



# How Jesus Designed His Church

1st Edition - October 10, 2007

Revision/reprinted - October 15, 2009, February 21, 2012

*"A New Testament faith  
deserves  
a New Testament church."*

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maker of **TREDS** brand Rubber Footwear

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Cover design by Sam Weber. Edited by Karen Weber. 2/3/17





*To my dear wife,  
Karen,  
whose Christian companionship  
has made life an adventure and the present study a reality.*

## Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Dr. Sam Westman Burton for reviewing the study; offering helpful insight and encouragement. Sam spent a career as a missionary church planter and educator and published two books; *The Church of the New Testament: Its Organization and Functions* and *Disciple Mentoring: Theological Education by Extension*.

I am also very grateful for the tremendous effort of my son, Sam, who marked the study for publication and launched HeartsBurning.com, which also features the study in printable form.

My wife, Karen, spent many painstaking hours editing and re-editing the manuscript, resulting in a truly collaborative work. Discovering the church Jesus designed continues to be our shared dream.

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## 0.1 Foreword

In 30 years of mission work, 15 of which have been in African countries, from South Africa to Sudan, I have been given the opportunity to see our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ face what American Christians today have not been able to connect with in any degree of comparison, at least up to this present time.

As I have read Rob Weber's book, *How Jesus Designed His Church*, which deals with the discovery of the Lord's plan for His Church, I have found a great resource for instruction and support that I recommend to those who sow the Gospel in countries where persecution abounds. This work of simple Bible teaching and outline for new Christian workers or those who have been in the faith for many years, is an extraordinary tool which I consider most valuable for these 'last days' when true Bible teaching seems lacking.

It is my prayer that this impressive work will be made available for those who sincerely want only the Word of the Lord to prevail in the establishment of churches around the world.

Sincerely in Christ,

Al Hamilton

BA. MA.

Founder of Pioneer Bible Translators,

Outreach Intl.; and Uganda Christian Missions



## 0.2 Author's Prologue

The study of God's plan for the Church projects a picture and presence of what can be and what might be, what was and what surely will be again. The Scriptures themselves will witness to your spirit and reveal His Church, filled with the life of Jesus Christ and endued with the unconquerable power of God's love. It is an alive Church, courageous in witness, joyous in persecution; made of members who consider themselves strangers and exiles in the world. Together, this vibrant Church happily travels the narrowest of all roads, leading to the one destination for which all human hearts long, heavenly Jerusalem.

The author initiated his study while attending Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. As a young, zealous Christian, it was perplexing as he considered the gap between God's greatness and limitless grace in Christ and the everyday life experience of many believers. What tremendous untapped potential! But why?

What was the void? More importantly, what was the needed connection? A book by Alexander R. Hay, titled *New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*, pointed to the Church's organization and workings as key to releasing God's divine intention in the lives of everyday saints. Believing that the Bible held the answers, the questioning author made a note card study of the New Testament during his last year in seminary (1980-81). Reading the New Testament from beginning to end yielded almost 600 references to the church and its workings. In addition, the author reviewed 39 books written on the subject of the Church. The note cards were sorted by theme and organized into groups, ultimately forming the outline of the study.

More than twenty years lapsed, the original outline and shoe box of note cards biding their time. Ten children later and evermore happily married to the same wife, ten years working in industry as a marketing professional and another twelve years developing an "old economy" manufacturing business, the shoe box of study cards resurrected. Finally, over a three year period of writing and editing, the original effort molded into the present

study.

*“The proof of the pudding,”* as the saying goes, *“is in the eating.”* It is the author’s deepest conviction that someday soon we will experience the Church overflowing anew with such remarkable love, joy and peace as to rival the earliest band of Christians. Their powerful love and childlike faith sparked a spontaneous expansion of the Church and turned the world in their own generation upside down.

I hope you and I are members of it.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rob Weber

### 0.3 Introduction

**Can you imagine** “What is possible in God?” Your first reaction might be, “But of course, all things are possible with God.” True, certainly, and yet ask who you know that lives as if that truth penetrated their soul?

The first human couple, Adam and Eve, discovered the world outside of God. They ate the forbidden fruit and unleashed a flood of death dealing consequences from which we still suffer today (Genesis 3:6-8).

