A. Husband must be giving
1. Agape, selfless love
 2. Based on daily decisions, not feeling
 3. A love that sacrifices unto death comes from a choice
 4. Authority arises from such love
- B. Follow the example of the Servant-King
1. Humble man serves others, including wife and children
 2. That will motivate family to follow example of Christ in home, church, world
- C. Physical and spiritual provision from husband
1. He is priest of home, interceding for and instructing family
 2. Physical needs will be met when he seeks Kingdom first

Matthew 6:33—"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

3. As Provider-Priest, husband's goal is to see family become all that Church is to be—glorious without spot or wrinkle, holy, sanctified

Ephesians 5:26-27—that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

- D. Husband must leave and cleave.
- Genesis 2:24**—For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.
1. Become one as Jesus and the Church are one
 2. Failure by either spouse to leave homes, parents, single lives will result in wrecked lives

Notes

- **He recognizes the difference between authority and value.** His position as head does not make the husband the most valuable member of the family. All members have equal value in God's eyes, they simply have different roles. In the partnership of two spiritually-equal human beings, the man bears the responsibility to lead the partnership in a God-glorifying direction.

The Call to Love

- **The husband is giving.** He must exercise an agape or selfless kind of love, which is based on a daily decision, not a feeling. The kind of love that sacrifices unto death comes from a man who makes the choice to love his wife. Authority arises from such love.

- **Following the example of the Servant-King, the husband serves.** A man who humbles himself to serve others, including his wife and children, will motivate them to follow the example of Christ in their home, in their church, and in the world.

- **He provides both physical and spiritual provision.** He functions as the priest of the home, interceding for and instructing his family. Physical needs will be met when he has sought the Kingdom first. *Matthew 6:33.* As the provider-priest, the husband's goal is to see his family become all that the Church is to be — glorious, without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish, sanctified, and cleansed, *Ephesians 5:26-27.*

- **He leaves and cleaves,** *Genesis 2:24,25.* Husbands and wives are to become one, just as Jesus and the Church are one. Failure by either husband or wife to leave homes, parents, and single lives behind will result in wrecked marriages and devastated families.

- E. Husband to treat wife the way Jesus treats His Bride
1. Nourish
 2. Cherish
 3. Dwell with her with understanding
 4. Give her honor

First Peter 3:7—You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

IV. Role of the wife

Ephesians 5:22-24—Wives, (be subject) to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head

of the church, He Himself (being) the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives (ought to be) to their husbands in everything.

- A. Respect and honor are key to submission
 - B. Scripture instructs wives to submit
- Titus 2:5**—(to be) sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.

First Peter 3:1—In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives...

Colossians 3:18—Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

- C. Even godly women sometimes see submission as negative
- D. That is because they do not understand the word
- E. Submission does not require giving up independent thought or to view husband as God
- F. She is not to refrain from giving counsel and input
- G. Wife is a trusted advisor and counselor

V. The call to submit

- A. Submission is a heart attitude
- B. An inner quality of gentleness that affirms leadership of husband
First Peter 3:4—but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.
- C. Submission is absolute, obedience is not
 1. Only God deserves unqualified obedience
 2. If anyone in delegated authority commands you to sin, you should not obey
 3. Remain submitted in heart, even though you do not obey
 - a. King David fleeing from Saul
 - b. Heart was submitted, though he did not obey the command to come back and be killed

Notes

• **He treats his wife the way Jesus treats His Bride.** That includes nourishing her, cherishing her, dwelling with her with understanding, and giving her honor, *First Peter 3:7*.

The Role of the Wife

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything, Ephesians 5:22-24.

“Respect” and “honor” are the key words in the matter of submission. Wives are instructed throughout scripture to submit to their husbands, *Titus 2:5; First Peter 3:1; Colossians 3:18*. Yet, even Godly women have often seen submission in a negative light. That has happened because we do not clearly understand the term. Submission does not indicate that a wife is to give up independent thought or view her husband as God. Nor is she to refrain from giving input as a trusted advisor or councilor would give to a ruler.

The Call to Submit

- **Submission is a heart attitude.** It is an inner quality of gentleness that affirms the leadership of the husband, *First Peter 3:4*.
- **Submission is also absolute, although obedience is not.** Only God deserves our unqualified obedience. If someone in a position of delegated authority, including a husband or a parent, commands something which constitutes sin, there is no obligation to obey. It is possible to disobey a command and continue to remain submitted in heart attitude as David did with King Saul.

