

Foundations of Healthy Church Life



**A Series of Foundational
Teachings Regarding God's
Purposes In And Through His
Church**

Foundations of Healthy Church Life

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Foundations of Healthy Church Life

THE WORK OF CHRIST

PREFACE: It is important for believers to have an understanding of what the work of Christ has accomplished. Our whole life in serving God rests on the finished work of Christ.

I. MAN NEEDED CHRIST BECAUSE OF SIN - ROMANS 5:1-9

A. How sin originated in mankind.

Gen 1:26-31 Man was created in the image of God.
Man was created to enjoy fellowship with God.
Man was created to do the will of God.

Gen 2:16-17 In order for mankind to continue to live in this life with God, they were commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Obedience to God.

Gen 3:1-7 Mankind disobeyed.

B. The result of Adam and Eve's sin.

1. *They suffered death, separation from God. Gen 3:24*

2. *They incurred a penalty for their disobedience (Gen 2:17). The penalty is death, and eternal punishment in hell (which was created for the disobedient Satan and the fallen angels). Mt 25:41*

3. *The sin nature became part of them. They were polluted with the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:7). Not only did this cause a separation from God, but also affected their relationships with each other (naked and ashamed, Cain killed Abel).*

4. *They became slaves to sin with no ability to break free from it's power. Rom 6; Rom 3:10-19*

Satan is the author of sin, and those enslaved to sin are connected to him. Jn 8:44; Heb 2:14

5. *The sin nature was passed to all mankind. Mankind sinned and became slaves to it. Rom 5:12-19; Rom 7:18-20*

Mankind became estranged from God, and was powerless to do anything about it. Rom 5:6

6. Judgment and the penalty for sin was incurred upon all mankind. Rom 5:16

II. CHRIST THE SOLUTION

A. God Himself initiated the solution for mankind's dilemma. Jn 3:16

He initiated the sacrificial system in the OT pointing to the ultimate fulfillment in Christ. The sacrificial lamb (Ex 12:3) pointing to the lamb of God that was to come (Jn 1:29). Later God taught Israel that there could not be forgiveness without the shedding of blood (Heb 9:22). Even in the garden of Eden God sacrificed an animal to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness.

B. How Christ is the solution.

1. He is the propitiation. 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10; Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17

Propitiation/Expiation Greek "Hilasmes" - Propitiation emphasizes the appeasement of God's wrath and judgment. Expiation emphasizes the removal of guilt through the payment of a penalty.

2. He legally paid the penalty for sin. 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10; Heb 2:14; Acts 2:27; Eph 4:9

He was the only one qualified to do this.

He was human, born of Mary. Mt 1:18-25

He was without sin. He had no penalty of His own to pay. The virgin birth is the benchmark of the work of God.

No original sin passed through the bloodline of Adam because His father was the Holy Ghost. Rom 5:12,19; Lk 1:35; Mt 1:18.

He lived a sinless life though tempted in every way. Heb 4:15

His blood was the payment for our justification. Rom 5:9

3. He broke the power of the devil and the bondage of sin. Rom 6:3-11

Through the cross and resurrection Christ openly defeated Satan (Col 2:15), stripped him of his power (Heb 2:14-15), and broke his authority of death (Rev 1:5).

4. Through Christ we are brought into an abiding relationship with God. 2 Cor 5:18

We receive His righteousness enabling us to stand before, and walk with God. 2 Cor 5:21

C. The target/goal of the work of Christ and the gospel.

The goal of the Biblical gospel is righteousness (restored to a right relationship with God that progressively transforms our life and relationships with others).

The goal of the American gospel is happiness.

We, like Adam before the fall, are in a position to walk in an abiding relationship with God and fulfill His will. Titus 2: 11-14

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS

PREFACE: It is unfortunate, but one of the biggest reasons for most of the problems in the testimony of individual believer's lives as well as the Church is a lack of walking under the Lordship of Jesus. This is an often neglected truth, yet it is an important part of our foundation in serving Christ. To have Church Life that expresses a New Testament lifestyle, the foundation of the Lordship of Jesus must be firmly established in our lives.

I. BIBLICAL SALVATION INVOLVES COMING UNDER THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS

Romans 10:9-10 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; 10 for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (NASB)

A. To receive Jesus as savior, we must receive Him as Lord.

Acts 2:36 Lord and Christ (Savior), was the Biblical message.

B. What is a Lord? Acts 10:36

Definition - supreme in authority; controller; one in charge; one who rules over everything.

Jesus as Lord is related to coming into the Kingdom. The closest idea to "Kingdom" we have in our culture is the idea of "government." Kingdom means rule. If we are to come into the Kingdom/Government of God we must come under the rule of Jesus.

Models of Salvation.

American Model - Are you saved? In other words, have you made a decision for Christ?

Biblical Model - Are you under Christ's' Government/Kingdom/Lordship? Does Christ rule your life?

Coming under the Lordship of Jesus Christ means the end of life on your own terms. It is surrendering the rule of your life to Jesus.

*Lk 6:46 And why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?
Mt 7:13-23 ...depart from Me you who practice lawlessness (absence of government).*

C. Living under Christ's Lordship means we yield our lives daily to His rule.

Luke 9:23-24 23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. (NASB)

The essence of the nature of sin is selfishness. Taking up our cross means death to self. In Biblical times if you saw someone carrying a cross they were going to one place for one purpose, the place of death. In taking up our cross we are dying to ourselves in order to live unto Him. Luk 14:26-27; Mat 10:38-39, Mat 16:22-25; Mar 8:34-38; Joh 12:25-26.

II. WE OFTEN SEE A SUBSTITUTE SALVATION MESSAGE THAT IGNORES CHRIST'S LORDSHIP

A. There often is presented a watered-down message that allows one to take Jesus as Savior with no mention of His Lordship.

We often find the term "personal savior" used in this type of message. Nowhere in the Bible is this term found. This type of message often portrays Jesus as a personal valet, Jeannie-in-the-bottle, or celestial Santa Claus, who is only concerned with catering to our own selfish desires.

B. The Biblical emphasis is on Lordship.

The term "Savior" is used 37 times in the Bible, the term "Lord" is used about 7000 times. The emphasis is clearly on Lord.

It is only as Jesus becomes Lord, does He become Savior. A prime example is in marriage. Our spouse must clearly become our husband/wife before they can function in the roles associated with it. Any other arrangement is a perversion (living together, fornication etc.) of what was intended.

C. There must be a consideration of Christ's Lordship upon becoming a Christian.

It is not just to be a quick, light-hearted decision. There needs to be consideration.

Lk 14:26-35 "count the cost"

It is the end of life on our own terms.

D. God empowers us to come under Christ's Lordship and follow Him.

Even though following Jesus as Lord is a decision that we make, it is impossible for us to do so in our own human power. God gives us His grace and ability to follow Christ.

Mt 19:24-25 It is only possible with God.

Eph 2:8 It is by God's grace.

2 Pet 1: 3 It is by God's divine power.

Phil 2:13 God is working in us the will to work for His good pleasure.

III. CHRIST HEADSHIP IN THE CHURCH

Eph 1:21-23...22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Eph 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, (16) from whom the whole body....

Col 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church.

A. Christ as the head of His body is what makes a church a Biblical church.

Just like a human body cannot live if it becomes disconnected from its head so the church cannot live without Christ as head.

B. A church can function without Christ as the head.

Just like we can keep a human body functioning with medical devices that doesn't mean it has life coming from the head.

C. Seven signs that Christ is the Head of a local church.

1. Jesus is Lord – The ruler or the one in complete authority. It is not about what we want individually or corporately, it is about what the Lord wants.

2. The first desire among the people is to please Him.

2Co 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

Eph 5:8-10 ...walk as children of Light...(10) trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Heb 13:20-21 Now the God of peace... (21) equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ

3. God's Word is given preeminence. Over tradition, man's opinion, over experience.

4. Prayer, and worship, and prophetic become very important activities of the Church. Not a church who prays but a praying church, not a church who worships but a worshipping church.

5. People desire to have a growing relationship with God. John 15 Abiding in Christ etc.

6. Real repentance will become an important part of our life.

2Co 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

7. They will have a desire to move in all the desires of God expressed in the five fold ministry of Ephesians 4. *Ephesians 4:10-11*

Foundations of Healthy Church Life

REPENTANCE

PREFACE: Repentance from dead works is one of the elementary doctrines of Christ. *Heb 6: 1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.* Repentance is not only important at the beginning of our journey in Christ, but throughout the rest of our lives. Repentance is an important part of continuing to see the blood of Jesus restore and cleanse us from all sin. Repentance is a doorway of renewal, refreshing, and new days in God.

I. REPENTANCE IS NECESSARY

A. Repentance is an essential element in receiving the redemptive work of Christ.

Acts 2:37-38, Acts 3:18-19

God clearly demands that all men come into repentance. Acts 17:29-30

B. Repentance is first. The first word of the gospel is "Repent". The second word is "Believe." Mk 1:15

John's first message was repentance. Mt 3:1-8

Jesus Christ's first message was repentance. Mt 4:17

The twelve apostles preached repentance. Mk 6:7-13

The first message on the day of Pentecost was "repent." Acts 2:38

Paul's first message was repentance. Acts 20:20-21

C. What is repentance?

Definition - to think differently, to feel remorse for sin, to change or to metamorphise.

Repentance is the change of heart and mind from sin and selfishness to devotion to God. More specifically, repentance involves change in the following areas: Thinking; Feeling; Judgment; Purpose; Practice; Confession.

Repentance is completely turning away from the self-serving way of life, and turning toward serving Jesus as Lord.

Repentance occurs when one comes to the sorrowful realization that they are totally living in sin which is a hopeless situation. It is a decision to change your thinking toward sin, self, and God. Repentance is the change that removes self from the throne of your life and allows Jesus to be seated there.

II. FALSE CONCEPTS OF REPENTANCE

A. Repentance is not merely the conviction of sin.

Conviction brings on repentance, but because one is convicted does not mean he has repented.

B. Repentance is not just sorrow.

Many are sorry for their sins but never turn from them. 2 Cor. 7:10

C. Repentance is not simply a decision to do better.

It is not a New Year's resolution. It is a spiritual condition of the heart. Mt 5:3

Engaging in religious activity does not constitute repentance. Mt 5:20

D. Mental faith, or believe-ism, does not constitute repentance.

The demons believe but that doesn't mean they have repented. Jas 2:19-20

III. FRUITS OF REPENTANCE

John the Baptist called for "fruits meet for repentance." Mt 3:8

There are fruits or deeds that are evidences of repentance in people's lives.

A. Fruits of repentance.

Godly sorrow and 2 Corinthian 7 fruits. *2Co 7:9-11 NASB I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.*

Earnestness - effort and diligence to do the right things and put things right

Vindication of yourself - doing whatever it takes to clear self of the wrong, confession, apology etc.

Indignation - anger against the sin. Opposite of apathetic.

What fear - Godly fear.

Longing - deep grief that it happened and longing for it to be put right.

Zeal - earnest desire to become clear of sin and things put right.

Avenging of the wrong - desire to do whatever to vindicate, retribution etc

Demonstrated yourself innocent - do whatever it takes to move past this sin.

Confession of sin. Ps 32:1-5; I Jn 1:9

Forsaking/Renouncing of sin.

Pro 28:13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. (Msg) you find mercy by admitting and leaving them.

Renunciation is part of reclaiming ground given the devil through sin. *Eph 4:27 neither give place to the Devil.*

The early church participated in renunciation in regular practice and baptism.

By the early 200s baptism included renouncing Satan and all his works. A question was asked about renunciation. "Do you renounce Satan, and all his angels, and all his works, and all his services, and all his pride?"

Hatred of sin. Ex 36:31-33

Restitution where possible. Lk 19:8, Lev 6:1-7

IV. REPENTANCE/FAITH/FORGIVENESS

A. Jesus' message - Repent and Believe

These two aspects of the commandment cannot be separated; they take place concurrently.

Repentance is part of believing, and belief is part of repenting. These are merely two aspects of one act. Repentance cannot happen without faith, and there is no saving faith without repentance.

Eph 2:8-9, Jas 2:22-24 This transaction occurs as we partake of Christ through repentance, faith, and the taking on of His forgiving nature in our relationships with others. Mt 6:12-15; Acts 26:18; Eph 1:7; 1Jn 1:9; 2:1, 2, 12.

Foundations of Healthy Church Life

CONVERSION

PREFACE: The result of turning from sin in repentance and turning to God in faith is conversion. We often neglect the truth of conversion. We talk about things like "getting saved" or "receiving Jesus" instead of "being converted." If the elements of conversion are present it will put one on a firm foundation.

I. WHAT IS CONVERSION?

A. Definition

The Greek word translated "convert" is "epistrepho." It is also translated "turn" and when used in connection with repentance and faith, means "to turn from the wrong way to the right way."

A convert is one who has turned from the wrong way (serving self) to the right way (serving Jesus)

It is a turning from and a turning to. It is a turning from sin, repentance, and a turning to God to serve and follow Him through faith. It involves repentance and faith.

B. Key Biblical passages.

1Thes 1:9,10

Acts 3:19 "Repent and return (KJV: be converted) that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

Conversion has to do with the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 11:21 "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed (turned, were converted) to the Lord."

Proper belief and faith will result in conversion. Not just believing that Jesus died for our sins, but a faith that trusts and follows.

Acts 26:18 "to open their eyes so that they may turn (conversion) from darkness to light and from the domain of Satan to God, in order that they

may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

Turn from darkness to light, dominion of Satan to dominion of God (Kingdom). Col 1:13

Mt 18:3 "...Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

C. Conversion is the only way to become a disciple.

The great commission is a call to be disciples. Mt 28:19-20

A disciple is a follower, a student, or an adherent. It involves a walk, following Jesus. It is hard to follow self and follow Jesus. God's design is not for Jesus to follow us, but for us to follow Him. Conversion is the process by which we change from following self and Satan, and change to following Christ.

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

DISCIPLESHIP

PREFACE: Discipleship is one of the most neglected areas of instruction in Christianity in general. This is a great deception when you consider that the heart of our call is to "follow Christ", which means be a disciple. Our primary call is to be disciples of our Lord Jesus. Discipleship is foundational in our walk with Jesus.

I. WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

A. Definition of "Disciple"

Greek word "Mathetes, Matheteuo" - A learner, to be a pupil, a follower, or an adherent.

It doesn't mean a pupil in a contemporary sense. A pupil in a contemporary sense studies under a teacher and has the freedom to agree or disagree with what the teacher tells him. A disciple in a biblical sense is not just a pupil but also a follower and an adherent. A disciple follows and adheres to his teacher. A disciple following his teacher is not a negotiable issue.

II. OUR CALL IS TO BE A DISCIPLE OF THE LORD JESUS

A. The great commission is centered around discipleship.

Mt 28:18-20

It is more than just hearing and believing the gospel. It is being enrolled and enrolling people in a way of life following Christ.

The Devil believes in Jesus but it is obvious that he is not saved.

Jas 2:19 "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons believe, and shudder."

B. It is hard to justify Biblically a Christianity without discipleship.

The word "disciple" appears 269 times in the Bible, KJV. The designation "Christian" only occurs 3 times in the New Testament. Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1Pet 4:16

The phrase "Follow Me/Come after Me" appears 25 times in the Gospels. The phrase "Believe in Me" appears only 4 times.

Acts 11:26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. (NASB)

The inference from scripture is that the title "Christians" originated with pagan unbelievers and not with the Christians themselves. The pagans identified Christians as followers of Christ.

When Jesus called people in the Gospels He called them to follow Him. That is what discipleship is all about. We often get this backwards, thinking Christianity involves Him following us.

When Jesus set forth the terms of following Him, it was clearly explained that if you don't meet those terms you couldn't follow Him or be His disciple. Lk 14:26-27,33; Mt 10:24-40; Mt 16:24-25; Mk 8:34-35; Lk 9:23-24

We have substituted the idea of "Making a decision for Christ" for "Becoming a disciple of Christ." A decision can simply be a rationalistic statement, but a disciple is the reality of a lifestyle.

C. The church can only be built on Biblical design with disciples who are following Jesus.

Col 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

A Biblical church is not "the church of our choice" but a church that Jesus dwells among and they seek to follow and please Him.

Hebrews 13:20-21 Now the God of peace,... (21) equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight,

III. SEVEN BIBLICAL TERMS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

A "term" is a condition regarding something or the stipulations regarding the agreement.

These terms may seem rough but they are dealing with the foundation from which we serve Christ. It is much like using concrete in building a foundation of a house. It seems rough and inflexible but it has to be that way to hold up under the weather and storms as well as support the weight of the house.