Contemplate the possibilities for you and me in God. The Bible provides a record of ordinary lives, transformed to extraordinary when joined with God in His eternal purposes. Noah erected an ark to safely carry his family and species of the animal kingdom through the Great Flood; repopulating the earth (Genesis 6-9). Abraham abandoned his country, following the Lord to an unknown land; a land inhabited today by his descendants against all odds (Genesis 12:1-4). Jael won a great victory for Israel without leaving the perimeter of her home. An enemy commander, exhausted and in retreat, made an unplanned stop at her home seeking food and shelter. After a meal the officer slumbered and Jael, seizing the moment, drove a tent stake through the temple of the adversary’s head, triumphing over Israel’s enemy (Judges 4:17-22). Hannah, refusing to remain barren, “poured out her soul before the Lord” (1 Samuel 1:15) and God opened her womb through the birth of Samuel, the prophet.

Ancient earth reveals God’s possibilities hidden in creation. Several years ago, miners in the Naica Silver and Lead Mine of Chihuahua, Mexico, discovered a cavern containing a literal forest of what are now recognized as the world’s largest crystals. Unmatched in proportion, the crystals average four feet in diameter and thirty feet in length, some as long as fifty feet! (web search: giant crystals) **Can you imagine?**

The author, while working for a seventy year old firm with top management anticipating limited growth, proved human projections could not rival God’s possibilities. Within a short

three year period, a flood of new products drove sales to increase four-fold. **Can you imagine?**

Old Testament prophets spoke of the day when God would break the pernicious problem of sin, not by writing tougher laws or establishing wiser leaders, but by replacing man's stony, self loving heart with a heart of flesh, truly capable of loving God and our fellow man. How? By pouring out His Spirit on all flesh, God made it possible for each one of us to know Him personally (Joel 2:28, Ezekiel 36:26). **Can you imagine?**

**Acts 2:14-18:** (at Pentecost)<sup>14</sup>But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them:“Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words. <sup>15</sup>For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; <sup>16</sup> but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup>‘And it shall be in the Last Days,’ God says,  
‘That I will pour forth of my spirit upon all  
mankind;

And your sons and your daughters shall  
prophesy,

And your young men shall see visions,

And your old men dreams;

<sup>18</sup> Even upon my bondslaves, both men and  
women,

I will in those days pour forth of my spirit

And they will prophesy.’

**Ezekiel 36:26-27:** <sup>26</sup>“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

What if you cannot imagine? The New Testament recounts an interesting story involving religious leaders who had no

expectation of better things to come. They possessed no hope for the future, refusing to believe in the afterlife. The story describes their attempt to prove the resurrection of the dead a complete impossibility. Imagine that! In the Bible reading below, these religious and learned folk strongly defended their conviction, relying on Scripture for justification. Jesus listened patiently, but rejected their reasoning. Underscoring where their mental road map led them off course, Jesus said, “You are mistaken, because you don’t know the scriptures or the power of God.”

**Matthew 22:23-33:** <sup>23</sup>On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him, <sup>24</sup>asking, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up children for his brother.’ <sup>25</sup>Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother; <sup>26</sup>so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. <sup>27</sup>Last of all, the woman died. <sup>28</sup>In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had married her.”

<sup>29</sup>But Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. <sup>30</sup>For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <sup>31</sup>But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: <sup>32</sup>‘I am the God Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.” <sup>33</sup>When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

To a degree, more or less, you and I might accept the logic of the Sadducees of old, living a less-than-possible life; not knowing the scriptures or the power of God. Jesus said, “I came that you might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Have

we tested the limits of the more than abundant life? Have we plumbed the depths of the peace that passes all understanding? (Philippians 4:7) Have we held our breath with joy inexpressible (1 Peter 1:8), or lost ourselves in the love of God which is beyond knowledge? (Ephesians 3:19)

**What is possible in God? Can you imagine a simple way to gain entrance into a lifetime of continual discovery?**

As a young man I was accused of asking too many questions and having too few answers. As an unbeliever it was troublesome to explain why people act the way they do. Particularly perplexing; as natural as it is to exist unhappily, the task to create genuine happiness, at least for more than a moment of time, lay far beyond my reach. Thankfully, after personal commitment to Jesus, the spiritual understanding of sin and the power of salvation dissolved these bafflements.

And along with salvation, new questions surfaced. Why do Christians act the way they do and why do so many, including myself, live less than more abundantly? What changed from the experience of the early church described in the Books of Acts?

Did God change? No! Did His power or His good will toward us or the promises and precepts in His word change? “Jesus is the same yesterday, today, yes and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). “All flesh is like grass and the flower of grass. The grass fades and the flower falls off but the Word of God abides forever” (Isaiah 40:8). Likewise, human nature remains unchanged: fallen. “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9) Temptations and our Adversary remain constant. What changed?