D. Submission requires choice, not mere action

1. Possible to remain silent and follow decisions while harboring a heart of rebellion
2. True submission means wife exercised her own wisdom to bring counsel to situation
3. Then she trusts God to guide husband in decision
4. She trusts God to clean up the mess when husband gets it wrong
5. Woman who chooses to submit is saying that she trusts God

E. True submission brings women freedom to function as God intended and become all that He desires

VI. The call to respect

A. See husband as God sees him

1. Wife knows his weaknesses well, which can breed contempt.
2. Sarah chose to see Abraham as father of promise rather than man who failed to give her a son

B. Wives called to respect even ungodly husband

1. Husband can be won without a word by wife who is submissive, chaste, and respectful

First Peter 3:1-2—In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any (of them) are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

2. Called to be worthy of husband's trust

Titus 2:4-5—that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, (to be) sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.

Proverbs 31:28-29—Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband (also,) and he praises her, (saying:) "Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all."

Notes

• **Submission requires a choice, not merely an action.** It is quite possible for a woman to remain silent and follow her husband's decision while harboring a heart of rebellion. True submission means that a wife exercises her own experience and wisdom to bring counsel to a situation. Then she trusts God to guide her husband in the right decision — and to clean up the mess if he gets it wrong! A woman who chooses submission is saying that she trusts God.

• **True submission brings women the freedom to function as God intended and to become all that He desires.**

The Call To Respect

Respect is closely linked to submission, because it is difficult to submit to someone you do not respect. Like submission, respect is a choice, and it can be cultivated.

• **She sees her husband the way God sees him.** No one knows a man's flaws and foibles better than the woman who lives with him each day, and that knowledge can breed disdain. Sarah must have faced that with Abraham, but she chose to see him as the man of promise rather than the man who failed to give her a son.

• **While it is much easier to respect a godly husband than an ungodly one, God doesn't seem to make that a prerequisite.** In fact, He says that a husband who "does not obey the Word" can be won without a word by his wife's submissive, chaste, and respectful behavior, *First Peter 3:1-2*.

Along with these two areas, wives are also called to be pure, discreet, diligent in rearing children and keeping the home, astute in business, and worthy of their husband's trust, *Titus 2:4-5; Proverbs 31:28,29*.

Notes

Such a woman possesses many talents and abilities, and she becomes a blessing to her children, her husband, and the Church.

The Role of Parents

Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They shall not be ashamed, when they speak with their enemies in the gate, Psalm 127:3-5.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine, within your house, your children like olive plants around your table. Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord, Psalm 128:3-4.

God expects the same order, love, security, and stability for children in a natural family that He expects in His own Home, the Church. The line of authority continues to come from the Head, which is Christ, through the father, who is the head of the house. However, parents function as a team in rearing children.

The Call To Love

Children are the Lord's reward, Psalm 127:3. One of the greatest privileges God has given to men and women is to allow them to bring forth children after His own likeness. To do so is to fill a home with joy. Parents also have a responsibility to love and esteem their children and to want them the way God wants and loves His children. Jesus wanted children to be around Him, and He used them as an example of pure faith, *Matthew 18:2-5*. In our efforts to train them up in godliness, we must never forget the call to love and delight in the pure joy of having children.

3. Such a woman becomes a blessing to family and church

VII. Role of parents

Psalm 127:3-5—Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They shall not be ashamed, When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128:3-4—Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine, Within your house, Your children like olive plants Around your table. Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the LORD.

- A. God expects same order, love, security, and stability in family as in His Home, the Church
 1. Line of authority continues to come from Head through husband
 2. Parents, however, function as team in childrearing

VIII. Call to love

Psalm 127:5—How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They shall not be ashamed, When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

- A. Children are the Lord's reward
 1. One of greatest privileges is to bring forth children in His likeness
 2. Fills home with joy
 3. Parents responsible to love and esteem children the way God loves and esteems them
 4. Jesus wanted children around Him and used them as examples of pure faith

Matthew 18:2-5—And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

- "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me
5. In our efforts to train them in godliness, remember to love and delight in the pure joy of having children