Quotes: "The Savior is not looking for men and women who will give their spare evenings, or their weekends, or their years of retirement to Him. Rather He seeks those who will give Him first place in their lives." H.A. Evan Hopkins

"Nothing less than unconditional surrender could ever be a fitting response to His sacrifice at Calvary." William MacDonald.

A. A supreme love for Jesus Christ

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. (NASB)

This scripture doesn't mean that we should have animosity or ill-will towards our relatives, but it does mean that our life and devotion to Christ should be so great that all other is like hatred in comparison. The most difficult phrase in this scripture is "yes, and even his own life."

When we become followers of Christ it is a radical move that brings division in our lives.

Mt 10:33-37

Lk 12:49-53

Our love and devotion to Him is often tested in relationships.

Jesus shows us that our devotion to Him even takes priority over natural family relationships. Mt 12:48-50; Lk 8:19-21

Jesus demonstrated this in Lk 2: 41-51 even though He was still in subjection to His parents. Eighteen years later in Jn 2:1-11, even at his mother's prodding, it would not cause Him to do something God did not want Him to do.

Christ is the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense. When we become His disciples those same qualities will tend to mark our lives. 1Pet 2:6-8; Lk 2:34; 2Cor 2:14-16; Lk 20:17-18

B. A denial of self.

Mt 16:24-25

Mt 10:37-38

Mk 8:34-35

Lk 9:23-24

Lk 14:27

This is the first step in order to take up your cross.

Denial of self is not the same as self denial. Self denial means foregoing certain things. Denial of self has more to do with a complete submission to the Lordship of Jesus giving self no rights or authority at all.

C. A taking up of our cross.

Mt 10:38

Mk 8:34

Lk 9:23 Taking up your cross daily

Lk 14:27

Mk 16:24

The Bible speaks of two crosses. The one Jesus died on and the one we take up and die on.

The cross in Biblical times was a means of death.

D. A life spent following Christ.

Once we set ourselves following Christ there is to be no looking back.

Luke 9:62 Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (NASB)

A disciple "abides" in Christ. Jn 15:1-8

E. A fervent love for all who belong to Christ.

Jesus tells us that love for one another is the way the world will know we are His disciples. Jn 13:34-35

Love of God and love for the saints are the two great commandments upon which all the things of God rest.

Matthew 22:37-40 37 And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 'This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 'The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 'On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'" (NASB)

We were born again to enable us to have this kind of love for one another.
1Pet 1:22-23

F. A forsaking all to follow Him.

Mt 19:27-30

Mk 10:31

Lk 14:26-33

Phil 3:7-8 "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ."

The rich young ruler is an example of the need to forsake all to follow Christ.
Mt 19:16-26

When we become disciples we become stewards of our resources. Christ becomes the owner.

G. A life lived according to His word.

John 8:31-33 31 Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. " 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You shall become free'?" (NASB)

Psalm 119:105 Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. (NASB)

The word of God, not our feelings or the cultural ideas around, are what we govern our lives by.

Jas 1:21-25 We view our lives and the world around us by the word of God.

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

THE HEART OF SALVATION IS KNOWING GOD

PREFACE: The essence of Salvation/Eternal Life can be summed up in the idea of knowing God. In salvation God called us to a relationship with Him and Jesus Christ. It is not just a formal set of beliefs. God has called all of us to walk in a relationship with Him that is not just a small part of our lives, but the very focal point from which we live.

I. ETERNAL LIFE AND/OR SALVATION IS TIED UP IN A RELATIONSHIP (KNOWING GOD)

A. Jesus Himself shows us that eternal life is connected to knowing God.

John 17:1-3 These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee, even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life. "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. (NASB)

Eternal life is tied up in knowing God. It is relational in nature.

Jesus Himself set the example for us. He walked in a close relationship with His Father (God). His life on this earth flowed out of this relationship.

John 14:9-10 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. (NASB)

John 10:30 "I and the Father are one." (NASB)

Jesus prayed for all believers that they would find a similar relationship with God.

John 17:20-21 "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. (NASB)

B. What does it mean to know God.

Definitions: *Know* - to be aware of, to know, be sure, understand.

Dictionary, *Know* - to be aware of or acquainted with as by sight, experience, or report.

It is more than just knowing the word or report, but it is experiencing the reality of Him in your life. It is becoming acquainted with Him by sight, experience, and report.

C. At the heart of the New Covenant is the idea of knowing God.

Heb 8:8-13 which is a quote from Jer 31:31. In this New Covenant, God's design is that all would "*know Me, from the least to the greatest of them.*"

One of God's ultimate intentions through the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the establishment of a covenant in which He would draw people into a relationship with Him.

II. KNOWING GOD IS THE THING THAT SEPARATES WHAT IS RELIGIOUS FROM WHAT IS REAL

A. This was one of the main contentions between Jesus and the religious people of His day. Jn 8:42-58

The religious people of Jesus day thought that they were right with God based on a religious system they were involved in. Jesus exposed the fact that they had a religion, but they didn't really know God. This type of challenge will always infuriate people who are walking in a religion and not a reality.

The prophet Hosea prophesied about people who would fall into a false sense of religion in which they don't really know God.

Hosea 8:2-4 They cry out to Me, "My God, we of Israel know Thee!" Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him. They have set up kings, but not by Me; They have appointed princes, but I did not know it. With their silver and gold they have made idols for themselves, That they might be cut off. (NASB)

B. The difference between simply being religious and authentic Christianity.

Religion - It based on knowing about God and Jesus Christ. It is void of any real substance of a relationship with Him.

Christianity - Christianity is based on knowing God and Jesus. It goes past merely knowing about God and Jesus, and leads on into a relationship in which they experience God in their lives.

C. Those that are simply religious are content with the small amount of knowledge about God while those who know Him hunger for more of Him in their lives.

This was the heart of Paul. Phil 3:7-10 He pressed on to know God.

Knowing God is something we grow in. It is a progressive revelation and experience much like other relationships.

As we grow in our knowing God more and more of our lives will reflect His Lordship because He is Lord. The more we know Him as Lord the more of our lives will be under His rulership.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (NASB)

The religions attempt to control the effect of religion in their lives according to what they want or are comfortable with. This is one of the reasons why there is little desire to know God more because they don't want God controlling all their lives. They want a religion they can control.

Those that are religious hide behind the argument that they don't want to be fanatical about religion. That is simply a cover for not wanting more of God's control/Lordship in their lives.

D. Knowing God is the key to bearing fruit and growing in the things of God.

Jn 15:1-5 You must abide in the vine to bear fruit because you cannot bear it by yourself. It takes abiding in a relationship.

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

THE WORD OF GOD

PREFACE: The word of God is one of the most important areas of the believer's life. The only sure revelation we have of God is through His Word. Contained in His Word are all things He wants us to know about Himself, mankind, and what is required of us. All our ideas or revelations must be measured by the standard of His Word.

I. WHY IS THE WORD OF GOD IMPORTANT?

A. It is God's word to mankind.

2 Timothy 3: 16-17 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (NASB)

The purpose of the Bible is to reveal God. Through the Bible God has made known His nature, thoughts, feelings, and actions. Through it, He also shows mankind's state, need, and what the Lord requires of him.

The Bible is our only objective basis of faith and practice. Without the written word man would be left with an inadequate revelation of God that is subject to the whims of mankind's faulty reasoning and imagination. Objective - not affected by personal feelings or prejudice, based on facts, unbiased.

Without the Bible, man will tend to make God in his own image.

B. It is active and alive.

Hebrews 4: 12 ¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (NASB)

C. It effectually works in those who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2: 13 And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. (NASB)

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. (NASB)

D. It is good for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction. 2 Tim 3:16

E. It cleanses and purifies us. Jn 15:3; Ps 119:9; Eph 5:26

II. THE UNITY OF SCRIPTURE

A. There is a single theme that runs throughout the Bible that shows a remarkable unity.

The theme of redemptive history, with Christ as the fulfillment of God's plan.

John 5:39³⁹ "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; (NASB)

John 5:46⁴⁶ "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. (NASB)

Luke 24:47⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (NASB)

This remarkable unity is an indication of Divine inspiration, particularly when you consider that it is composed of 66 books written over approximately 1600 years by about 40 different men. No other collection of writings can claim such unity in such circumstances.

III. THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

A. The Bible doesn't merely contain the word of God, it is the word of God.

B. All of it is Divinely inspired and free of error.

If only part of it is inspired by God and partially true, then we would be left the victim of constantly changing human intellectual guesses as to what part is actually the word of God.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. It is not merely a collection of human thoughts and experiences. Men were moved upon by the Spirit of God to write.

The concept of God inspiring the Scriptures goes back to the original manuscripts and leads to the conclusion that error does not exist in the Scriptures as originally given. The Bible is the most copied, most scrutinized historical book we have, and by far the most accurate.

IV. THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

A. The Bible has always been viewed throughout Christendom as an authority for belief and practice.

Some groups give it only limited authority, subjecting it to human thought and decision, ecclesiastical structure, and church traditions.

The proper Biblical view is that the scriptures are the authority, given by inspiration of God, and our objective basis for faith and practice.

Foundations of Healthy Church Life

HOLY SPIRIT

PREFACE: When a person has started a new life by faith in Christ they are not left on their own power to walk out this life. God has provided the power of the Holy Spirit to enable believer to live and be witnesses for Him. In Acts 2 Peter speaks of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the last days. We are still living in that period of time and the ministry of the Spirit continues. There has been much confusion about the person and work of the Spirit in the life of the believer. In this study we hope to clear up some of the confusion on the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer.

I. BIBLICAL PROOFS OF THE PERSONALITY OF THE SPIRIT

A. The Holy Spirit is a personality, not a mere influence or power.

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as He. Jn 16:13,14

1. Attributes of personality ascribed to Him:

- a. Knowledge - 1 Cor 2:9-11 The Spirit knows the thoughts of God.
- b. Will - 1 Cor 12:11 The Spirit distributes gifts according to God's will.
- c. Mind - Rom 8:27 Whoever knows the mind of the Spirit..., He intercedes for the saints.
- d. Love - Rom 15:30 Paul urges the church by the love of the Spirit.
- e. Intelligence - Neh 9:20 God gave the Spirit to instruct them.
- f. Grief - Eph 4:30 Don't grieve the Spirit.

2. Biblical symbols for the Holy Spirit: These symbols often describe various operation of the Spirit.

- a. Fire - Isa 4:4; Acts 2:4; Mt 3:11
- b. Wind - Jn 3:8; Acts 2:2,3
- c. Water - Jn 7:38,39; 1 Cor 10:4
- d. Oil - Mt 25:3; Ps 89:20; 1Jn 2:27
- e. Dove - Mt 3:16

B. The Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus (The Head), and the Church (His body).

	Christ	The Church
1. Born of the Spirit	Lk 1:35	Jn 3:1-5; 1Pet 1:22-23
2. Filled with the Spirit	Jn 3:34	Acts 1:8; 2:4; Eph 3:19
3. Lead of the Spirit	Mt 4:1	Rom 8:14
4. Ministry of preaching by Spirit	Lk 4:18	Acts 4:8-12

5. Cast out devils	Mt 12:28	Acts 8:5-7
6. Anointing	Acts 10:38	2 Cor 1:21; 1Jn 2:27
7. Crucifixion by Spirit	Heb 9:14	
8. Commandments by Spirit	Acts 1:2	Acts 15:28-29

C. The purpose of the Spirit in the life of the believer.

1. Power to be witnesses.

Power - dunamis - force, strength, might, power, strength, ability Lk 24:49.
They were to wait for the Spirit Acts 1:8; 4:31-33

2. Inspiration for true worship. Jn 4:24; 1 Cor 14:15
- 3 Help in our prayer life. Rom 8:26-27
4. Understanding of the Scriptures. Jn 16:13; 14:26
5. Guidance from God. Jn 16:13; Mk 13:11; Rom 8:14
6. Ability to bear fruit. Gal 5:22
7. Ability to operate in Spiritual gifts. 1 Cor 12:7,11

II. BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. Questions that cause most of the controversy over this issue.

1. Do we automatically get filled with the Spirit at salvation, or is there something more?
2. Is there any accompanying manifestation in those who are filled with the Spirit?
3. What is the procedure, or how is one filled with the Spirit?
4. Is being filled with the Spirit a one time thing like water baptism?

In answering these questions we simply need to look at the Biblical accounts.

B. Biblical accounts.

Acts 2:1-11 The Spirit fell on them while waiting in prayer before God (vs 1-4). The initial result was speaking in tongues about the mighty deeds of God (vs 4,11).

Acts 2:14-17 Peter speaks of the ministry of the Spirit in the last days. He lists manifestations of the Spirit in the lives of believers with prophecy, dreams, and visions.

Acts 4:8 The Scripture makes a distinction that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit in speaking.

Acts 4:31 The same believers who were filled in Acts 2 were filled again while praying. The result here was speaking the word of God with boldness.

Acts 6:3 When choosing men to serve, one requirement was that they were full of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:12-24 A period of days elapsed between the time they received the word and were later filled with the Spirit (vs. 12-17). They were filled with the Spirit as hands were laid on them (vs. 17). Something observable happened as a result of them being filled with the Spirit (vs. 18).

Acts 9:1-17 A period of 3 days elapsed between Paul's Damascus road experience and being filled with the Spirit. He was filled with the Spirit as hands were laid on him (vs. 17-18). We do not know what the initial manifestation of the Spirit was in Paul's life but we do know that he later operated in gifts of the Spirit, especially speaking in tongues. 1 Cor 14:1-40, 18.

Acts 10:43-48 The Holy Spirit fell on them while Peter was speaking. The initial manifestation was speaking in tongues and exalting God. (vs. 45-46). This event occurred before they were baptized in water (vs. 47).

Acts 19:1-6 Something in their experience gave Paul the indication that they hadn't received the Spirit when they initially believed (vs. 2). They were filled with the Spirit as Paul laid his hands on them. (vs. 6). The initial manifestation was speaking in tongues and prophesying.

C. Answers from the Biblical accounts.

1. There is no automatic assumption that one is filled at salvation.
2. There is very clear accompanying manifestations when one is filled, such as tongues, prophecy, exalting God, and boldness. The most common manifestation is speaking in tongues. We should expect accompanying manifestation when filled. There are inferences in other writings from the Apostle Paul that speaking in tongues was common place in the lives of believers 1 Cor 12-14, 1Co 14:39 NASB Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.
3. People were filled at times when hands were laid on them, when praying, and when listening to the word being preached.

4. It is obvious that being filled with the Spirit is not a one time only thing. These accounts, along with the exhortation in Eph 5: 18 to be continually filled with the Spirit, shows us that it is to be a continual experience.

D. Receiving the Spirit.

1. Like everything else in God it is to be received by faith. Gal 3:2; Rom 10:17.

2. We must be convinced that the baptism of the Spirit is Biblical, necessary, applicable for today, an experience distinct from salvation, and evidenced by speaking in tongues or other biblical manifestations.

3. Make Jesus your focus. Mt 3:11

4. Ask for it based upon a hunger in your heart. Lk 11:9-13; Jn 7:37-38

Expect to receive, and act in faith to respond in Biblical manifestations. As in Acts, they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance.

Foundations of Healthy Church Life

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

PREFACE: Praise and worship hold a very important place among God's people. The Bible gives us a thorough coverage of praise and worship. There has been a great hunger among God's people to return to a more Biblical expression of praise and worship. We believe that God desires us to worship in a Psalmic pattern, which is a genuine, heart felt, expressive praise and worship desired by God and described in detail in the book of Psalms. Let us look at part of the Biblical pictures of praise and worship and pattern ourselves after them.

I. INTRODUCTION TO PRAISE AND WORSHIP

A. Importance of praise and worship

Satan knew the value of worship. He offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if He would fall down and worship him. Mt 4:8-11

The importance of praise and worship lies in the relationship it established between the worshiper and the object worshiped. We tend to become like what we worship. Example of a fan and an athletic team.

B. Real worship and praise are the characteristics of true Christianity.

1. *Phil 3:3 "for we are the true circumcision; who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh."*

2. Jesus in talking to woman at the well explains that the time has now come that true worshipers will not be set apart by outward form. True worshipers will worship God in Spirit and Truth. Jn 4:21-24.

C. Distinctions between worship and praise.

1. Definitions:

Praise - to commend, to applaud, to express approval or admiration of, to extol in words or in song, to magnify, shine, boast, rave etc. It is an outward expression.

Worship - The Greek word carries the meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand. Also it means to do reverence to, adore, fawn or crouch, worship etc. It is difficult to get a simple definition of worship because real worship defies definition. It is something to be experienced. It is the result of a divine encounter that involves the feelings that are born out an intimate communion with God. It is a response to a revelation of God.

Praise and worship are so closely related and affect each other so much that it is difficult to completely separate them into narrow boxes of definition.

D. How are we to worship God?

Jesus tells us how to worship in John 4:24.