What is so fundamentally different from the early, New Testament Church as to explain the spiritual poverty inflicting the saints of the church today? The answer lies in the conventional wisdom men use to organize the church and its functions, a pattern totally foreign to the New Testament. The Church that flamed to life at Pentecost two thousand years ago projects the model that we must explore. Jesus’ own teaching, as well as His will revealed through the apostles and authors of scripture, describes a Church uniquely designed to serve the needs of the

saints, unlock the personal experience of His actual presence, and release His almighty power in the lives of ordinary believers. Through a living, vibrant Church, God will flood the earth with the knowledge of His glory; His saving mercy in the Gospel of Christ.\*

You may wonder how God's plan for the Church, if detailed in the Bible, could disappear almost unnoticed. Actually, other basic Bible truths, even plainly stated ones, were neglected or simply "lost" for long periods of time. An example, "salvation by grace through faith", a key tenet arising within the Protestant Reformation, was previously hidden from the Church for possibly over 1000 years. During the extended period of spiritual darkness, salvation was thought to originate from the Church, through its priests and the administration of sacraments. For a sum of money an individual could even purchase forgiveness of sins from the Church by buying what was known as an "indulgence." **Can you imagine?**

***Ephesians 2:8:*** <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

***Romans 3:24:*** <sup>24</sup>...being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

In the early 1500s Martin Luther championed the truth of saving grace through personal faith in Christ, setting the foundation stone for the Protestant Reformation. New churches formed, including the Lutheran Church named after Martin Luther, and the monopoly of the Catholic Church, exclusive and authoritarian, began to splinter.

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\*Thankfully, Jesus' triumphant return does not await our successful evangelizing of the world. Hallelujah! He can come at any moment! When our Heavenly Father says, "Enough, it's time," He will send an angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation, tribe, language, and people (Revelation 14:6). The sacred proclamation will be complete. He will reap His harvest field.

We ponder how central saving truth vanished in the midst of a believing community. During most of the time period between the birth of the New Testament Church at Pentecost and the Protestant Reformation, only Church leaders could access the Bible, specifically in the ancient languages of Greek, Hebrew and Latin. Furthermore, religious and civil law prohibited translating scripture into any common language understood by the “masses.” *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* records the persecution and death faced by those who bravely did translate and distribute scripture.

Why would leaders entrusted with the Church’s wellbeing prevent their congregations from reading the Bible for themselves? Furthermore, why would the same religious leaders teach false doctrines, enticing the multitudes to buy God’s forgiveness through indulgences? The love of money, lust for power, and desire for position and privilege provide sufficient motivation.

Another reasonable question is “Why would God provide a detailed plan for the Church, its organization and activities?” How could a single plan address all the needs of diverse peoples, cultures, languages and times of history? The review of Bible history uncovers how frequently God provided detailed plans. As in the construction of Noah’s ark, length, width, height and materials for use are all detailed. The Bible records in this case describe an overview of the construction project, not exhaustive details as the ark was a design never intended for duplication.

**Genesis 6:14-16:** <sup>14</sup>Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch. <sup>15</sup>This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.

<sup>16</sup>You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.

Similarly, God provided the design of the Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant which together formed the physical focus of Old Testament worship. Explicit detail characterizes the record of their pattern and fabrication.

**Exodus 25:9-40:** <sup>9</sup>According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.

<sup>10</sup>They shall construct an ark of acacia wood two and a half cubits long, and one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high. <sup>11</sup>You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and you shall make a gold molding around it. <sup>12</sup>You shall cast four gold rings for it and fasten them on its four feet, and two rings shall be on one side of it and two rings on the other side of it. <sup>13</sup>You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. <sup>14</sup>You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark with them. <sup>15</sup>The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be removed from it. <sup>16</sup>You shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you.

<sup>17</sup>You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. <sup>18</sup>You shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. <sup>19</sup>Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. <sup>20</sup>The cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat. <sup>21</sup>You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you. <sup>22</sup>There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two

cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.

<sup>23</sup>You shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits long and one cubit wide and one and a half cubits high. <sup>24</sup>You shall overlay it with pure gold and make a gold border around it. <sup>25</sup>You shall make for it a rim of a handbreadth around it; and you shall make a gold border for the rim around it. <sup>26</sup>You shall make four gold rings for it and put rings on the four corners which are on its four feet. <sup>27</sup>The rings shall be close to the rim as holders for the poles to carry the table. <sup>28</sup>You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, so that with them the table may be carried. <sup>29</sup>You shall make its dishes and its pans and its jars and its bowls with which to pour drink offerings; you shall make them of pure gold. <sup>30</sup>You shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times.