IX. The call to train

- A. God's Word to abide in parents and be taught to children
- When they sit, lie, stand, or walk
Deuteronomy 6:7—and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.
- B. Each generation responsible for teaching Word to next generation
Psalms 78:1-7—LISTEN, O my people, to my instruction; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should teach them to their children, That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children, That they should put their confidence in God, And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments...
- C. All children born into sin
- D. Parents responsible for instilling Word in their hearts
- E. Only the power of the Holy Spirit can cause regeneration
James 1:21—Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

- F. Do not provoke children to wrath
Ephesians 6:4—And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
Colossians 3:21—Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.
- G. Could pertain to inappropriate teasing or discipline
- H. Also refers to parents failing to fulfill their call to bring up children in nurture of Lord

X. Call to discipline

- A. Vital to training process
- B. More than punishment
- C. Discipline brings a change in behavior so training in righteousness will result
Proverbs 22:15—Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.
- D. Other forms of correction besides spanking
- Time out
 - Words of correction
 - Specific consequence, such as no video watching if you misbehave

Notes

The Call To Train

God's Word is to abide in the heart of parents, and they are to teach that word diligently and continually to their children. When they sit, lie, stand, or walk parents are to be teaching children the ways of God, *Deuteronomy 6:7*. Each generation is responsible for teaching the Word of the Lord to the generation which follows behind them, *Psalms 78:1-7*.

All children are born into sin and inherit a corrupting influence which drives them to further sin and worldly lusts. Parents are responsible for teaching the Word of God, instilling it into the hearts of their children. The power of the Holy Spirit, however, causes a regeneration and cleansing from sin, *James 1:21*.

One admonition to parents is that they not "provoke their children to anger," *Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21*. Although this may have practical applications, such as teasing or inappropriate discipline, children are also provoked to anger when parents fail to fulfill their call to bring children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The Call To Discipline

Discipline is a vital part of the training process, but it is much more than mere punishment. Discipline brings a change in behavior so that training in righteousness will result. The Bible states clearly that *foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him, Proverbs 22:15*.

Much controversy surrounds spanking, and parents should make sure they approach spanking with a right heart. For most children and most behaviors other forms of discipline work well. A time-out

Notes

from activities, a few words of correction, or a clear consequence such as “no *Veggie Tales* videos if you hit the other little boys in children’s church today,” will bring the desired results.

Spanking should be reserved for open acts of rebellion or for times when children refuse to repent or change a behavior. Make sure that you are setting rules and consequences that your child can really follow. Set him up for success, not failure.

When you decide that spanking is the only course of action to take, follow these guidelines. Wait until you are calm. Explain to the child why you are spanking. Follow the spanking immediately with hugs and words of love. Make sure your child knows that you are disciplining because you love him.

As they grow older, children will learn that sin causes pain, just as their disobedience caused physical pain when they were spanked. Discipline and training must produce more than an outward change of behavior. Because God is interested in the heart, it is more important to discipline attitudes than actions. While it is necessary to require children to conform to rules and commands of God, the ultimate goal is changed hearts, which will obey God without parental intervention. Parents enforcing rules in the home will point children to Jesus who will enable them to fulfill His call.

The Role of Children

The key words for children are “honor” and “obey.” First, children are to honor their parents, *Ephesians 6:2–3*. That includes parents who are not living godly lives. Children in such situations must seek God and find a way to honor their parent without following the parent’s example.

- E. Spanking reserved for open rebellion
 - 1. Wait until you are calm
 - 2. Explain why you are spanking
 - 3. Choose a private setting
 - 4. Decide ahead of spanking how many swats
 - 5. Follow immediately with hugs, love, affirmation
- G. Discipline and training must produce more than outward change of behavior
- H. God is interested in the heart
- I. Discipline attitudes before they are actions
- J. Ultimate goal is heart change so children will obey God
- K. Parents enforcing rules at home will point children to God, enabling them to fulfill call of God

XI. Role of children

- A. Honor and obey
- B. Honor parents first
 - Ephesians 6:2-3**—Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.
 - 1. Honor even ungodly parents
 - 2. Seek God for a way to honor in those situations without following their example
- C. Obey parents in the Lord

Ephesians 6:1—Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Colossians 3:20—Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

- D. Submission is heart attitude
- E. Obedience is an action
- F. Submit to ungodly parent in heart without obeying ungodly commands
- G. Children who do such will inherit long life
- H. Families in local church will be supported, defined and complimented
- I. Each member will become all that God designed them to be

Notes

Next, children are to obey their parents in the Lord and in all things, *Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20*. Again, the rules for submission and obedience must be understood here. Submission is an attitude of the heart, while obedience is an action. It is possible to submit to an ungodly parent in your heart without obeying the ungodly commands of that parent. Children who fulfill this role will be blessed with the promise that it will go well with them, and they will inherit a long life.