1. *Worship in spirit* - Jesus here is showing that worship is not to be bound to a certain time or place, but it was going to be a function of the spirit of man reaching out to the Spirit of God. Worship isn't just outward ritual. Worship is our spirit corresponding with God's Spirit.

2. *Worship in Truth* - Jesus Christ is the truth. Jn 14:6. Jesus intends that we worship in accordance with the truths of God's word. Jn 17:17, Ps 119. The doctrinal content of our songs determine their real spiritual value.

3. *Worship with our whole heart.* Ps 111:1; Ps 9:1 It includes our emotions.

E. Praise and worship signify our priestly ministry.

1. *The Bible teaches that we are all priests unto God. Rev 1:6; 1 Pet 2:5*

2. *God has shown that He is to be approached by sacrifice and spiritual sacrifices. 1 Pet 2:5*

- Sacrifice ourselves. Rom 12:1

- Sacrifice our possessions. Phil 4:18; Heb 13:16

- Sacrifice of praise. Heb 13:15

- Sacrifice of thanksgiving. Ps 116:1-7; 1 Thess 5:18; Eph 5:20

- Sacrifice of joy. Ps 27:6

II. WHY WE ARE TO WORSHIP

1. God has ordained worship/praise as a way to come into His presence. Ps 100:4

2. Worship/praise is a sign that God is in the midst of us (Ps 22:3). God inhabits our praise (Jer 33:11).

3. God has given us worship as a way of glorifying Him. Ps 50:23

4. Worship/praise is part of our priestly ministry. Heb 13:15

5. God is worthy to be praised. Ps 18:3

III. WHEN AND WHERE WE ARE TO WORSHIP

A. When are we to worship?

1. *At all times. Ps 34:1*

2. *Continually.* Ps 34: 1, Ps 35: 7, Heb 13: 15; Eph 5: 18,20; Lk 24: 53
3. *While I have my being.* Ps 146: 1-3; 45: 17; 71: 6; 119: 164
4. *Everyday.* "Everyday will I bless Thee" Ps 146: 1-3

B. Where we are to worship?

1. In our homes. Ps 149: 5
2. In the congregation. Ps 22: 22; Ps 35: 18; 100: 2,4; 111: 1; 134: 2; 135: 1
3. Before the unbeliever. Acts 2: 46-47; Ps 40: 3; Ps 126: 2; Acts 16: 25-34

C. Who is to worship?

1. The Lord's servants. Ps 113: 1
2. Those who fear the Lord. Ps 22: 23
3. Those who seek Him. Ps 22: 26; 145: 10

IV. BIBLICAL EXPRESSIONS OF WORSHIP/PSALMIC WORSHIP

Controversy stirs when we begin to discuss the manner in which we are to worship God especially the outward expressions. We believe in "Biblical Psalmic Worship" which means a genuine, heart felt, expressive praise and worship desired by God and described in the Bible, especially the book of Psalms.

This is part of worshipping Him according to the word. Some mistakenly think the we praise and worship with expressions we are comfortable with. This is a wrong posture.

Biblical/Psalmic expressions of praise and worship are like "love languages." Most spouses have certain expressions of love that are especially meaningful to them that they desire their spouse to exhibit. God is our Heavenly Father and Jesus is our Bridegroom. The expressions of praise and worship in the Bible are a type of love language that He desires. The expressions of worship aren't about what we like or find meaningful. They are about what God delights in and we do it because it is what He desires.

A. Biblical expressions of praise and worship.

1. Lifting our hands. **14 Times**

Ps 28: 2 "Hear the voice of my supplication when I cry to Thee for help, when I lift up my hands toward Thy holy sanctuary.

Ps 63: 3-4 "Because Thy loving kindness 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 to Thy name.'

Ps 141:2 "May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee; the lifting of my hands as the evening offering."

Ps 134:2 "Lift up your hands to the sanctuary, and bless the Lord."

1 Timothy 2:8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

Note that children lift their hands when they want adults to pick them up. Lifting of the hands is also a form of surrender.

2. Clapping hands. **12 Times**

Ps 47:1 "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of Triumph."

Ps 98:8

3. Playing musical instruments. **58 Times**

Ps 149:1-4

Ps 150:1 -6

Ps 81:1-2

Ps 98:4-6

Ps 33:2

Ps 45:8

God has given us music and singing to help lift our heart.

4. Singing. **29 Times**

Ps 81:1-2

Ps 33:2-3

Ps 95:1

Jas 5:13 "...Is anyone merry, let him sing praises."

Eph 5:19

Col 3:16

Ps 149:6 "Let the high praises of God be on our lips."

5. Shouting, crying out, lifting our voice. **265 Times**

Ps 47:1 "Shout unto God with a voice of triumph."

Ps 66:1-2 "Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; Sing the glory of His name; make His praise glorious."

Ps 81:1 "Sing for joy to God our strength; shout joyfully to the God of Jacob."

Psalms 95:1-2 O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. (2) Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

Psalms 98:4-6 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; Break forth and sing for joy and sing praises. (5) Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, With the lyre and the sound of melody. (6) With trumpets and the sound of the horn Shout joyfully before the King, the LORD.

Psalms 100: 1 A Psalm for Thanksgiving. Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.

Psalms 126: 2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter And our tongue with joyful shouting; Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

The word "hallelujah" means to cry aloud or break out into a cry.

The 5 places in Revelation that reveal the eternal state are is full of loud voices.

Revelation 7: 9-12 NASB I looked, and behold, a great multitude...10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Revelation 14: 1-7 NASB Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion,...2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harp6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth,...7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory,... worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

Revelation 19: 1-6 NASB After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God;...6 Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

Revelation 21: 1-3 NASB 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.

The only Silence in Revelation is the half an hour before the judgments of God are released on the earth in Chapter 8

6. Standing. 7 Times

Ps 135: 2 "You who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God! Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praises to His name, for it is lovely;"

Ps 122: 2

Ps 134: 1 "Behold, bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord, who serve (stand) by night in the house of the Lord! Lift up your hands to the sanctuary, and bless the Lord."

Ps 135: 2

Standing speaks of respect and alertness.

7. Dancing. 9 Times

Ps 30:11

Ps 149:3

Ps 150:4

Ex 15:20-21

8. Bowing or kneeling. 12 Times

Ps 95:6

Rev 19:4

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

THE CHURCH

PREFACE: The Church is very important in the plans and purposes of God. Jesus spoke of the relationship of the Kingdom of God and the Church in Mt 16:16-19. The Church is the instrument or agent to express and demonstrate the Kingdom of God on the earth. As the Body of Christ, the Church is to be the visible expression of Christ in the earth. Often neglected and misunderstood by believers, the building of the Church (Mt 16:16-18) as the bride of Christ (Eph 5:25-27) lies at the center of the purposes of God in our time (Eph 3:10-11).

I. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

A. Definition

“Church” - Greek word “Ekklesia” - calling out, called out ones, congregation, assembly.

The church is the called out assembled people of God, called out of the world, and assembled together in Local Church Bodies.

B. Incorrect views of the Church.

Charles Colson “It is hard to imagine a more urgent or critical task than the recovery and restoration of the Biblical view of the church...Three or Four years ago I came to the realization that we have a scandalously low view of the church.”

D. Mrtyn Lloyd-Jones “Our greatest need is to recapture the New Testament teaching concerning the church.”

John Stott “Today more than ever, we need to catch a Biblical Vision of the church...If the church is central to God’s purpose, as seen in both history and the gospel, it must also be central to our lives. How can you take lightly what God takes so seriously? How dare we push to the circumference what God has placed in the center.”

In much of Christianity the current view of the church is different than the Biblical model. This must be changed if we are to move forward in the purposes of God for the church. The following is a list of some of the incorrect views and their Biblical counterpart.

1. The church or house of God is the building you meet together in.

Biblical view - The church is the people baptized into the Lord Jesus and assembled together to serve His purposes. Eph 2:19-22; 1 Cor 10:17; 1 Cor 3:16; 1 Pet 2:4-5; Acts 7:46-49

2. The church is something you have usually in the form of services or meetings.

Biblical view - The church is something you are. 1 Cor 12:27

3. The church functions at scheduled meeting times.

Biblical view - Church life is an ongoing process, and the church is to be functioning all the time. Mt 18:19; Acts 2:46; Acts 4:31-37; 1 Cor 14:26

4. The church is an organization/denomination you are a member of.

Biblical view - The church is an organism. There is practical commitment to the local group of believers God joins you to. 1 Cor 12:13,18

5. Any believer is the church, therefore any believer himself or group of believers who get together constitute a church, - Bible studies, praise and worship meetings, Christian clubs or organizations, etc.

Biblical view - While it is true that Jesus lives in the believer, and where 2 or 3 believers gather He is in their midst (Mt 18:20), the Biblical picture of local churches is flocks of sheep. While fellowship, worship, study of the Word, etc. are all activities of believers, one important ingredient that constitutes a church is leadership. God clearly assigns shepherds to pastor/shepherd the flocks. God ordained leadership that oversees, pastors, and leads the flock. Acts 14:21-23; Acts 20:28; Eph 4:16; Heb 13:17; 1Thes 5:12-13; 1 Pet 5:5; 1 Tim 5:13; Phil 1:1, etc.

II. TWO FORMS OF THE CHURCH IN SCRIPTURE

A. The Invisible Church

All believers every where, past, and present, are joined in a mystical union in a spiritual body for a habitation of the Spirit, with Jesus Christ as it's Head. 1 Cor 10:32; 1:2; 3:16

B. The Church Visible/Local Church.

Those believers in a distinct geographic area who are joined together to serve the purposes of God. It is an identifiable group of believers who are joined together in a way of life serving God under the oversight of God given leaders.

It is:

- 1) Groups of believers in a given locality. Mt 18:20.
- 2) Gathered to the person of Jesus for worship. Jn 4:24.
- 3) Living a disciplined life. Mt 28:19-20.
- 4) Under the oversight of gifted ministries. Eph 4:9-13.
- 5) Established in the principles of Christ doctrine. Acts 2:42, Heb 6:1-2.
- 6) Keeping the memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 11:23-34.
- 7) Locally governed yet in fellowship with other groups of believers. Rev 1:11, Phil 1:1.

C. The context of the Bible (The NT) is the context of the Local Church.

The New Testament was written to local churches and it is only in the context of local churches that it can be properly understood.

The idea of Church is mentioned 114 times in the New Testament, 96 of those times it is in reference to the local Church.

Individual verses Corporate glasses. We tend to read scriptures through individual glasses rather than corporate glasses. This often causes us to misinterpret the scriptures because they were written from a corporate context. Examples: Rom 12:1-2 context vs 3-18; 1Pet 1:23 context 1:21-2:10

Billy Graham. "Letters were written to individual churches, small clusters of believers, leaders, and followers together. At the heart of these letters is God's assumption that we belong together at work and at worship in a Local Church. I am convinced that the cluster of believers of which you are a part, is the basic unit through which God is working to redeem the world.

John White, Navigators "Can one be a committed disciple and not be a part of a local congregation? Practically, I believe the answer is no. If we take Scriptures seriously, committed discipleship must include fellowship, interaction, and functioning with other believers in a local church.

Terry Virgo "It was said of Jesus (when He drove the money changers out of the temple) Zeal for God's House would consume Him...Do we have zeal for God's House or do we see it as hopeless? Many Christians would reply, "of course we go to church," but that wasn't the question. Do we have zeal for God's House?...The book of Revelation shows Jesus, not as one who is vaguely in the midst of the church, but as one who walks among the individual lamp stands. He knows each local church intimately. He commends one and warns another. He notes steadfastness here, apathy there. Each is an open book to Him. His longing for a glorious bride is seen in His concern and ambition for each particular congregation. How far short we come in our attitude towards the Local Church! Our devotion to Christ is rarely matched by a similar devotion to His church, but finds expression in other areas. And so we fail to share God's heart and follow his strategy.

III. Nine MODELS WE SEE IN THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH SCENE

A. The Teaching Center - A place where believers go to hear the Bible expounded. Some go so far as to their church organization "_____ Teaching Center."

B. The Theater - A place where faithful gather to witness the drama of the sacrament and other traditions enacted before them.

C. The Corporation Church - A place where an efficient and highly program-oriented organization with a full-time pastoral team involved in retailing religion to the masses.

D. The Country Club Church - A place where people join to have certain needs met, just as one might join any other organization to have other needs met.

E. The Mystical/Anti Structure Church – House churches, any meeting church, alternative churches etc. This **View of church is anti organizational**. Anything that has a structure is considered wrong. They frown on any recognized leadership or authority. No organization, no structure, we are one in the Spirit,

F. The Personality Church – People are drawn together around the personality or charisma of the leader. He may be well known or well liked.

G. The Issue Church – The Church is built on issues. The issue is the thing that draws and keeps the church together. As long as the issue is to the forefront the people have a common rally point. Issues can be anything from Politics, Home Schooling, Abortion, etc

I. Event/Revival Center Church – The Church is centered around getting people to come to Events or meetings. Success is measured in the number of people gathered in buildings.

H. Spiritual Hospital – People who are needy (all aspects) are drawn to caring people. The identity of the people is need based. Problem with hospitals is that you can touch the caring aspect of family but you can't build normal healthy family there. A lot of germs and sickness there. People tend to want out of there when their needs are met.

IV. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

This was the Church that "turned the world upside down". Acts 17:6. They made a great impact in the earth. This is in great contrast to society's view of the Church today as boring, irrelevant, impersonal, and full of hypocrites.

A. The Church of Pentecost Acts 2:36-47; 4:31-33; 5:42

Authentic Christianity "Coming under the loving Lordship of Jesus, and being joined to a company of imperfect people who are learning to live a new life in a new way."

B. One of the hallmarks was that they were devoted to fellowship. Acts 2:42.

Fellowship - Gk Koinonia - a having in common, partnership, a shared life, or a common life. It is where we get our word "community". Fellowship/community was their lifestyle.

Their view of Church was not a building, a meeting, or an organization. They saw it as a joined together group of people (people in relationship with God and each other) relating and working together on a regular basis to extend the Kingdom of God.

A "Sunday Morning Christian" was no more in their way of thinking than a "Sunday Morning Church". They were radically devoted to God and to one another.

Biblical Fellowship was more than a two or three times a week meeting for five minutes of "fellowship." It was a lifestyle in which they shared a common life together.

B. Examples of the life of fellowship in the Early Church's experience.

- 1. They prayed, broke bread, and received teaching together. Acts 2:43*
- 2. They were together and held things in common. Acts 2:44*
- 3. They shared material possessions as any had need. Acts 2:45, 4:32*
- 4. They walked together living their lives on a daily basis. Acts 2:46*
- 5. They ate meals together in their homes. Acts 2:46*
- 6. They praised God together. Acts 2:47, 4:24*
- 7. They met in the Temple and from house to house. Acts 2:46*
- 8. They were united in purpose, one heart one soul. Acts 4:32 (They had a common destiny in God together).*
- 9. There wasn't a needy one among them due to their benevolence. Acts 4:32*

V. RELATIONSHIPS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

A. The New Testament was written to Local Churches (groups of believers in geographic areas who were joined together in relationships) and it is only in the context of Local Churches that it can be understood.