<sup>31</sup>Then you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand and its base and its shaft are to be made of hammered work; its cups, its bulbs and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. <sup>32</sup>Six branches shall go out from its sides; three branches of the lampstand from its one side and three branches of the lampstand from its other side. <sup>33</sup>Three cups shall be shaped like almond blossoms in the one branch, a bulb and a flower, and three cups shaped like almond blossoms in the other branch, a bulb and a flower—so for six branches going out from the lampstand; <sup>34</sup>and in the lampstand four cups shaped like almond blossoms, its bulbs and its flowers. <sup>35</sup>A bulb shall be under the first pair of branches coming out of it, and a bulb under the second pair of branches coming out of it, and a bulb under the third pair of branches coming out of it, for the six branches coming out of the lampstand. <sup>36</sup>Their bulbs and their branches shall

be of one piece with it; all of it shall be one piece of hammered work of pure gold. <sup>37</sup>Then you shall make its lamps seven in number; and they shall mount its lamps so as to shed light on the space in front of it. <sup>38</sup>Its snuffers and their trays shall be of pure gold. <sup>39</sup>It shall be made from a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. <sup>40</sup>See that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.

Yet another example of God's design involved the duties of priests and the system of sacrifices and feasts practiced throughout Old Testament history, beginning with the construction of the tabernacle to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.. God provided a "methods manual" describing what to sacrifice, when, why, how to perform each sacrifice and by whom. More than enough detail, a literal handbook for generations of God's people to study and follow, describes each procedure.

**Leviticus 1:** <sup>1</sup>Then the LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, <sup>2</sup>"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When any man of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd or the flock.

<sup>3</sup>If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. <sup>4</sup>He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf. <sup>5</sup>He shall slay the young bull before the LORD; and Aarons sons the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>6</sup>He shall then skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. <sup>7</sup>The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. <sup>8</sup>Then Aarons sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head and the suet over the wood which is

on the fire that is on the altar. <sup>9</sup>Its entrails, however, and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>But if his offering is from the flock, of the sheep or of the goats, for a burnt offering, he shall offer it a male without defect. <sup>11</sup>He shall slay it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD, and Aarons sons the priests shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. <sup>12</sup>He shall then cut it into its pieces with its head and its suet, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. <sup>13</sup>The entrails, however, and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it, and offer it up in smoke on the altar; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>But if his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering from the turtledoves or from young pigeons. <sup>15</sup>The priest shall bring it to the altar, and wring off its head and offer it up in smoke on the altar; and its blood is to be drained out on the side of the altar. <sup>16</sup>He shall also take away its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar eastward, to the place of the ashes. <sup>17</sup>Then he shall tear it by its wings, but shall not sever it And the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar on the wood which is on the fire; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.” (This is only the beginning of God’s instructions for sacrifices, but it provides a flavor of the depth of detail provided.)

Finally, it was the Lord, Himself, who also provided the design of the temple built in Jerusalem and the organisation of those who served in its functions. The details were communicated in writing through David the King, with God’s hand upon him. David is recorded charging his son, Solomon, with the task of building the temple...

**1 Chronicles 28:** <sup>10</sup>“Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be courageous and act.” <sup>11</sup>Then David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch of the temple, its buildings, its storehouses, its upper rooms, and the room for the mercy seat;<sup>12</sup> and the plan of all that he had in mind, for the courts of the house of the Lord, and for all the surrounding rooms, for the storehouses of the house of God, and for the storehouses of the dedicated things;<sup>13</sup> also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites and for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord and for all the utensils of service in the house of the Lord; <sup>14</sup> for the golden utensils, the weight of gold for all utensils for every kind of service; for the silver utensils, the weight of silver for all utensils for every kind of service; <sup>15</sup> and the weight of gold for the golden lampstands and their golden lamps, with the weight of each lampstand and its lamps; and the weight of silver for the silver lampstands, with the weight of each lampstand and its lamps according to the use of each lampstand; <sup>16</sup> and the gold by weight for the tables of the showbread, for each table; and silver for the silver tables; <sup>17</sup> and the forks, the basins, and the pitchers of pure gold; and for the golden bowls with the weight for each bowl; and for the silver bowls with the weight for each bowl;<sup>18</sup> and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the model of the chariot, even the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord. <sup>19</sup>“All this,” said David, “the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern.”