As families become integrated into the life of their local church, these roles will be supported, defined, and complemented; and each individual family member will become all that God has designed them to be.

Check Yourself

Using Psalm 127 and 128, fill in the blanks below with the names of your own spouse, children, or parents.

Behold, _____ are/is a gift of the LORD; The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.

How blessed is _____ whose quiver is full of them; He/she shall not be ashamed, When He/she speaks with his/her enemies in the gate.

How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, You will be happy and it will be well with you.

_____ shall be like a fruitful vine, Within your house, _____ like olive plants around your table.

Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.

The LORD bless _____ from Zion, and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Indeed, may you see _____'s children. Peace be upon Israel!

SELF-CHECK

Objective

Objective: By the time students finish this lesson, they should be able to do the following:

1. Make a brief statement about the importance of friendships with scriptural support.
2. Discover their own strengths and weaknesses in relationships.
3. Explain that the relationship with brethren and relationship with God are inter-related.



House to House

Fellowshipping With the Family

And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:46-47

Chapter Twenty-One

Objective:

The goal of this lesson is to reinforce our need for fellowship with one another, and with God.

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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Discuss with students the "meet my needs" mentality some people have toward relationships with God and one another. How do you combat that attitude in yourself?

Talk about creative ways to build friendships in a busy lifestyle. For instance: Serving together at the next church outreach, having lunch together once a week, e-mailing one another at midnight, taking your families for a Sunday afternoon picnic at a local lake.

Teaching Notes

I. Introduction

- A. God is a relational Being
1. Trinity is a relationship—Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- B. Christianity is fruitful when practiced in relationship to others
- C. From the beginning of time, God knew it was not good for man to be alone
- D. We were created to relate and be friends
- Psalm 68:6**—God makes a home for the lonely...
- Romans 12:10**—Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor...
- E. Relationship illustrated in lives of saints
1. David and Jonathan
- First Samuel 20:17**—And Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.
2. Paul and the Ephesian elders
- Acts 20:37-38**—And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they were accompanying him to the ship.
3. Jesus and His disciples
- John 15:12**—“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.
4. Some suggest that Thomas was doubtful about resurrection because he had separated himself from brothers and was not present when He appeared
- John 20:24**—But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came

Notes

House to House

Fellowshipping with the Family

Introduction:

God is a relational being. The Trinity itself is a relationship — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So what we have learned about the church and have applied to our own families will be useless unless we put it into practice with the brothers, sister, mothers, and fathers who make up the family of God. Our Christianity is fruitful when we practice it from house to house.

God sets the solitary in families, Psalm 68:6. From the beginning of creation, God knew that it was not good for man to dwell alone. That fact has not changed. We were created to be a people in fellowship with one another. We were made to be friends. We are to be devoted to one another in brotherly love, honoring one another above ourselves, *Romans 12:10.*

That truth is illustrated in the lives of many saints in the Bible, such as David and Jonathan, *First Samuel 20:17*, Paul and the Ephesian Elders, *Acts 20:37-38*, and Jesus and His disciples, *John 15:12*. It has been suggested that one reason Thomas was so doubtful about the resurrection of Christ was because he had separated himself from the fellowship of the brothers and was not present when Jesus appeared to them, *John 20:24*.

Notes

Devoted To Fellowship

And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer, Acts 2:42.

Fellowship goes far beyond casual conversation at the back of the church on Sunday, and it is much more than lazy afternoon chats over tea. Fellowship penetrates to the depths of the soul, causing us to belong to those we are in fellowship with. The light of this kind of fellowship then shines into the community. They can see that we belong to one another and to God.

Because of the proof given by this ministry they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, Second Corinthians 9:13.

The most visible fellowship takes place in our daily lives, not our special activities. When ten families show up to help the new neighbors move in, fellowship is demonstrated. When young men gather to paint a widow's house on Saturday afternoon, everyone on the block sees fellowship. When the youth group washes dishes in the kitchen following a Ladies' Meeting, they are learning about the heart of fellowship. It is from those times of giving ourselves to God together that deep conversations and hilarious fun will arise.