B. The New Testament gives us very clear guidelines on how we are to walk in relationships together as a Local Church. 59 One Anothers

1. "...Be at peace with each other." (Mark 9:50)
2. "...Wash one another's feet." (John 13:14),
3. "...Love one another..." (John 13:34), 4. "...Love one another..." (John 13:34), 5. "...Love one another..." (John 13:35), 6. "...Love one another..." (John 15:12), 7. "...Love one another" (John 15:17)
8. "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love..." (Romans 12:10)
9. "...Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)
10. "Live in harmony with one another..." (Romans 12:16)
11. "...Love one another..." (Romans 13:8)
12. "...Stop passing judgment on one another." (Romans 14:13)
13. "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you..." (Romans 15:7)
14. "...Instruct one another." (Romans 15:14)
15. "Greet one another with a holy kiss..." (Romans 16:16)
16. "...When you come together to eat, wait for each other." (I Cor. 11:33)
17. "...Have equal concern for each other." (I Corinthians 12:25)
18. "...Greet one another with a holy kiss." (I Corinthians 16:20)
19. "Greet one another with a holy kiss." (II Corinthians 13:12)
20. "...Serve one another in love." (Galatians 5:13)
21. Don't bite or devour one another "If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you will be destroyed by each other." (Galatians 5:15)
22. "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." (Galatians 5:26)
23. "Carry each other's burdens..." (Galatians 6:2)
24. "...Be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2)
25. "Be kind and compassionate to one another..." (Ephesians 4:32)
26. "...Forgiving each other..." (Ephesians 4:32)
27. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." (Ephesians 5:19)
28. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Ephesians 5:21)
29. "...In humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)
30. "Do not lie to each other..." (Colossians 3:9)
31. "Bear with each other..." (Colossians 3:13)
32. "...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another." (Colossians 3:13)
33. "Teach...[one another]" (Colossians 3:16)
34. "...Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
35. "...Make your love increase and overflow for each other." (I Thessalonians 3:12)

36. "...Love each other." (I Thessalonians 4:9)
37. "...Encourage each other..."(I Thessalonians 4:18) 38. "...Encourage each other..." I Thessalonians 5:11)
39. "...Build each other up..." (I Thessalonians 5:11)
40. "Encourage one another daily..." Hebrews 3:13)
41. "...Spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10:24)
42. "...Encourage one another." (Hebrews 10:25)
43. "...Do not slander one another." (James 4:11)
44. "Don't grumble against each other..." (James 5:9)
45. "Confess your sins to each other..." (James 5:16)
46. "...Pray for each other." (James 5:16)
47. "...Love one another deeply, from the heart." (I Peter 3:8)
48. "...Live in harmony with one another..." (I Peter 3:8)
49. "...Love each other deeply..." (I Peter 4:8)
50. "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." (I Peter 4:9)
51. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..." (I Peter 4:10)
52. "...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another..."(I Peter 5:5)
53. "Greet one another with a kiss of love." (I Peter 5:14)
54. "...Love one another." (I John 3:11), 55. "...Love one another." (I John 3:23), 56. "...Love one another." (I John 4:7),
57. "...Love one another." (I John 4:11), 58. "...Love one another." (I John 4:12) 59. "...Love one another." (II John 5)

It is obvious that in order to walk in these instructions for fellowship it will take more than just a corporate meeting one or two times a week. It is to be a way of life.

C. At the heart of the purpose of God for Local Churches is the need to walk together in right relationships.

Romans 15:5-7 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; 6 that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

Philippians 2:1-2...2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.]

Colossians 2:1-2 ...2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

1 Corinthians 1:10 10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. (NASB)

Ephesians 3:17-18...and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (NASB)

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

THE COVENANT PEOPLE OF GOD

PREFACE: The concept of God's covenant and His people lies at the heart of God's purposes. Throughout Scripture God has revealed His covenant intention to have a people for Himself in this earth that would reflect His nature and Kingdom. A proper revelation of God's covenant people will help break us out of our individualistic frame of reference into the corporate purposes of God.

Tit 2:14 who gave Himself to us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession.

I. THEME OF THE BIBLE

A. To properly understand the whole Bible we must have an understanding it's central theme. Without this we will have a hard time seeing how the OT and NT fit together.

B. To serve God's purpose our lives must be ordered around His theme/story.

Acts 13:22, 36... He raised up David...concerning whom He also testified...,'I have found David...a man after My heart, who will do all My will.'36"For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep.

C. Central theme of the Bible

Central figure - Jesus Christ

Major themes of the bible - Reconciliation, Atonement, Redemption etc.

Central theme - God choosing a people out from all the other peoples of the earth and entering into covenant with them that they would become His holy people carrying out His purposes. As they live together as His family under His rule He demonstrates His life and Kingdom through them. Another way to say it is God's family together on God's mission.

D. Scriptures regarding the theme of the covenant people of God.

Exodus 6:1-8, 19:1-7; Deut 7 :6-8; 1 Pet 2:4-10 Peter quoting from Exodus 19; Titus 2:13-14; Eph 5:25-27; 1 Cor 10:1-11; 2Cor 6:16-18

E. Definitions from Exodus 19:5-6, Dt 7:6

Nation - A nation of people. Dictionary - A body of people associated with a particular territory that is conscious of it's own unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly it's own.

Kingdom - A rule, a domain, a realm, royal power or dominion, a king's rule or domain.

People - A people of the same race and language. Dictionary - The whole body or persons constituting a community, tribe, race, or nation.

F. Covenant is the means by which God chooses and joins Himself with His people

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant...with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

The story of the Bible reveals various covenants God made with His people.

Adam and Eve Genesis 1-5; Noah Genesis 8:20-9:17; Abraham Genesis 12, 15:4-21, 17, Gal 3:16; Moses Ex 6:1-8, chpts 19-24, Dt 7:6; David 2 Sam 7...; and the New Covenant, Jer 31:34, Heb 8:8-13 (which is a continuation, and fulfillment of aspects of the previous covenants).

New Testament writers viewed the New Covenant as the fulfillment of important aspects God revealed in previous covenants (primarily to be His people in the earth).

The earth being filled with a people reflecting His image

*Gen 1:27-28 God created man in His own image...28) God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, **and fill the earth**, and subdue it.*

Eph 1:22-23...and gave Him as head over all things to the church, (23) which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (msg The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.)

Eph 3:11-12 "through the church the many sided wisdom of God is made known."

Abraham's seed that will multiply and bless many nations (Christ and His church)

Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-5, 17:1-7,15-21, Gal 3:16-29...the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one... that is, Christ... (29) And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Gen 22:17-18...I will greatly multiply your seed...and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. (18) "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

Mt 16:18 "I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail" (msg will not be able to keep it out).

God's Holy Nation and People of His own possession

Exo 19:5-6...if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; (6) and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'
Deu 7:6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

1Pe 2:1-9...(4) And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, (5) you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (6) For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION...(9) But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION

Covenant - Webster's dictionary "a mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, or a contract."

God' s definition goes much deeper - It is not just an agreement creating a connection. It is a joining together that alters both parties. It is a joining to accomplish a purpose.

God joins Himself to His people. We are "baptized into Christ" Romans 6:3, Gal 3:27. We are forever joined, a part of Him ("now you are the body of Christ" 1 Cor 12:27).

The covenant joining of God includes Him joining us together as His family. One distinction lost in English translations of the Bible is that almost all of the promises and commandments of the NT were written in the plural. The church, according to Paul was not a loose federation of isolated individuals. It was designed by God to be a joined body, a living, breathing, organism, whose members are so closely connected that they can move together.

Part of the understanding of the communion ceremony is realizing Christ covenant has caused us to be joined together.

1Co 10:16-17 Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? (17) Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

Jesus prayed for the same oneness that is in the Godhead to be among His people

Joh 17:11-21...that they may be one even as We are....(21) that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

G. History of the theme of God's covenant people throughout the bible.

Adam and Eve - God's desire for Adam and Eve to fill the earth with a people of His own image. Gen 1:28-28

Abraham - God chooses a man of faith to father a nation of people that will bring blessing to other nations Gen 12:1-3, Gen 15:1-6. He reaffirms the promise after Ishmael Gen 17:1-7 6-7. He reaffirms the promise after the sacrifice of Isaac. Gen 22:16-18

Isaac - God reaffirms Abrahamic covenant with Isaac. Gen 26:23-25

Jacob - Steals birthright from Esau; steals blessing from father; wrestles with Angel and his name changed to Israel (striven with God). God affirms name change and promise of a nation and people to come forth from him.

Gen 35:9-12

Joseph - the dealings with Joseph and his brothers culminated with the preserving of His people Gen 45:7, 50:19-20

Moses - People of God multiplied in Egypt. Ex 1:7-9. God raises up Moses to deliver them. Ex 3:7-8. People led out to Mt. Sinai and received their national identity. Ex 19:1-6.

Numbers - People lead to land and rebel, go back into the wilderness until a new generation arises.

Deuteronomy - Moses assembles the new generation and recounts the covenant to them. He explains to them that their purposes as a nation is so other nations will see the greatness of God through them. Dt 4:7, Dt 7:6-8

Joshua - People led into the promise land and capture key strategic places.

Judges - People mess up as they fight against the enemies in the land and God delivers them by raising up Judges.

1&2 Sam, 1&2 Chron, 1&2 Kings - Samuel is the last Judge and the people want a king to rule over them. Saul is chosen first king but he turned out bad then David is anointed as king. David's son Solomon takes over and builds the temple. He dies, and the kingdom is divided between the 10 northern tribes of Israel and the southern tribe of Judah. Each has a series of good and bad kings that rule over them until the northern tribes are led away into captivity by Assyria and the southern kingdom is led away into captivity by Babylon.

Ezra and Neh - After 70 years of captivity a remnant returns under Zerubbabel and Jeshua. Later Ezra returns with a remnant and the Temple is rebuilt. Twelve years later Nehemiah returns and builds walls around the city.

Malachi - God's people continue to show signs of drifting away and Malachi calls them back to covenant faithfulness. The OT closes heading into the 400 year intertestament period with God promising that a prophetic voice would turn His people back to family. Mal 4:5-6

New Testament - Jesus comes on the scene and announces a new phase in the plan for the Kingdom Nation, and covenant People of God.

He announces that the Kingdom is being taken away from the natural Jews and given to the Church. Mt 21:42-43, Rom 9:24-26. He tells it in a Parable. Lk 20:9-18. He tells Peter He is giving the keys of the Kingdom to the Church. Mt 16:16-19 Parable of the vine growers

Christ gives His life as the covenant to sanctify God's people. Titus 2:13-14, Eph 5:25-27

Paul expresses it as both believing Jews and Gentiles being formed into one new people in Christ. (Eph 2:11-22) to express the life of the Kingdom.

The New Covenant is a covenant of people hood. Heb 8:1-12 is a quote from Jer 31. Peter expresses the fulfillment of the idea of people hood through the Church. 1 Pet 2:4-10

"The Church is constituted a people just as an individual is constituted a child of God. Converted individuals become part of the transformed people. The walking out of this reality always produces a church with NT dynamic, unless stifled by unbiblical traditions."

II. BIBLICAL MANIFESTATION OF INVOLVEMENT WITH GOD'S PEOPLE

A. The Biblical model of involvement is with the church, specifically the Local Church

The word church is used 114 times in the NT, 96 of those times is in direct reference to the Local Church.

B. Definition of Church

Gk Ekklesia - calling out, called out ones, assembly, or called out and assembled together for a special purpose.

C. God's design of His people is covenant interdependence - We are to be joined not just connected

Romans 12:5⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Amplified "mutually dependent on one another"

Ephesians 4:25 for we are members of one another. 1 Cor 12:13-27, Eph 4:16

Difference between joining and connection - An extension chord is connected to the wall outlet as it is plugged in, but an arm is joined to a body. You can disconnect the chord without much problem but if you disconnect the arm it is a much bigger problem.

We often overemphasize the personal that we lose the aspect of our corporate walk.

Ephesians 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (NASB)

D. We can only operate in a Biblical model as we walk in our relationships with God's people.

Ephesians 2:21-22 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (NASB)

Ephesians 4:16 Colossians 2:18-19

1 Peter 2:4-5 And coming to Him as to a living stone...you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood.

E. It takes covenant commitment to walk in relationally with God's people.

Acts 2:24 says they were devoted to fellowship Gk koinonia - a having in common, partnership, a shared life, or a common life. It is where we get our word community.

Wallis - *"Community is the very essence of the Church, and the very lifestyle of the Kingdom. The Church is community."*

F. We must avoid the unbiblical idea not being joined and walking together with God's people.

We don't want to be spiritual bumble bees, spiritual butterflies, spiritual lone rangers, or spiritual grasshoppers hopping from one exciting meeting or Bible study to another. Nor do we want to be content with only being a part of the radio or television church that has little real involvement with other believers.

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

The Kingdom Of God - The Church - And Relationships

PREFACE: The Kingdom of God in its simplest form is the rule/government of God. A main call of the Church is to express the Kingdom of God in the earth. As we gain understanding of the Kingdom of God from Scripture we will see that walking in right relationships is at the heart of living in and expressing the Kingdom.

I. INTRODUCTION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A. Five things that show us that the Kingdom of God was the major thrust of Jesus' ministry.

1. He announced it's coming in a present sense.

Matthew 4: 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (NASB) Kingdom used over 50 times in Mathew alone. Jesus was the perfect example of the Kingdom

2. His teachings centered around revealing truths about the Kingdom.

Matthew 9: 35 And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. (NASB)

Showing, declaring, and demonstrating the Kingdom of God

His parables illustrated truths about the Kingdom. Mt 13:11

3. He talked about how to enter the Kingdom. *Jn 3:3-6, Mt 5:20, Mt 7:21.*

4. His mighty works were to prove that the Kingdom was here. *Mt 12:28*

5. He also announced the Kingdom's coming in a future sense. *Mt 24:31-34, Lk 22:29-30*

B. The Kingdom of God was a main thrust of the early Church.

Book of Acts begins with and ends with teaching on Kingdom and it was proclaimed throughout.

Acts 1:3 To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. (NASB)

Act 28: 30-31 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, (31) preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

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

Acts 19:8 And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. (NASB)

C. God wants the Kingdom to be our main thrust.

- 1. We are to pray as a priority for it to come. Mt 6:10*
- 2. We are to seek it first. Mt 6:33*

D. Definition of the Kingdom.

Hebrew: Malkuth - a rule, a domain, a realm, a reign.

Greek: Baselea - a royalty, rule, a realm, royal power or dominion. King (King's) dom (domain) - In it's simplest form it is a kings rule and domain.

Kingdom is a governmental word. A contemporary word that could be used is the "government" of God.

In a Biblical sense the Kingdom of God is the rule of King Jesus and the area which is receptive to His rule. Linguist and Bible Translator - In Greek and Hebrew the word is a verbal noun. It is a thing yet it is active. It is the active rulership of God. This will change your whole perspective.

II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE CHURCH

A. Salvation involves God placing us in and/or under His Kingdom (rule).

Colossians 1:13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, (NASB)

B. Coming under the Lordship of Jesus means coming into the Kingdom.

Romans 10:9-10 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; ¹⁰ for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (NASB)

C. God has designed His Church to dwell in and express the Kingdom to the world around us.

1 Peter 2:4-9 which is a quote from Exodus 19:5-6

Matthew 16:16-19 And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (NASB)

The Church is the vehicle or agent to express the Kingdom of God.

Billy Graham from the book Approaching Hoof beats. *"He (the apostle John, in Revelation) wrote to individual churches, small clusters of believers, leaders and followers together. At the heart of these letters is God's assumption that we belong together at work and at worship in a local church. I am convinced that the cluster of believers of which you are a part, those brothers and sisters in Christ with whom you join to pray and study, give and witness, is the basic unit through which God is working to redeem the world."*

The lifestyle of the Kingdom of God is to be lived out and expressed through the Church. The Church is to demonstrate the culture of the Kingdom to the culture around it.

The nature and power of the King (what He is like) should be seen in His Kingdom (through the Church).

III. The Kingdom of God and Relationships

A. One of the main ways the Kingdom of God is expressed is through the right relationships of it's people. Right relationships with God and with one another.

It is a relational Kingdom.

When religion drifts away from relationships toward religion it becomes progressively complicated. Jesus appeared on the scene and religion had become complicated.

*Mar 12:13-34 Then they *sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him in order to trap Him in a statement. (14) They *came and *said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?...28-34 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" (the Law at that time had become complicated: (613 Commands - Oral Law Over 7000) (29) Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; (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.' (31) "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (32) The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; (33) AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." (34) When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."*

Ten commandments: 4 Relationship with God and 6 relationship with others.

It is a relational Kingdom - Rom 14:17-15:6 The context of the passage of the Kingdom is right relationships. *17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Eph 2:14-22 The work of Christ brought peace between man and God and peace between people who now walk in right relationships.

B. Our relationship with God and one another are interrelated. They affect each other.

1 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. (NASB)

Mat 6:12-14 NASB 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... (14) "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

*Mat 18:21-35 NASB Then how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, (22) Jesus *said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. (23) "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves...(34) "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he*

should repay all that was owed him. (35) "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

Mat 5:23-24 NASB "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, (24) leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."

1Jn 4:12-21 NASB No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us... 19) We love, because He first loved us. (20) If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. (21) And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

1 John 1:3 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.

C. The way God relates to us is the way we are to relate to one another.

Romans 15:7 7 Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. (NASB)

Ephesians 4:32 32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (NASB)

Ephesians 5:2 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (NASB)

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; 4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (NASB)

John 13:34-35 34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (NASB)

Joh 17:11-22 "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are...20) "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; (21) that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are

in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. (22) "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

Foundations Of Healthy Church Life

RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE NEW COVENANT

PREFACE: The New Covenant is relational in nature. At the heart of what God did through Jesus Christ was the establishment of right relationships between Him and those He joins you to in the Church. It is a covenant that has both horizontal as well as vertical aspects that are tied to relationships

I. THE RELATIONAL NATURE OF THE NEW COVENANT, VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL

A. The New Covenant has a vertical aspect in relationships.

It was initiated by God to bring us into a new/right relationship with Him.

1. It is a relational covenant

Heb 8:8-13 is a quote from Jer 31:31-34. A main feature of the covenant is that we will know God.