This scripture in Acts uses the word "devote" to describe the attitude of the first church toward fellowship, teaching, and prayer. To devote oneself indicates the sacrifice of time, energy, money, talents, and abilities for the sake of the cause. In this case, the cause is fellowship with God and with the brethren. Relationships cost. They are hard work. But no other light will shine brighter in the world of darkness than true fellowship among the saints.

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II. Devoted to fellowship

Acts 2:42—And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

- A. Fellowship goes far beyond casual acquaintance or common interests
- B. Fellowship penetrates to depths of soul, causing us to belong to those we fellowship with
- C. Light of this kind of fellowship shines on community
- D. They can see that we belong to one another and God

Second Corinthians 9:13—Because of the proof given by this ministry they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all...

- E. Most visible fellowship takes place in daily lives
 - 1. Helping someone move
 - 2. Doing works of service
 - 3. From such times of serving together, deep conversations and fun times will arise
- F. Acts uses word "devote" to describe attitude of church toward fellowship
 - 1. Devoting means sacrifice of time, energy, money, talents, and abilities for sake of fellowship with God and brethren
- G. Relationships cost and are hard work
- H. No other light will shine brighter in the darkness of the world than that of true fellowship among the saints

III. Distortions of this teaching

- A. Some have taken second chapter of Acts to mean no one should own their own car or sewing machine
- B. Scriptures are talking about heart attitude of things we are stewards over **Acts 5:1-11**—But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came upon all who heard of it. And the young men arose and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out as well ." And she fell immediately at his feet, and breathed her last; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things.
1. Instead of counting their land as God's and giving it up for someone else's needs, they tried to lie to Holy Spirit
 2. It was not that they kept money for private needs. It was the lie
 3. Not wrong to have private family time as long as hearts are ready to receive guests

IV. Two kinds of fellowship

- A. Vertical and Horizontal
1. Vertical is God to man
First John 1:3—what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.
First Corinthians 1:9—God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Philippians 2:1-2—If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same
- mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.
- a. Fellowship flows back and forth from heaven to earth
 - b. Involves prayer, praise, worship, and study of Word
2. Horizontal flows between brothers and sisters
 - a. Also expressed in prayer and worship
 - b. Includes physical expressions like breaking bread, gathering to learn more about apostles' doctrine, showing hospitality, meeting one another's needs
- Romans 12:13**—contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Notes

Distortions of the Teaching

Some believers have taken the scriptures in the second chapter of Acts to mean that it is wrong to own a car or have private possessions, and that our fellowship should take place in a commune-style setting. That is not the point being made. Rather, the scriptures are pointing to our heart attitude toward the things we are stewards over. Ananias and Sapphira. *Acts 5:1-11*, felt that they owned certain things. Instead of counting their land as God's and being willing to give it up if someone had a need, they attempted to deceive the Holy Spirit Himself. It was not the fact that they kept money for private needs that caused their death. It was the lie. Likewise, it is not wrong to have a quiet family dinner with no other guests, as long as our hearts are ready at any instant to set an extra plate and invite someone else to come in.

Two Kinds of Fellowship

Fellowship takes place on two different planes — vertical and horizontal. Vertical fellowship refers to our relationship with God. *First John 1:3; First Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 2:1*. That fellowship flows back and forth from heaven to earth and involves prayer, praise, worship, and study of the Word of God.

Horizontal fellowship flows back and forth between brothers and sisters. It is also expressed through such things as prayer and worship, but it also includes the physical expressions of breaking bread together, gathering to learn more of the apostles doctrines, showing hospitality, and ministering to one another's needs. *Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:16; Acts 2:45; 4:35*. It is also great fun!

Notes

The Bible gives some specific directions for putting this horizontal fellowship into action. We are to treat one another with love, and love fits the following parameters:

- Love is patient, love is kind, (and) is not jealous
- Love does not brag (and) is not arrogant
- Love does not act unbecomingly
- Love does not seek its own
- Love is not provoked
- Love does not take into account a wrong (suffered)
- Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth
- Love bears all things
- Love believes all things
- Love hopes all things
- Love endures all things
- Love never fails, *First Corinthians 13:4-8*.