Know - to be aware of, to know, to be aware of or acquainted with as by sight experience or report (relationship).

Jesus said that knowing God is what eternal life is all about. Jn 17:1-3

2. The idea of reconciliation is the establishment of right relationships. 2 Cor 5:17-20

Reconciliation - The establishment of friendly relations between parties who are at variance with each other.

Prior to us coming into right relationship with God through Jesus Christ we were at variance with God. Rom 5:10, Rom 8:7, Col 1:21.

B. The New Covenant has a horizontal aspect in relationships.

It is designed to bring us into a new/right relationship with one another.

1 Cor 10:16-17, 1 Cor 12:12-13, Eph 2:12-22

His work was designed to make us one and establish peace.

C. Biblical salvation is relational, a way of life relating with God and with His people He joins you to.

II. IN THE NEW COVENANT THE DUAL ASPECTS OF RELATIONSHIPS ARE INTERRALETED

A. Both aspects of relationships affect each other.

Mt 5:21-24 You can't worship God correctly if you are not in right relationship with your brother. **Gift** - act of service or worship.

1 Peter 3:7-8 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. To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; (NASB)

1. *The way we relate to one another is an indication of how we are relating to God.*

1 Jn 4:7-21 This is how we know we love God.

2. *Forgiving others plays an important role in God forgiving us. Mk 11:24-26*

Mt 18:21-35 This is the nature of the Kingdom and how it works.

Mt 6:12-15 The Lord's prayer "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

B. God's highest priority for us is walking in right relationships.

Matthew 22:37-40 And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 'This is the great and foremost commandment. 'The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 'On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'" (NASB) Rom 13:8-10

Jn 13:15, 33-35 Walking in right relationships is the way the world will know we are His disciples. Mk 12:13, 28-34

III. ONE OF THE AIMS OF REGENERATION (BEING BORN AGAIN) IS SO WE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO WALK IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

A. Scriptures relating to this.

1 Pet 1:22-23 He connects being born again to walking in right relationships with one another.

Rom 5:5 "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

Col 3:9-23

Eph 4:22-32

Foundations Of Healthy Church Life

THE BODY OF CHRIST AND RELATIONSHIPS

PREFACE: The New Testament gives us several symbolic expressions of the Church. The New Testament describes the Church as the Temple of God, Spiritual House, God's Dwelling Place, The Building or House of God, etc. One of the most prominent descriptions of the Church in the New Testament is the Body of Christ. As we look at the Church as the Body of Christ we will see that just like a human body, it takes relationships between the body parts for it to work as it was designed. This is an obvious expression of the relational nature of the Church.

I. PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

A. The main purpose of the Church (Body of Christ) is to express the truth and life of Christ (the Head) within it.

1 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; (NASB)

1 Timothy 3:15 but in case I am delayed, 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. (NASB)

Philippians 2:15-16 that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. (NASB)

Eph 2:19-22, 3:10-11

In the same way we are concerned about the appearance of our human body because we want the real us on the inside to be favorably received by others. We want a good representation of ourselves to others.

II. PAUL'S REVELATION OF THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

A. Paul carried revelation of the Church as the Body of Christ.

1. Eph 4:12-16
2. Eph 3:3-6
3. 1 Cor 12:12-13

4. Col 1:18; 2:18-19

B. Biblical truths about the Body of Christ.

1. Each believer was born again to be a functioning part of Christ's Body.

1 Corinthians 10:17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. (NASB)

Romans 12:4-5 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (NASB)

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. (NASB) "Now you are Christ's Body and each of you a limb or organ of it." (NEB)

2. The purpose of the body is to present the life within it.

Ephesians 3:10-11 ¹⁰ in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, (NASB)

3. Each member is equipped with giftings and talents to be used in building up the Body.

As in the human body every part is to actively contribute toward the welfare/well-being of the body. 1 Cor 12:14-27, Rom 12:4-10

1 Peter 4:10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (NASB)

1 Cor 12:12,26 "So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church...What is the outcome then brethren? When you assemble...let all things be done for edification."

4. With the awareness of God's design of the Body of Christ we are to be practically joined or built together in the Church.

Eph 2:21-22

1 Pet 2:4-6

This means being built together in relationships.

5. There is a built in design for protection and accountability that helps keep us faithful to God.

Hebrews 3:12-13 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. (13) But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering,... (24) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another;

Heb 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.

There is a built in DNA in a human body to help every part to operate in its created place and design. In Christ body the Holy Spirit is also pressing us to be connected in our proper place.

III. RELATIONSHIPS AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

A. As in the human body it takes relationships between the members for it to work. Eph 4:16, Col 2:18-19

If our body parts weren't connected and interacting we would cease to exist.

As in the human body the relationships between the members of the body is a everyday way of life. If our human body only functioned for an hour on Sunday mornings we would die. Church is more than just a meeting with superficial relationships but is a way of life.

B. It is a mistake for Christians to think that they only need a relationship with the Head (Christ) and not the Body (Church).

This is a wrong mentality that is foreign to the New Testament picture of Salvation in which you are brought into a new relationship with Christ and His Body.

C. The picture of the human body gives us insight into the relational nature of the Church.

"The human body has systems made up of organs, made up of numerous groups of specialized cells all working together for the homeostasis or effectively balanced system of operations for the efficient maintenance of the body as a whole. Only in a diseased or pathological organ do the cells or systems work for their own benefit; and when they do the body cannot last long. Malignancy, when it occurs, must either be eradicated or the body as a whole will suffer doom. Never in a healthy

situation do the components of the body work outside of the best interest of the body as a whole. The brain, in conjunction with the nervous system effectively communicates the best use of limited resources and where the best expenditures of energy and effort, should be allocated, to benefit the needs of the body most. Christ as the head does the same for His body and only He has perfect knowledge in determining who should do what, and when, not us in our limited and finite scope of information and mind set."

Foundations Of Healthy Church Life

EVANGELISM

PREFACE: God wants His kingdom to spread penetrating and pushing back the kingdom of darkness in the earth. The church is the vehicle in our time that manifests the Kingdom of God. The church must be involved in evangelism. Evangelism simply means to tell or announce good news. The only good news in this world of darkness is the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As members of the Body of Christ we are responsible to get the word out.

I. WHY IS THE GOOD NEWS NECESSARY?

A. The first man, Adam, who was created in the image of God, fell into sin and out of fellowship with God (Gen 3), thus marring the image of God.

B. Because we are all offspring of Adam and we were made in the image of our father Adam (Gen 5:3), every man born into the world is born in sin and shaped in iniquity. Ps 51:1; Rom 3:9-12; 5:12

1. All are children of wrath - Eph 2:3
2. All are under condemnation - Rom 3:19
3. All have a rendezvous with death - Heb 9:27; Rom 5:12
4. All are dead in trespasses and sins - Eph 2:1
5. All are alienated from the life of God - Eph 4:18
6. All are hostile to the law of God - Rom 8:7

C. Man has been separated from God for so long that he has become used to the unnatural, and he actually loves darkness rather than light. Jn 3:19

II. WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS?

A. God took the initiative in bringing man back into fellowship with Himself by sending Jesus Christ to be the head of a new race. Gal 3:26-29

1. Christ was also the image of God - Heb 1:3
2. Christ did not fall into sin as Adam did - Heb 4:15
3. Christ received the full penalty for sin in Himself, through undeserving - Rom 5:8

B. All who receive Christ as Lord and Savior, accept the finished work of Calvary as the only way to salvation, repent of their sins and

acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ, receive the new birth experience and are born into Christ. Jn 3:1-5; Acts 2:38-39; Jn 14:6

1. In Christ we are made righteous - Rom 4:5, 22-25
2. In Christ there is no condemnation - Rom 8:1-2
3. In Christ we are conformed to the image of God - Rom 8:28-30
4. In Christ we have peace with God - Rom 5:1
5. In Christ we have access to the Father - Rom 5:2

C. Man is ultimately restored to a place of full fellowship with the Father and becomes a partaker of the riches of His glory - Eph 1:18; Col 1:27; Rom 9:23

D. God has provided one way of salvation for all men, whether Jew or Gentile - Rom 5:21

III. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE TO TELL THE GOOD NEWS?

A. God's way of salvation is not discovered by man; it comes to him by revelation and must be preached to him from the revealed Word of God. Rom 10:17-18; 16:25-26

B. The Gospel message has been entrusted to the Church. Mt 28:18-20; Eph 3:9-11

C. All believers are responsible to respond to the command of Jesus, for the Church is comprised of people. Mk 16:15-20; Acts 1:8

IV. WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACH US ABOUT OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO TELL THE GOOD NEWS?

A. The primary ministry of Jesus was to evangelize - Lk 4:18, 43; Mt 11:5; Lk 8:1

B. The ministry of those whom Jesus sent out was evangelism - Lk 9:6

C. Paul was ready to preach the gospel everywhere - Rom 1:15; IPet 3:15

D. The early church recognized it's responsibility in evangelism - Acts 5:42; 8:4,12,25,35,40; 13:32; 14:7,21; 16:10, etc.

E. The good news must be shared, for this is the only way that it is spread - Rom 10:12-18

F. There is a necessity that we all be involved in this area - ICor 9:16

G. Paul give special commendation to the churches at Rome and Thessalonica for their efforts in evangelizing in their communities and beyond their borders. Rom 1:8; I Thes 1:8

IV . THE LAW AND GRACE

We cannot be afraid to give the law of God in evangelism. Rule of thumb: Law to the proud, Grace to the humble.

1. Without some knowledge of God's law people will not realize they fall short of God's standard and are not right with Him.
2. This is what the Holy Spirit does as He convicts the sinner of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Jn 16:9
3. The goal of the good news is to establish righteousness with God. 2Cor 5:17

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

LIVING FOR GOD'S PURPOSE

PREFACE: God desires His people to live with a great sense of purpose for their lives. It is a sad statistic, but according to some polls 36% of born again Christians are still trying to find out the purpose for their lives. This is in contrast to only 49% of non-believers still trying to find out the purpose for their lives. Living for His purposes isn't some sort of superior state that only a few "Super Spiritual Christians" find, while the rest of us are left to stumble around. God wants every Christian living for His purposes on this earth and has made them clear in His word.

I. A LIFE LIVED WITHOUT GOD'S PURPOSE IS FUTILITY

And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 1 Peter 1:17-19

The word "**futile**" means *useless, or of no purpose*.

The writer of Ecclesiastes used the phrase "Vanity of vanities" (Ecclesiastes 1:2), and goes on to explain that life lived without God is **vain** (empty, to no purpose).

A. Living for Christ will cause us to move from a futile/purposeless life to a life filled with God's purposes.

When we live for His purpose we will invest in eternal things and live every day to it's fullest.

James 4:13-14 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. (NASB)

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

B. If we don't live with eternity in view we will fall back and live our life for "this life's issues" only.

2 Timothy 4:10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted

me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. (NASB)

II. THREE PURPOSES ALL CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO WALK IN

These are the primary purposes of every Christian life. These purposes are all part of each other. It is like an egg. All three parts of it are important and somewhat interconnected. It is hard to value one part without the other parts.

A. We are called to grow up/mature as followers of Christ. It is part of walking in a real relationship with Jesus

The call of the Great Commission is a call to grow as we follow Christ.

Matthew 28: 19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all 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."

Hebrews 6: 1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity.

Ephesians 4: 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.

Religious pollster George Barna found some interesting statistics in this area.

- When Christian adults were asked to identify their most important goal for their life, not a single person said it was to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ, or to make Disciples of Christ.
- Less than one out of every five born again adults had any specific and measurable goals related to their personal spiritual development.
- Less than 1% of all believers perceived a connection between their efforts to worship God and their development as a disciple of Jesus.
- When given thirteen basic teachings from the Bible, only 1% of adult believers firmly embraced all 13 as being biblical perspectives.

"Most Christians are simply not making progress in their personal spiritual development."

Walking in God's purpose for growth/maturity will cause you to put yourself under spiritual disciplines which are necessary for growth.

Things like systematic Bible reading, Bible classes, disciplined prayer times, and meeting with spiritual mentors and/or peer fellowship will promote growth and progress in your life.

B. Becoming our part in building His church on earth.

Matthew 16:24-26 Then Jesus said to His disciples, if anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake (His cause) shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul?

In following Christ, we are to lose our life for His cause. Jesus had already told them His cause a few verses earlier in Verse 18.

Matthew 16:18 Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

Ephesians 1:22-23 MSG...The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

Each person when they come into Christ becomes fellow members of Christ's body (the church). Each member is to actively take their place to see the church become all God intended her to be.

Ephesians 2:19-20 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens (citizens or a colony of heaven Phil 1:27 "live as citizens," Phil 3:20) with the saints, and are of God's household.

1Corinthians 12:12-13, 18 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,.. But now God has placed the members, each one of them in the body, just as He desired.

Ephesians 4:1, 15-16 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,..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.

When you embrace this purpose you wake up and think thoughts like, "How can I help motivate, serve, and encourage my brothers and sisters to live the life of His body on earth?"

C. Sent as His family on mission to the earth

Joh 20:21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Joh 17:18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

Gen 1:28... "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth (with people displaying His image)."

Ephesians 1:22-23 MSG... The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

Eph 3:10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church...

Num 14:21 but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD. Hab 2:14, Isa 11:9 Psa 72:19, Isa 40:5

Luke 10 (sending the seventy) Matthew 9-11 (sending the twelve) pattern for mission.

Summed up with the phrase "extending God's Kingdom as we minister to people."

Seventy: *Luke 10:1-17 NASB Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself (with the others) was going to come. (2) And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. ...(5)*

"Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' (6) "If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you.

(7) "Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. 8)

"Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; (9) and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ...(16) "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me." (17) The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

Twelve: *Mat 9-11 9:35-38 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. (36) Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. (37) Then He *said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. (38) "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."*

*Mat 9-11 9:35-38 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. (36) Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. (37) Then He *said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. (38) "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."*

Mat 10: 1-42 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.... 7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.... 11 "And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city... (remember that He sent them out two by two) 12 "As you enter the house, give it your greeting. 13 "If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace.

*Mat 11:1 When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in **their cities** (the cities they had just went to).*

Four elements of the Luke 10 Matthew 9-11 pattern:

1. Go into the home - We need to meet people in their circle of life. Lk 10: 5-7 *"Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' (6) "If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. (7) "Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. (Mt 10: 11-13)*

We then enter into receptive places with people.

2. We are to bring blessing to people Luke 10:5, Mt 10:13 "Peace be to this house." - As we interact with people we bring God's blessing of peace. It is first of all releasing the Prince of Peace into the lives and atmosphere of the house. Giving blessing of peace is not just flattery but a blessing. We encourage them with God's perspective.

3. Find ways to bring healing and deliverance into their lives – Luke 10: 9, 17 and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ... (17) The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." We counsel with people, help dispel lies that are controlling them, and bring healing in all areas, physically, emotionally, and relationally. This is done through prayer, fellowship, and bringing the word of God. (Mt 10: 1)

4. Proclaim the Kingdom (the rule of Christ) – Luke 10: 9, 17 and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' (Mt 10: 7-8) We labor to see Christ rule explained and embraced in every area of their life.

Interacting, blessing, and healing people helps build a platform from which we speak of the Kingdom.

We also must look for ways to preach the gospel because it is the only way to the new birth and entry into Kingdom. *Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

It is part of our call to be ambassadors for Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

The word "ambassador" means, "to represent one royal court to another." We are representing God and His life to the world around us in order to see them reconciled to God.

Everyday when we get up and go to work, to the campus, or to the marketplace, we go as ambassadors of Christ who are trying to see mankind reconciled to Him. This mission is to motivate us with purpose.

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

GODLY LEGACY

PREFACE: One of the most neglected areas among the people of God is the whole focus on Godly Legacy. There is a short sightedness that has come upon the contemporary church regarding the generations behind us. This stands in stark contrast to the Biblical perspective that focuses on leaving a spiritual inheritance to the coming generations. The Bible speaks much about the idea of legacy, which is the handing down of the faith to generations behind us. God has always been multigenerational in focus and commands us to be as well. There is no success without a successor.

I. GOD'S CALL UPON HIS PEOPLE IS MULTIGENERATIONAL IN FOCUS

Deuteronomy 6:1-7 Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that your son and grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments,.... Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach (impress) 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 shall rise up.

Psalms 78:1-6 Listen, O My people, to my instruction; incline your ears to the words of my mouth...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 which He has done. For He establishes 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.

A. God always has a multigenerational perspective.

He refers to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He defines Himself generationally.

Throughout the Bible God always considers things in light of how they affect generations. He considers things generationally.

B. In the Bible there is always a view towards lineage.

There is always a concern for the generations coming behind.

There was always a focus and mandate to deposit into the generations coming behind us.

Older men are to be,... teaching what is good, that they may encourage (train) 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. Likewise (the old men) urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with all purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. Titus 2: 1-7

I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. 2 Timothy 1:4

C. The church is designed by God to be multigenerational in focus.

We are failing if we are not thinking about the generations behind us.

There is no success without a successor.

To be multigenerational we must understand two words, Destiny and Legacy

Destiny – What you are heading for, your goal, vision, your journey.

Legacy – Anything handed down from an ancestor or predecessor. What you leave behind.

Christ's first instruction to Peter (an Apostle) after He rose from the dead and before He ascended was to feed the lambs (young sheep). *If you are too big or important to care for the lambs then you are too big and important.*

So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, {son} of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." John 21: 15

In the House of God the younger generations behind us are not to be tolerated but celebrated. They are our future. Children are a gift of God and the blessing of the Lord.

II. TO BE MULTIGENERATIONAL IN FOCUS WE MUST BEGIN TO THINK LIKE A PATRIARCH

A. Having a Patriarchal mindset

Patriarch – A Patriarch was a founding father, or ruling ancestor.

The Patriarchs were always thinking about the generations and lineage behind them. They were constantly concerned with the line of descent by which the covenant was being perpetuated. They worked to make sure they succeeded. (Abraham - Genesis 15: 1-19)

Having a Patriarchal mindset isn't a matter of age but a matter of focus.

The trick of the enemy is to get us so focused on the current generation that we lose the seed.

B. There are to be no generation gaps in the House of God.

The prophetic picture of God's design is for the generations to be together. Zechariah 8: 1-6 – The elderly and the children are together.

The New Testament exhortation set forth in Titus 2 - Older with the younger, teaching them.

C. The great danger of growing older with the spirit of the age instead of the Biblical design.

In our culture when people grow older they isolate themselves from the generations.

Some times this is aided by an attitude in Christians as they get older that tries to preserve their generation instead of understanding their call to compel the coming generation.

Aspects of the spirit of the age in people as they grow older that robs them of the purpose of God for legacy in His house:

1. *Failure to run you race to the end. "Draw Back spirit"*

This is the opposite attitude than the one Caleb had when at the age of 85 he was still wanting to fight for the inheritance he was yet to possess. Joshua 14: 10-13

Paul also had an attitude that wanted to run his race all the way up until the end that caused him to have a "press on" attitude. Philippians 3: 7-15

Nothing is more damaging to the younger generations than to see someone older than them living a halfhearted commitment, or someone who slipped into spiritual retirement mode.

2. *Lack of concern about inheritance.* This is exemplified in the bumper sticker "I'm spending my children's inheritance."

It is a retirement mentality – "I have paid my dues and sacrificed enough, now it is time for me to finally enjoy life."

Why do people, when they get older, withdraw from the younger generation and travel around the country looking at rocks and buildings, when they have so much wisdom that the younger generation needs?

3. Short term thinking.

4. Concern with preserving your generation instead of compelling the next.

You always fight to preserve your style of church, music, etc. The old is always better.

D. Three types of relationship every member should seek to walk in pertaining to legacy.

Paul – People ahead of you in the Lord willing to build into your life. Not necessarily smarter or more gifted than you, but Are further down the road of life. These can be spiritual fathers

Barnabbas – People who are brothers and sisters to you on equal footing. They are not impressed or intimidated with you. They are willing to keep you honest

Timothys – Those spiritually younger than you in whom you are pouring your life and help.

Foundations of Healthy Church Life

Biblical CHURCH GOVERNMENT

PREFACE: As we look across the landscape of the church we see many different ideas when it comes to the government of the church. We need to attempt to return to New Testament patterns of church government if we are to build according to Christ's design. Without government there would be lawlessness, anarchy, and disorder. God's government on earth and in the church is expressed through delegated authority. This authority is delegated to those whom God appoints to be leaders in the church.

Spiritual Leadership is different than business models etc. Spiritual Leadership is caring for and motivating God's people through teaching, exhorting, encouraging, and example, to pursue God's agenda individually and corporately.

To help influence the movement of God's people from where they are to where He wants them to be.

Two errors in the Body of Christ when it comes to approaching leadership.

Over glamorize it – "The man of God" – Jesus spoke of this as the way the Gentiles (those outside of God) approach the concept of leadership Mt 20:25, Mk 10:42, Lk 22:25.

Undervalue it – In our culture that has an "anti-authority" posture that prizes independence. Add to that all the leadership scandals in both Charismatic and the Catholic Church and it leads to a devaluing of leadership.

Pattern that runs through Scripture and the history of God's people, "as go the leaders so goes the people."

Why book of Hebrews ends with people needing to take a right posture towards leaders.

Heb 13: 7-9 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. (8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (9) Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings

Heb 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.

I. LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

A. Two leadership gifts/graces defined within the organization of the local church.

It is important to note that the rise of the Synagogue system in the Intertestament period formed a backdrop (God designed structure for the local religious life of God's people in various places) of understanding for the local church. The Synagogue had a structure similar to local churches in terms of leadership, discipline, education, and instruction.

The New Testament indicates the office of an Elder/Bishop with the Deacons closely connected with it.

- 1. Elder/Bishop**
- 2. Deacon**

Philippians 1:1 ¹ Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers (elders/bishops) and deacons: (NASB) Acts 14:23; 20:28; 15:22-23; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1-2; 1Thes 5:12

B. Three New Testament terms (Greek words) to designate the office of Eldership.

- 1. Greek "presbuteros" Elder** - speaks of "senior" or maturity and experience, an older man. This speaks of the man.
- 2. Greek "episkopos" Bishop/Overseer** - Greek epi - over, skopeo - to look or watch. This term speaks of the leaders' responsibility to watch over, protect, care for, and feed the flock. This speaks of the office.

In the Scriptures this term is used in the same sense as an Elder. Titus 1:5, 7; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim 3:1; 1 Peter 5:1-2

- 3. Greek "poimen" Pastor/Shepherd** - One who is a feeder. This speaks of what He is doing.

The Scriptures show us the interrelatedness of these three words.

Acts 20:17-28 "take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost made you overseers (episkopos) to feed (poimen) the church of God.

1 Peter 5:1-2 "I exhort the elders (presbuteros)...feed (poimen) the flock of God which is among you, exercising oversight (episkopos) not under compulsion,..

Titus 1:5-7 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint Elders (presbuteros) in every city as I directed you...For the overseer (episkopos) must be above reproach,... 1 Tim 3:1 "office of an overseer (episkope)

C. Functions of Eldership

1. *Ruling* - 1 Tim 5:17. The elders form the government of the Local Church. They have authority that comes from God. Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4
2. *Teaching - or feeding-* 1 Tim 3:1-2; Heb 5:12-14; Jn 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Thes 5:12
3. *Leading and guiding the church forward* - Heb 13:17
4. *Being examples* - 1 Tim 4:12
5. *Serving the people of God* - Lk 22:25-27; Jn 13:1-20 Jesus washing the disciples feet.

Eldership is more about function than office. One is an Elder as long as they perform the function. Some of the ways you can express the functions/responsibilities of an Elder are: making decisions; being responsible for all that goes on in the church; leading, guiding, and setting direction/vision of the Church; ruling or making decisions on a variety of issues including discipline of members; serving and not being served.

D. Scriptures indicate a plurality of Eldership. They work as a team (this expresses the identity of God).

1. *Acts 14:23 "Elders in every city"*
2. *Acts 15:4-23 "Elders in Jerusalem"*
3. *Acts 16:4 "Elders in Jerusalem"*
4. *Acts 20:17 "Elders of Ephesus"*
5. *1 Tim 5:1, 17-21 "Let the Elders rule"*
6. *James 5:14 "Call for the Elders of the Church"*
7. *1 Pet 5:1 "The Elders which are among you"*
8. *Titus 1:5-11 "Ordain Elders in every city"*
9. *Heb 13:17 "obey them that rule"*

As in any team, including leadership team, there is a leader. Elders tend to have different measures and areas of rule according to calling. Elders are equal in value but not in authority or gifting. Elders lead as a team. They carry out their function through the prayerful discussions of issues. They come to one mind on issues and the team leader pulls together the direction.

E. What is a Deacon?

Over the last 2000 years of church history various movements have taken Biblical terms like "Elder" and "Deacon," and applied them to different positions and people. Unfortunately, the applications of the terms are varied. This is especially true for Deacons. In much of recent history (the past 200 years) the role of deacons has been greatly minimized when compared to what we see in Scripture. In many Charismatic and Evangelical circles the term "deacon" has been applied to people who took care of serving the practical needs of the church (give them a title and they will feel better about serving). Others saw them as groups who provide leadership in the practical business areas of the church. In the worst case scenarios some saw them as groups who help keep the spiritual leaders in check.

The Greek word for Deacon is "Diakonos" - to be an attendant, to wait upon. In other words they are one who is a servant or renders service.

Three main passages where the official idea of Deacons are used.

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 (elders) and deacons (Diakonos 1249).

1Ti 3:8 Deacons (Diakonos 1249) likewise must be... 10-13 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. (11) Women (female deacons) must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.... (13) For those who have served well as deacons (Diakonos 1249) obtain for themselves a high standing.

Rom 16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant (Diakonos 1249) of the church which is at Cenchrea (2) that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

First NT application of the idea of the Deacon

Act 6:1...(2) So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve (Gk 1247 Diakonos) tables. (3) "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task...(5) The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose... (6) And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them

Why did they instinctively know to move in this direction

The synagogue system provided a backdrop of understand for the early church. The Synagogue system was the cradle of understanding for the early local church. During the 600 years prior to the church being birthed we see the rise of the Synagogue system. God's people were scattered around the empire and the temple and Jerusalem was destroyed. Even after Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt God's people still lived in various towns. To maintain their identity and share their common life in God together (like the local church) they gathered together (root word for Synagogue) in the various places. During the 400 year intertestament period between the Old and New Testament the Synagogue system developed to what it was when Jesus came on the scene.

Jesus announced that the church would serve a similar function as the Synagogue. In Matthew 18:15-20 Jesus described how the local church conducts discipline and said that wherever two or three were "gathered

together" (Gk Sunago which was the verb form of Synagogue) He would be in their midst.

Paul and Peter describe the church as fulfilling the function of the temple where He dwells.

1Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Ephesians 2:20-22...(22) in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

1Peter 2:4-5...(5) you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

In the Synagogue system, there were appointed people who cared for the daily administration of alms for the poor and needy, just like the Apostles appointed the seven in Acts 6. This was where they instinctively got the idea.

Evolving Idea of Deacons in local churches

Three Greek words that are translated as minister or servant in KJV, NIV, NASV

Diakoneo (G1247) --"To be an attendant, to wait upon." - General way of serving Luke 22:24-2

Diakonia (G1248) --"Service or attendant as a servant."- General manner of serving Acts 6:4

Diakonos (G1249) --"A waiter, attendant, servant or minister." Refers to someone who is serving. Philippians 1:1, 1 Tim 3:8.

Two ways the words are used in NT

1. Unofficial way - general idea of serving

2. Official way - a certain group of people who have proven themselves as having a specific grace to play a role in serving. Romans 16:2, Phil 1:1, 1 Tim 3:8.

In the official way they were gifted people who carried great administrative responsibilities, as well as other functions their calling enabled them to do.

Five New Testament facts revealing that the idea of deacons has been minimized and the Biblical patterns needs to be restored.

1. Acts 6 group (most of the orthodox church see this group as the first deacon ministry in the church) administrated the feeding of over 5000 people each day. This was no small task. Can you imagine feeding 5000 people each day with no Wal-Marts or Grocery stores. It was an administrative miracle.

2. Stephen, who was part of the Acts 6 group and he preached, moved in signs and wonders, and initiated significant breakthroughs in the Spiritual realm.

Acts 6:8 NASB And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

3. Philip lead significant spiritual breakthroughs and is the only person in the New Testament identified as an Ephesians' 4 evangelist. He was also later a leader in the church in Caesarea

Act 8:5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them.

Act 21:8 On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.

4. Phoebe was identified as a significant enough deaconess among churches that Paul appealed to the Romans to both receive and support her.

*Rom 16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant (Diakonos) of the church which is at Cenchrea (2) that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and **that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you**; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.*

5. The qualifications for elders and deacons reveal a very high standard.

Of the 25 qualifications listed for elders and deacons seen in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 Titus 1:5-9 Acts 6, seven of them applied to both (Not addicted to wine, not fond of sordid gain, tested, above reproach, husband of one wife, good managers of children and household, and a good reputation).

Interaction between Elders and Deacons - One way to show the relationship between elders and deacons is to see the relationship between a husband and wife in a home. Paul says local churches operate like a natural household 1 Timothy 3:15. The husband is the head (leader) but the wife has a co-leader who carries great responsibility and administration in leading the home. The husband carries the final responsibility for the decisions (headship), yet the wife is fully involved and leads with him.

F. How the church responds to the leadership.

1. Submitting to the leadership of the elders. Heb 13:17

2. *Following their example. Heb 13:17*

3. *Expressing love and appreciation to them, praying for them, and helping them. 1 Thes 5:12-13*

4. *Being generous towards them, so that they don't have to live under unnecessary financial pressure. Gal 6:6, 1 Cor 9:9, 1 Tim 5:17-18*

G. Qualifications for Elders and Deacons.

1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 show the moral, domestic, and spiritual qualifications of those who are elders and deacons in the church.

One of the major qualifications has to do with the way they rule in their home. Paul said if they didn't know how to manage their own home well that they wouldn't be able to manage God's home the church. 1 Timothy 3:4-5. You might say it like this, "***The way they treat their bride is how they will treat His bride, and how they run their home is how they will run His home.***"

H. Setting in of Elders and Deacons (Ordination).

A simple way to sum up the NT examples of ordination is that it has three elements to it.

1. *There is a grace and calling of God.*
2. *It has recognition by a church body.* (Hard to say you are a doctor if you can't get patients).
3. *It is confirmed by proven leadership (locally and extra locally)* . A good rule of thumb regarding proven ministries that confirm is "have they built a healthy church." In other words, it is hard to recognize a grace in someone to build a local church if you have never had the experience of building one.

It is a recognition by the existing leadership, the church body, and the extra local leaders of what they have the grace, calling, and the character to do. They should have already been doing elder type things without the title. It is based on the need of the local church. It is local church based and doesn't transfer from one body to another.

Setting in or ordination. This is a special time of setting needed and qualified leaders aside to do the work at hand. It is a time of impartation and recognition as they are set apart 1 Timothy 4:4. There must be carefulness of laying hands on a novice. 1 Timothy 5:2. If we lay hands too soon on someone who isn't proved they will tend to fall into the same condemnation that motivated Satan (the biggest thing is pride).

II. THE FIVE FOLD ASCENSION GIFT MINISTRIES OF EPHESIANS 4

Paul speaks of the gift ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher, as given to equip the church. This means their primary function is to train, enable, motivate, discipline, and instruct the church so that they will be able to carry out the work of the ministry of building up the body of Christ (Eph 4:11,12).

We also note that God calls certain of the elders to those functions and that at times there seems to be an overlap of ministry. Eph 1:1; Gal 1:1; 2 Tim 1:11; I Pet 1:1,5:1

A. Apostle - "one who is sent" Eph 4:11; I Cor 12:28; Acts 14:23; 15:12; Gal 2:4-14

Apostolic ministry typically functions in:

1. *Appointing and training leaders.*
2. *Establishing churches.*
3. *Strengthening existing churches.*
4. *Administrating leadership.*
5. *Formulating doctrine.*
6. *Administrating churches.*

B. Prophet - "bubble up and gush forth"

A prophet is God's mouthpiece, speaking on His behalf.

A Prophet typically:

1. *Works alongside apostles in foundational ministry. Eph 2:20; Acts 15:32*
2. *Receives revelation to direct, warn, inform, edify, exhort, and console God's people. Eph 3:3-5; Acts 15:32; 11:28; 13:1,2; 21:10,11*
3. *Sometimes prophets receive revelation to foretell future events. Acts 11:27-28*

C. Evangelist - "a messenger of good, one who proclaims good news"

Philip's ministry is the best Scriptural example of an evangelist (and the only one mentioned with this title). Acts 6:5; 8:26-40; 21:8

Philip wasn't a one man show; he asked Peter and John to come and help his situation with the Samaritans.

Evangelists not only do the work themselves but are to equip the church to do the work.

D. Pastor - 'one who feeds and cares for the sheep'

1. *He shepherds the local church. Ezek 34:12-16*
2. *He discerns false ministers. Rev 2:2*
3. *He is willing to lay down his life for the sheep. Jn 10:10*

E. Teacher - "one who is skilled and gifted in the exposition of the Word of God"

1. *He has insight into God's Word and an ability to convey God's message.*

2. He has a concern for exactness, and also the ability to bring various parts of truth into a comprehensive, understandable whole.