Putting It To Work

One good way to facilitate this kind of horizontal fellowship involves small group meetings during the week. These groups may meet in various homes, and they set an atmosphere where all members of the family can become acquainted and take an active part in one another's lives. These meetings are the perfect place for young disciples to learn to pray, prophesy, teach, exhort, and worship in a safe environment, where mistakes are accepted and growth is expected. Although our corporate meetings should be seen as perfecting meetings, not perfect meetings, these small groups are

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Hebrews 13:16—And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Acts 2:45—and they (began) selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

Acts 4:35—and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need.

c. Is also great fun

3. Bible gives specific instructions for horizontal

First Corinthians 13:4-8

a. Love is patient, love is kind, (and) is not jealous

b. love does not brag (and) is not arrogant

c. Love does not act unbecomingly

d. Love does not seek its own

e. Love is not provoked

f. Love does not take into account a wrong (suffered,)

g. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth

h. Love bears all things

i. Love believes all things

j. Love hopes all things

k. Love endures all things

l. Love never fails

V. Putting it to work

- A. One way is small group meetings during week
1. Meet in various homes
 2. An atmosphere where all members get acquainted and involved
 3. Perfect places for the young to learn, make mistakes, and have successes
 4. All meetings should be perfecting, instead of perfect, but especially small group meetings

- B. Put faith to practice day-to-day and house-to-house
- C. Then the world will see God and his people in true fellowship, and they will hunger for the same

VI. Portrait of a Home Group Leader

- A. Under-shepherds or sheep dogs
 - 1. Live in midst of sheep
 - 2. Sense danger or disease quickly
 - 3. Carry vital role in assuring green pastures and pure water
- B. Shepherd's hearts
- C. Understand authority and submit to local eldership
- D. First line of defense, and first voice of counsel for home group members
- E. Through friendships with one another and with people, become pillars of local church

Notes

less intimidating to someone who has never moved in the gifts of the Spirit before.

Whether our fellowship takes place in a Wednesday night home group, a Saturday morning work project, or a Sunday afternoon picnic, it is clear from the scriptures that we are to put our faith in practice day-to-day and house-to-house. Then the world will see God and His people in true fellowship, and they will hunger for the same.

Home group leaders function as under-shepherds for the flock of God. Some people have even compared them to sheep dogs, who live right in the midst of the sheep. They are so closely involved in the lives of the people that they sense quickly when a lamb is in danger or when disease is spreading. These leaders carry a vital role in making sure that all the sheep are eating in green pastures and drinking pure water.

Home group leaders always have a pastor's heart, and they love the church with passion and zeal. Like the centurion who understood lines of authority, they are submitted to the local eldership and look to that team for specific vision and direction. A home group leader is the first line of defense and the first voice of counsel for his or her home group members. Through their friendships with one another and with their people, home group leaders become some of the strongest pillars in each local church.

SELF-CHECK

Check Yourself

How relational are you? Take this quick survey to decide where you fit on the friendship and fellowship scale. Circle the answer which most accurately describes your life.

1. During the last three months, I have invited friends to my house to eat:

- a. At least once a week
- b. Two or three times
- c. Never or almost never

2. During the last three months, I have eaten a meal at a friend's home:

- a. At least once a week
- b. Two or three times
- c. Never or almost never

3. On Sunday mornings, when I look at members of the congregation:

- a. I know each one by name, and could probably name their favorite color, movie, or childhood memory.
- b. I know most of their names and could at least put the right kids with their parents.
- c. I can't identify the visitors as visitors.

4. It would be fair to say that I:

- a. Know what color the bathroom is in the home of every family in the church.
- b. Know where most people in my homegroup live and have been inside the door of most of their homes at some time.
- c. Know that most of the people in the church must live in the same city that I do.

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Check Yourself

5. As a member of a small group within the church I do (or would if we had small groups):

- a. Attend every single meeting and arrive half an hour early to help.
- b. Attend faithfully, and call the leader if I can't come for some reason.
- c. Miss three weeks out of four, or arrive at least half an hour late.

6. During the week:

- a. I make a point of calling at least ten people on the phone list, just to check in.
- b. Make contact with someone from the church at least two or three times.
- c. Watch t.v., mow the grass, take care of my family, and forget that I know those people from church.

Rate Yourself. If you circled mostly A's, you either come from a very small church, or you are too busy to have a life! Mostly B's indicate that you have a good grasp on relationships and probably live a fairly balanced life. Mostly C's indicate that either you are new to the family, have a serious hermit-thing going, or don't have a clue about horizontal relationships. Locate someone in the church who circled A's and find out what is happening in the church this week. Then sign on and join in.

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