All these ministries have a primary responsibility to equip the saints in the local churches. As we are coming into more insight of these ministries there needs to be a flexibility in how we view them. Our focus on these ministries should not be so much on clarity of title or guidelines but on function.

Foundations Of Healthy Church Life

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

PREFACE: Every true believer in Christ, in due time, must consider the question of church membership. Viewpoints toward church membership vary. Some hold that a membership card from a church means they are members whether they attend services or not. Others run to the opposite extreme and disdain any effort to organize or account for those considered members. Let us try to gain insights from Scriptures on this area.

I. RECORDS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

A. The Gospels and the Book of Acts imply that there was some definite evidence of both numbering and identification.

1. Jesus chose 12 Apostles, named and numbered. Lk 9:1, 2
2. Jesus later chose 70 others as His own. Lk 10:12
3. Over 500 brethren saw Jesus in His ascension. I Cor 15:33
4. Before Pentecost 120 disciples gathered in the Upper Room. Acts 1:15 (The number of the names were about 120).
5. At and after Pentecost multitudes were brought to Christ and into the church which He said He would build.
6. There were added unto them (the 120) about 3000 souls. Acts 2:41, 47
7. About 5000 believed also in Acts 4:4.
8. The number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem. Acts 6:7
9. At least 10,000 believers were numbered in these Scriptures.

II. IS IT SCRIPTURAL TO HAVE SOME KIND OF CHURCH ROLL OR RECORD?

A. The Old Testament.

1. The Israelites had their names in the Books of Genealogy of the Nation. They were numbered before the Lord. Num 1 & 2
2. The Levites were also numbered before the Lord before they could minister in the priestly offices. Num 3
3. Every one numbered in Israel had to be redeemed with silver. Ex 20:11-16
4. The remnant from Babylon had to be registered in the book in order to minister in the priesthood. *Ezra 2:62, 63; Neh 7*

B. The New Testament.

1. *The Church of the Firstborn have their names written in heaven. Heb 12:22-24*

2. *The redeemed of all ages have their names also written in the Book of Life. Phil 4:3; Rev 13:8; Rev 17:8; 20: 12-15; 21:27*

It is obvious that there is scriptural evidence of a numbering and accounting of membership. It is also worthy of note that legal requirements stipulate that proper records of membership be kept in relation to Church funds, holding of property, taxes, etc. This cannot be just an invisible, mystical method of record keeping!

III. MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership qualifications.

1. *Spiritual membership.* One cannot join Christ's Church, like joining a club, etc. One joins in the Spirit and by the Spirit. They were added to the Lord - Acts 4: 14; 11:24

2. *Practical membership.* In Acts we see practical visible expressions of membership.

The New Testament Experience of Christians was that they were added and devoted to Local Churches. Acts 2: 41-47 Acts 5: 14 *Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.*

Added - to put to, to join with, to gather with. Like a marriage 2 people are added together.

Devoted - to adhere to, to be an adherent, to be devoted or consistent to, to show oneself courageous for.

In Acts 2 we see irrefutable evidence that the apostles linked entrance into the Kingdom with becoming part of the church. Church life wasn't an extracurricular activity to be added on to an already full schedule.

B. Practical aspects of membership.

1. *Vision* - Prov 29: 18 Church membership requires an understanding of the vision God has given the leadership and a willingness to flow in that vision.

2. *Oversight* - Eph 4: 11-16 Church membership requires that we recognize the God-given authority of the eldership of the local church and that we be willing to submit ourselves to their leadership for development and growth.

3. *Relationships* - Acts 4: 32-35 Church membership is not purchased nor attained by attendance. It is the fruit of the giving of lives, one to another, as those who have been touched by Jesus seek to love God with all that is within them, that the kingdom of God be advanced in the earth.

4. *Instruction* - Heb 5:12-6:3 Church membership involves instruction to all within the local church to develop and mature its members. This instruction includes both sound doctrine and practical application. Reinforced by example, the instruction is to be directed to the purpose of developing vision, unity, right relationships, and understanding.

5. *Support* - Acts 2:44; Rom 15:27; 2 Cor 8 Support for the church is not a legalistic requirement to prove our membership, but is the natural expression of commitment, life, relationships, and maturity we develop as we grow in the knowledge of the Lord.

C. Reasons why some might reject the idea of practical church membership.

1. Fear of being hurt.
2. Do not believe it is Scriptural.
3. Not submissive in Spirit.
4. Desire to be self-governing, self-directing, lawless.
5. Do not want to support the church financially, tithes and offerings.
6. Do not desire to come under correction, discipline or protection.
7. Do not want to be committed to anything local or visible.

One cannot expect to receive all the blessings and benefits of the Lord's Church when one is not willing to be committed to the responsibilities of membership.

D. Confirmation of membership.

To confirm means to "make firm, or firmer, to strengthen, to establish, to verify; to ratify." The New Century Dict. adds, "To make valid or binding by some formal or legal act".

The scriptures are full of examples of confirmations. While we do not have any specific pattern from Scripture of how local church membership was confirmed we can gain some general ideas of what confirmation should contain.

1. Laying on of hands of the oversight and prayer.
2. Extending the right hand of fellowship. Gal 2:8, 9
3. Verbal commitment, or public affirmation, whereby the believer enters into covenant relationship and is willing to receive the privileges, assume the responsibilities, and accept the discipline of the local church of which he is a member.

Foundations Of Healthy Church Life

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

PREFACE: Few areas of church life areas controversial and misunderstood as discipline. The Bible clearly sets forth principles on discipline. Scripture teaches us that church discipline is an obligation, not an option. Numerous instances of discipline are cited in the epistles. Paul instructs the Corinthians to expel the immoral brother. He also tells the Ephesians to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" Eph 5:11. He tells Timothy that he had to deliver Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme 1 Tim 1:18-20

I. WHY IS DISCIPLINE NECESSARY?

A. Jesus gives the authority of the Kingdom to the church. Mt 16:18-20.

Part of this authority is the exercising of discipline.

B. What discipline means:

Teaching, learning, to disciple.

Training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or morals.

Punishment to inflict pain or penalty.

A rule or system of rules which govern conduct or activity.

C. Why is discipline necessary?

Discipline is basically designed to make order and happiness possible; without it there would be anarchy.

Discipline introduces the principle of submission - my will crosses His will.

Selfishness and self-will bring destruction and misery. Isa 14:12-14

D. Key concepts from the Scriptures regarding church discipline.

1. *The church is responsible for disciplining it's members.*

1 Cor 5:12-13 "For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person."

2. The purpose of church discipline is two-fold: Not to allow the sin to affect the rest of the body, and to bring the offending person to a place of repentance.

1 Tim 5:20 "Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear."

3. Forgiveness is commanded for the one who has been offended.

4. Mercy is the desire of God in dealing with all transgressions. The parable of the 1 lost sheep out of the 99.

5. Church discipline comes in stages to allow time for repentance.
Titus 3:10-11; Mt 18.

This does not necessarily mean a tight legalistic number but rather is a principle that exhausts all possibilities and gives ample efforts to allow those to repent.

6. We are not to keep company with the expelled one so that he may be ashamed. 2 Thes 3:14. This word "ashamed" literally means "to turn in," i.e., to turn one upon himself and so produce a change of conduct.

7. The disciplined brother is not to be looked upon as an enemy, but warned as a brother. 2 Thes 3:15.

8. The spiritual are to restore the one in a trespass. Gal 6:1.

9. The goal is to restore the offender. Jas 5:19, 20.

10. Principle of binding and loosing.

Keys are the authority to deal with.

Bind and Loose/permit and forbid - perfect, passive, participle - things that are already in a state of being bound or loose.

Matthew 16:19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind that is, declare to be improper and unlawful - on earth must be already bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth - declare lawful - must already be loosed in heaven. (Amplified)

The church has the responsibility to live for and enforce heaven's standards.

Mt 18:18 "Truly I tell you, whatever you forbid and declare to be improper and unlawful on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and

whatever you permit and declare and declare proper and lawful on earth must be already permitted in heaven." (Amplified)

Holeman - Heaven sets the standard and earth follows it's lead.

Without addressing the issues of sin, there is anarchy, chaos, and absence of authority.

Cities are planned, Ghettos happen - To reflect the city of God we must deal with it.

II. SCRIPTURAL PROCEDURE FOR DISCIPLINE

A. Matthew 18:15-20 Not a legalistic number but a principle of exhausting the possibilities.

- 1. Go to the brother alone - proper attitude must be maintained. Gal 6: 1*
- 2. Take two or three others - correction is not rejection.*
- 3. Tell it to the church (leadership) - It is the leadership's responsibility to announce any form of discipline. It is only in the wild where people are strung up by people who are not in authority.*

This principle is seen in 1 Timothy where Paul instructs leadership in the local church on handling discipline issues.

B. Some discipline is more restriction than removal

Romans 16:2-20...(17) Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. .

1 Corinthians 5: 1-13...(11) But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one. (12) For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church?

1Co 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." 2 Corinthians 6: 14-17

Ephesians 5:2-11...(6) Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. (7) Therefore do not be partakers with them...(11) Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

2 Thessalonians 3:6...that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.

2 Thessalonians 3: 14-15...take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. (15) Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish (keep admonishing) him as a brother.

1 Timothy 6: 3-5 MSG If you have leaders there who teach otherwise, who refuse the solid words of our Master Jesus and this godly instruction, (4) tag them for what they are: ignorant windbags who infect the air with germs of envy, controversy, bad-mouthing, suspicious rumors. (5) Eventually there's an epidemic of backstabbing, and truth is but a distant memory.

2 Timothy 3: 1-6...Avoid such men as these. (6) For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses,

Titus 3: 9-11 NASB But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. (10) Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, (11) knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

2 John 1: 9-11...do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; (11) for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

C. What are some areas of misconduct requiring Biblical discipline?

Covetous - inordinately desirous, greedy.

Idolaters - inordinately fond of a person or thing.

Railer - abusive language, scornful.

Drunkard - one who habitually drinks.

Extortioner - to obtain from a person by oppression, or abuse of authority.

Fornication/adultery - illicit sexual relationship - 1 Cor 5: 1-13

Disorderly conduct - 2 Thess 3: 6-15

Heresy - 2 Tim 2: 17, 18; Titus 3: 9-11

Foundations Of Healthy Church Life

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCES

PREFACE: Stewardship is the realization and practice of God's ownership of every area of our lives. It is divine-human partnership, with God as the senior partner. It is the recognition of God's ownership of one's person, one's powers, and one's possessions and the faithful use of these for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in this world.

I. STEWARDSHIP IS A FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE IN DISCIPLESHIP

A. Jesus taught his disciples the idea of stewardship. Lk 16:1-13

B. What is a steward?

Steward - Greek "oikonomon" - One charged with the administration of the affairs of the true owner. The steward is a manager. A steward is not the owner. When we become Christians, God takes ownership of our lives.

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

God then makes us responsible for the administration of the affairs of His property (all our lives). Mt 25:14-19 Parable of people given talents. We become accountable for something we possess but do not own.

Paul reflected this mentality regarding the ministry He received from the Lord.

Eph 3:1-2; I Cor 1:25; I Cor 9:16-17

C. Areas of our life that have been entrusted to us in stewardship.

1. *Life* - what we have received.
2. *Time* - What we have been allotted.
3. *Possessions* - What has been entrusted to us.
4. *Talents* - What we have been given to use.
5. *Finances* - What we have labored for.

D. Main difficulty in stewardship/Where we err the most.

We possess something for which we will give account but it is easy to assume ownership.

The main requirement for stewardship is faithfulness. I Cor 4:1-2 Faithful - Steadfast, dedicated, dependable, and worthy of trust.

II. STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCES

A. What the Bible has to say about money.

- 1. The love of money is the root of all evil. I Tim 6:7-10*
- 2. The Gospels contain more warnings against money and its misuse than any other subject.*
- 3. 1 in every 4 verses in Matthew, Mark, and Luke deals with money.*
- 4. 1 in every 6 verses in the N.T. as a whole deals with or has reference to money in one way or another.*
- 5. Almost 1/2 of the Parables of Jesus have reference to money in one way or another.*
- 6. The first apostle to fall was over the love of money. Jn 12:4-8; Acts 13:27-29; Acts 1:25*
- 7. The first sin in the early church was concerning money. Acts 5:1-10*

B. A main battleground we fight on as disciples is freedom from the love of money.

Mammon (finances) is an idol that disciples are tempted to serve. Jesus said that you cannot serve God and mammon. Mt 6:24. Discipleship has to hit our pocketbook.

The love of money drives us toward a covetous spirit - inordinate desire to hoard or obtain finances.

An inordinate spirit is the opposite quality of biblical contentment which we should aim for.

C. General guidelines for stewards handling finances.

- 1. Stewards avoid the drive to lay up treasures on earth. Mt 6:19-21*
- 2. Stewards see prosperity as from God. Dt 29:9*
- 3. Stewards avoid debt. Prov 22:7; Rom 13:8*
- 4. Stewards are careful about the type of financial business transactions they enter into. Prov 6:1-5; Prov 22:26. They are especially careful about co-signing.*
- 5. Stewards are industrious not lazy. Heb 6:12; Prov 24:30-31; 2 Thes 3:4-13*
- 6. Stewards recognize God's ownership of their finances and give first fruits of finances to honor Him. Prov 3:9-10*

III. STEWARDSHIP AND GIVING

A. The Old Testament order for giving.

O.T. financial order in tithing. It provides examples for us. I Cor 10.

1. *The first tithe or Lord's tithe.* Lev 27:30-33; Num 18:21; Neh 10:37. The 12 tribes tithed to the Lord and the income were given to support the priestly ministry of the tribe of Levi. They had no inheritance and were supported by the other tribes.

2. *The second tithe.* Dt 12:5-14, 17; 14:22-26. This tithe was brought to the Lord's House and was used to cover expenses at the national times of feasts. It was so the people could attend the Feast of the Lord.

3. *The third tithe.* Dt 14:28-29; 26:12-14. Every third year a tithe was given to support those in need, the stranger, the fatherless, the widow, the Levite. It was much like a saints relief fund.

This pattern carried over in the N.T. I Tim 5:10; Acts 11:29; 2 Cor 9; Rom 15:26.

Additional self imposed tithes/offerings:

Government tithe I Sam 18:10-22. When Israel chose a king they imposed a tax tithe used for the upkeep of the kingdom. 2 Kings 23:25

Tithe of the people. Neh 11:1-2. In the time of restoration from Babylon they took a tithe of the people to be used in the Lord's work at Jerusalem.

The people of God also gave various offerings such as Burnt Offerings, Heave Offerings, and Freewill Offerings.

B. New Testament financial order.

1. Jesus taught tithing. Mt 23:23; Lk 11:42. Jesus didn't condemn Pharisees for tithing but for omitting the weightier matters.

2. Jesus taught giving. Lk 6:38; Lk 21:1-4

3. The writer of Hebrews taught tithing. Melchisedek, Heb 6&7

4. Paul taught the principles of tithing like OT to support the ministry. I Cor 9:1-14

5. Paul taught principles of giving like the OT tithe, a collection for the relief of the saints

I Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8: 9

C. Finances and Storehouse. Mal 3:8-10

1. The children of Israel were instructed to bring their tithes/offerings and freewill offerings to the place where He would cause His name to dwell - His house, sanctuary. Dt 12:5-7, 10-12.

2. The idea of storehouse was renewed under King Hezekiah. 2 Chron 31:6-10

It was a time of renewal in Israel to return to the giving of tithes and offerings for the support of the ministry of the temple.

3. According to the Biblical pattern, the storehouse, the Temple, and the House of God, is the Local Church. It is the House of God. I Tim 3:10; Eph 2:10-22; Pet 2:4-6.

It is the House and Temple of God where the ministry is to feed and care for the people. Finances enable the priest to minister to the Lord, and study the word in order to spiritually feed the people. See Acts 6.

Finances in the storehouse were administered by the priest. I Chron 31:12-19. We see this pattern in Acts 4:37.

The purpose of giving and of the storehouse is that there would be meat (resources) in God's House (Mal. 3:8-10) to support the work of caring for God's people.

Foundations Of Healthy Church Life

FAMILY: MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

PREFACE: Family is at the heart of what God is about. Family is a picture of God's intended relationship with His people. Whether it be the nature of the relationship called Church, the institution of marriage, or the basic family unit in the home, family is at the center of God's intention for us. In our society there are many ideas about what constitutes a family but we must look to the word of God to find out the creators intended pattern for the family.

I. GOD'S ORDER FOR MARRIAGE

Family is an important building block for any society. In the church the family is the basic building unit that was originated by God. God has placed order in the family with a line of authority seen throughout creation and patterned after His nature

Purpose of marriage, "The blending of two lives together into a new unit that will enable the individuals to be fulfilled in serving the purpose of God in the highest possible manner."

A. Role of the husband, headship and love

Two words that summarize the husband's role from Eph 5:22-28 are "head" vs 23, and "love" vs 25,28

Husbands are to be the head of the home and love his wife in the same manner that Christ is the head of and loves the church.

1. What headship is

It doesn't mean husbands are harsh or domineering dictators in their use of authority or superior in value to their wives or children.

Proper view of male headship - In the partnership of 2 spiritually equal human beings (value), man and woman, the man bears the responsibility to lead the partnership in a God glorifying direction.

2. Responsibility of headship

The husband must be a man under authority. Recognize Jesus is Lord in every area of his life ICor 11:3. Any authority he has in the home must be derived from his submission to the authority of Christ.

The husband must understand and maintain the order of the home. He is responsible for the proper functioning of the family . He is responsible to establish and maintain the order of the home.

The husband should lead the family. Leadership is motivating others to follow you to an understood objective. He should have a vision for God's order for family and have a sense of vision for the specific objective for his family.

He must recognize the difference between authority and value.. Husband and wives are equal in value even though there rolls are different. He must be a provider. The husbands provision should not only be physical but also spirit. He needs to function as the priest of the home interceding and instructing his family.

He needs to recognize he and his wife are one. They are one even as Christ and His church are one. They are a team even though he is the team leader.

He must leave and cleave Gen 2:24,25. He leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife. Many homes are wrecked because of failure in this area.

He must love his wife and give himself sacrificially for her like Christ did for the church. Eph 5:25,29. Nourish - to promote health and strength. Cherish - To impart warmth, cherish, foster, care for.

B. Role of the wife - Submission and Respect.

1. Submission. *Eph 5:22-24 "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as Christ is head of the Church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the Church is subject to Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."*

Throughout the New Testament wives are admonished to submit to their husbands Tit 2:5; IPet 3:1; Col 3:18.

What submission is not. It is not putting your husband in place of Christ. It is not giving up independent thought. It does not mean you can't give input to your husband. It is not based on intelligence or competence. It does not mean your are to be fearful or timid. It does not mean you are inferior in value to your husband. The wife is a help meet to compliment her husband Gen 2:18.

Submission is an inner quality of gentleness that affirms the leadership of the husband. IPet 3:4

Submission is a matter of attitude. Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:18

Submission is absolute while obedience is relative. Only God gets unqualified obedience. If delegated authority commands something that is sin there is not obligation of obedience.

Submission requires a choice not merely an action. It is very possible to be silent and obey without submitting. A wife uses here insight to share her ideas and opinions working with her husband. She then should exercise her faith that her husband can make the best final decision.

2. Respect. Eph 5:33 "Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband."

Respect goes hand in hand with submission.

The wife needs to see her husband as God does and learn to respect and esteem him as head. Eph 5:33; IPet 3:2-6

There is an obligation to respect even if her husband isn't Godly. IPet 3:1-2 states that husbands who "Do not obey the word" can be won without a word by their wives' submissive, chaste, and respectful behavior. Nagging and preaching tends to drive away, while proper attitudes tend to draw him to Christ.

3. Wives also have the responsibility to be pure, discreet, and to be diligent in keeping the home. Titus 2:4-5; Prov 31:10-31

II. BIBLICAL VIEW OF CHILDREN

A. The Biblical view of children.

Children are the heritage of the Lord. Ps 127:3-5

Children are as arrows of the mighty.

Children are as olive plants. Ps 128:3

Children are the Lord's reward. Ps 127:5

Children are a crown. Prov 17:14

Jesus wanted little children to come to Him, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. Mt 19:13-14

One of the greatest privileges that God gives man is to bring forth children after His own likeness. Children are wonderfully made, Ps 139:13-16. They should be wanted and loved.

III. GOD ESTABLISHES CLEAR LINES OF AUTHORITY IN THE HOME

A. The line of authority.

The father is the head over the family; he and his wife work as a team to oversee the lives of the children. The children are accountable to both father and mother for their actions. The father and mother support each other and speak with one voice in all aspects of raising their children.

A good example is the Trinity.

III. PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN

A. To teach them the word of God

Dt 4:6-9 says God's word is to be in the parent's hearts and then taught diligently to their children.

Ps 78:1-7 states that each generation is responsible for teaching the word of the Lord to the following generation.

All children are born into sin, and inherit a corruptive nature that drives them towards sin and worldliness. Parents are to teach God's word to them to cleanse them from sin. James 1:21 says we are to "receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."

B. To train them in the Ways of God. Prov 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it."

1. Definition of training: to mold character by drilling, discipline; preparing for contest; teaching by repetition.

2. Wise thoughts in training.

Training is more than teaching - Teaching makes a child know what he is to do; training influences him, and sees he does it. The former deals with the mind; the latter with the will.

Prevention is better than cure. Not to watch and correct mistakes, but to watch and prevent mistakes; is true training. The highest aim of true training is to lead the child to know he can obey and do right and be happy in obedience. Prov 20:11

Habits must precede principles. With a child, the body grows for the first years of life while the mind is to a great extent dormant. Habits prepare the way for obedience from principle, not command.

The cultivation of the feelings precede that of judgment. Early years of childhood are marked by the liveliness of the feelings and the susceptibility of impressions, and these are used by the parent to create feelings favorable to all that is good, making it attractive and desirable.

Example is better than precept. The power of effective training lies, not in that which a parent might say and teach, but in what he is and does. We cannot teach children ideals we fail to live up to ourselves. When we live what we teach, we are able to teach others to live.

Love that draws is more than law that demands.

3. Four step process for scriptural training.

2Tim 3:16-17 "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Step 1 Doctrine - Biblical values and ways are implanted and the standard for teaching is set.

Step 2 Reproof or rebuking. Because of sin nature, children's inward attitudes and resulting behavior tend not to conform to God's ways. Parents need to point out differences with reproof applying scriptural doctrine.

Step 3 Correction - Attitudes or behavior that have been reproofed need to be corrected, or changed. This is where discipline is applied. Parents need to insist their children change their attitudes and behavior.

Step 4 Instruction or training in righteousness - Doctrine, reproof, and correction lay the foundation for this final step. We are leading children towards right relationships with God and one another.

4. Discipline - it is a vital part of the training process.

Discipline is more than just punishment; it is a means of changing behavior so that training will result.

Note of caution. *Col 3:21 "Parents are not to provoke children to anger, lest they be discouraged,"* Extreme severity and harshness with little kindness can tend to provoke and discourage children.

The Bible tells us very clearly how we are to discipline our children:

Prov 22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

Prov 23:13-14. " Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell."

The rod is the instrument God designates to associate physical pain with the pain of sin. Children spanked learn first that sin, or incorrect behavior,

causes physical pain; then, later, they learn that sin causes spiritual pain
1Cor 15:46. "chasten a son while there is hope" Prov 19:18

IV RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS

Children are to honor their parents. *"Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."* Eph 6:2,3

Children are to obey their parents. 1) In the Lord Eph 6:1; Dt 30:2. 2) In all things Col 3:20

Note to parents: As with any other area of our lives, God has joined us with others in Local Churches that we might help and strengthen one another. Parents need to work together with other parents under the oversight of Godly pastors to help raise children. We need to work together to insure Godly attitudes and right relationships

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

BECOMING A MISSIONAL PEOPLE

PREFACE: When we consider the idea of missions there is often a “missionary mystique” connected to it that robs God’s people of proper motivation. A mystique means “a special quality or air that makes somebody or something appear mysterious and special.” Most people think of missions as a special call for a few people who go to far away places and do extraordinary things. The real truth is that mission is the call upon all the church. Everyone is sent into the world everyday on a mission’s trip to bring influence. It is everyday, both far and near, either across the street or across the ocean. A wrong concept of missions works to develop a class distinction between special Christian Missionaries (unique people called to far away places) and the rest of us who live and work in everyday local places.

I. JESUS CALLED ALL HIS PEOPLE/CHURCH TO MISSIONS

A. In the same way Jesus was sent into the world on the Father’s mission, we are sent into the world on the Father’s mission

John 17:18-19 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

Joh 20:21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

*Acts 1:8 but you will 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.**"*

B. Our call to missions is everyday, everywhere, all the time

Many incorrectly think they are only on a missions trip when they go somewhere else. The Biblical perspective is that we are on a mission’s trip everyday from the time our feet hit the floor until the time we go back in bed. Everyday when we get up and interact with our family, go to work, go to school, or go to the marketplace with are on a missions trip as ambassadors of Christ trying to demonstrate the Kingdom and see mankind reconciled to God.

2Co 5:18-20 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... (20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

C. The call contains the idea of being salt and light

Mat 5:13-16 MKJV You are the salt of the earth,...(14) You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden... (16) Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven

Light speaks of being sanctified and distinct (holy).

We are to demonstrate God's light through the way we live our lives and relate with people. We live differently under Christ Lordship in our attitudes, behavior, and how we relate in our families, church family, and our workplaces.

The idea of salt speaks of our contact with and influence on others.

Salt had to be rubbed on things for it to do its work of preserving. We interact with people outside of Christ everyday. Our relational interactions help us rub our salt on them to influence them with the Kingdom.

We can commit two errors in this call. We can so withdraw from the world that our salt can't rub on them. We can also be so immersed in the world that we lose our distinctive light. God wants us to walk in both.

D. The call is both far and near

Act 1:8 but you will 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."

The idea of "both in" Jerusalem (locally), Judea and Samaria (closer geographic area), and the remotest part of the earth (across the oceans and to far away places) means it is going simultaneously. We are concerned and working in both near and far places at the same time, not one to the exclusion of the other.

We must avoid the two extremes of the "missionary mystique" (missions is only at far away places that few can go to) and the "parish mentality" that only sees their local area and doesn't care for the ends of the earth.

E. The call is to be a family on mission

In the gospels Jesus sent people out two by two

*Mark 6:7 And He *summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. Luke 10:1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.*

It was never God's will for man to be alone. God sends us out with a message and a friend. Jesus needed a small group of closely related people on His mission, and so do we.

We are to live the pattern of a family on mission

In the original creation mandate from the book of Genesis 1-2 is the foundation of missions (be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, rule over and subdue it). God's pattern in Genesis was to establish family relationships first then sends them on mission.

Traditional missions put forth an independent idea that we become superstar missionaries for Jesus. God's isn't as interested in making superstars for Jesus, but building a super people who will demonstrate and declare the gospel on mission.

There is a principle seen in the Matthew 9-11 and other gospel accounts of how Jesus sent the disciples on mission's trips. He sent people out in pairs and later He and the rest of the group joined them in the work.

This has the important connection of mission with the family He joins us to.

II. FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSIONS IS MORE THAN JUST PREACHING

A. There are four post resurrection commissionings of Jesus in the gospels

They are all part of the commissioning of Jesus. The church usually focuses on only two of the four.

Mark 16: 15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. (16) "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

Luke 24: 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Focusing on these two commissions have historically brought expressions of accomplishment through meetings, crusades, and rallies that include preaching the gospel, baptizing, proclaiming forgiveness of sins and repentance.

B. The two commissions we often forget

Matthew 28: 18-20 "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (19) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you

*John 21: 15-17 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Tend My lambs." (16) ...He *said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." (17)..." Jesus *said to him, "Tend My sheep.*

Matthew and John's rendition of Jesus' commission had elements to them that are impossible to accomplish at events, crusades, and rallies.

In Matthew 28 making disciples and teaching them to observe all Christ commanded

It is a process not an event. Even now Jesus is still making us disciples and teaching us to observe all He commanded.

In John 21 the taking care of sheep, lambs (young) and the sheep (older) is also an everyday process.

The Biblical perspective of God's people is that we are sheep who live in flocks that belong to the great shepherd Jesus. He delegates shepherds on earth to take care of those flocks.

1Pe 5:1-8 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder...(2) shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily,...(3) nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. (4) And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

For both the Matthew 28 and John 21 commissions to occur it necessitates the establishment of local churches (local flocks of sheep) and the continued building of local churches where the continuing process of discipleship and tending the flock can occur.

III. LUKE 10 Matthew 9-11 PATTERN FOR MISSIONS

Perhaps the most significant mission field in the world is right under your nose. It is everyday in our normal sphere of life.

A. Luke 10 Sending the Seventy, Mt 9-11 Sending the Twelve: The essence of their calling/function has to do with extending God's Kingdom as they minister to people.

B. Seventy: *Luke 10:1-17 NASB Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself (with the others) was going to come. (2) And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. ...(5) "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' (6) "If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. (7) "Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. 8) "Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; (9) and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God*

has come near to you.' ... (16) "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me." (17) The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

C. The Twelve: *Mat 9-11 9:35-38 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. (36) Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. (37) Then He *said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. (38) "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."*

Mat 10: 1-42 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.... 7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.... 11 "And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city... (remember that He sent them out two by two) 12 "As you enter the house, give it your greeting. 13 "If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace.

It doesn't end with everybody just scattering out and doing their own thing. There was a sense of being yoked together (Jesus and the twelve) as they continuing to participate in the work. Jesus and the others began to go into these new places of labor.

Mat 11:1 When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities (the cities they had just went to).

Matthew Henry comments on this passage "Christ departed, *to teach and preach* in the cities whither he sent his disciples before him to *work miracles* (Mat 10:1-8), and so to raise people's expectations, and to make way for his entertainment"

D. Elements of the Luke 10 Matthew 9-11 pattern:

1. Out of the meeting and into the home - We need to meet people in their circle of life. Lk 10: 5-7 *"Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' (6) "If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. (7) "Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. (Mt 10: 11-13)*

We then enter into receptive places with people.

Luk 10: 8-9 "Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; (9) and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

Meal time in that day was the means of relating with people along with eating food. Eating what is set before you means you relate with people where they are at. As we are doing that we are to look for ways to bring healing, both physical and emotional, and healing from sin. It may be as simple as praying with someone about something. Most unbelievers will not refuse someone praying for them if you just ask. Jesus blessed people (unbelievers) by feeding them and healing them. He didn't withhold blessings because of their sin.

2. We are to bring blessing to people Luke 10:5, Mt 10:13 "Peace be to this house." - As we interact with people we bring God's blessing of peace. It is first of all releasing the Prince of Peace into the lives and atmosphere of the house. Giving blessing of peace is not just flattery but a blessing. We encourage them with God's perspective. It has to do with speaking positive words to someone. It can be a compliment or a word of encouragement. The idea of a spoken blessing gives people a sense of hope. It isn't just flattery but has substance to it. God's blessing will be in stark contrast to what they hear on a regular basis.

3. Find ways to bring healing and deliverance into their lives – Luke 10: 9, 17 and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ... (17) The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." We counsel with people, help dispel lies that are controlling them, and bring healing in all areas, physically, emotionally, and relationally. This is done through prayer, fellowship, and bringing the word of God. (Mt 10: 1)

4. Proclaim the Kingdom (the rule of Christ) – Luke 10: 9, 17 and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' (Mt 10: 7-8) We labor to see Christ rule explained and embraced in every area of their life.

Interacting, blessing, and healing people helps build a platform from which we speak of the Kingdom. Speaking of the Kingdom isn't just giving the four points of salvation. It is also bringing up the positive testimonies of how the rule of Jesus in our lives or the lives of others has brought life and change.

We also must look for ways to preach the gospel because it is the only way to the new birth and entry into Kingdom. *Joh 3: 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

IV. THE SUPERNATURAL AND MISSIONS

*1Co 4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.
1Th 1:5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power
and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction;*

A. We must not forget the supernatural

We serve a supernatural God who has given us supernatural power, and a supernatural gospel. Missions contain good works but also works of power. We need both. It is both feeding the hungry, serving practical needs, and bringing justice and relief to suffering, but it is also healing the sick, casting out devils, and seeing God's supernatural works of faith with power.

2Th 1:11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,

B. God's power is not just to happen in church meetings and buildings but in the marketplace

There were 43 - Supernatural occurrences in book of Acts (Angels moving, Spirit moving, healing, deliverances, supernatural protection, visions, trances, etc.), 35 occurred in marketplace and homes, 7 occurred at a gathering of the church, 1 occurred in a religious building (Synagogue).

C. God wants to release the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit through His people

It begins with drinking of the Spirit from Jesus and expecting it will flow through us.

Joh 7:37-39...,"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. (38) "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" (39) But this He spoke of the Spirit.

Prayer for people is an important touch point to release supernatural power. We pray in faith expecting God's power to flow through us. We need to lay hand on people and pray outside of church buildings expecting them to be healed, delivered, and filled with the Spirit.

We also need to expect Spiritual gifts to flow in everyday life at work and in the marketplace. We look for prophetic words, words of knowledge, words of wisdom and supernatural utterances.

Eph 6:19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,