God’s detailed plans, communicated to man, form a common theme throughout Bible history. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). God-given plans for

God's work demonstrate God's mercy. Jesus faithfully promised, "I will build My church."

Does it seem a stretch to look for organizational solutions when man's problems dwell in the individual Christian life? Personal failings are generally attributed to a lack of faith, shallow commitment, or simple disobedience.

Targeting individual soul-searching instead of organizational reform would be a reasonable approach if the Christian life were designed for isolation, likened by the ascetics and monastics of old who lived in caves or in baskets fastened to the top of tall poles. Through the ages outstanding individuals have risen to the top, bucking the status quo and going against the flow with no regard for reputation, livelihood, or personal safety. Church history glitters with these gems. Jesus, however, does not purpose to reward the exceptional alone. His mission reclaims ordinary folk, regular people who daily do their job wherever they live.

For good or ill, organizational systems exert strong influence to deeply affect personal behavior. The United States of America unquestionably stands as the most successful nation in history. Is this because Americans are by nature the smartest or most industrious folk on the face of the earth? Unique among nations, its political organization recognizes the God given personal rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The nation's Founding Fathers trusted God's providence in the daily life of each citizen. All political systems that deny these truths fail to unleash the potential of their people. History and present experience stand as proof.

Perhaps you have read about businesses that "reorganize," a metaphor for management efforts to improve operations. The design directing the functions and relationships of individuals within the firm is flawed; not the workers' training or competency. The employees sincerely work, but unproductively and below their capabilities.

As we have seen, God provided detailed design and order for the religious organization and community life of His people under the Old Covenant. It seems plausible that He also communicated a plan for the organization of the Church of the New Covenant

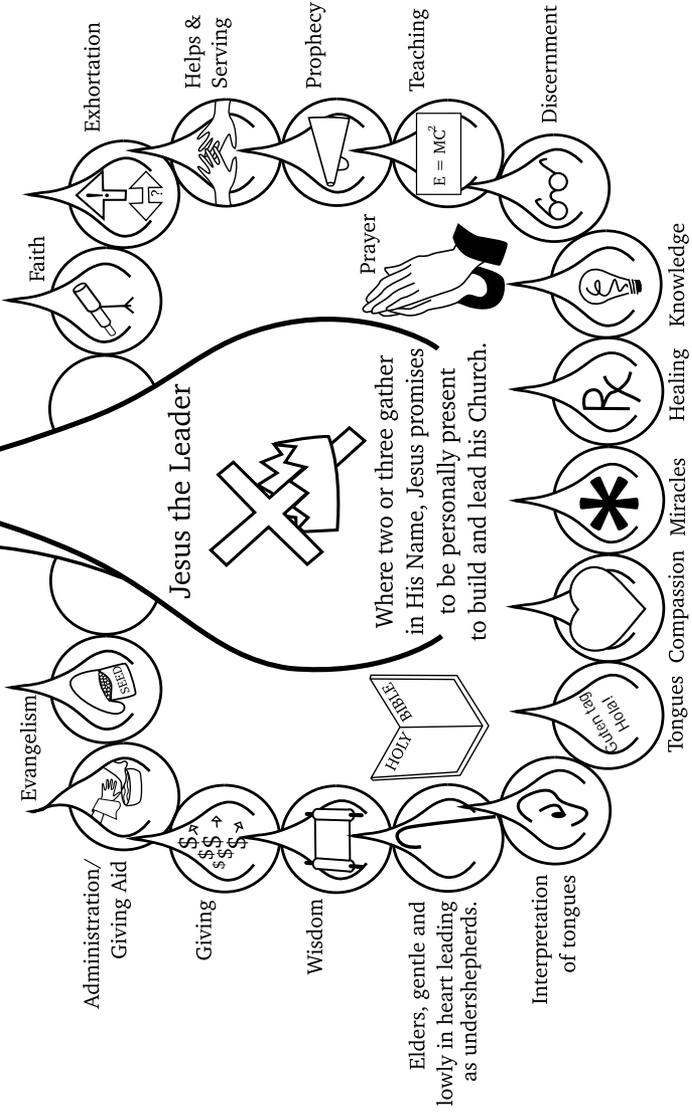
(New Testament). Can you imagine our Lord entrusting the design of His Church to the wisdom or imagination of the twelve apostles or the most up-to-date organizational theories of 21st Century Christians?

With perfection, the record of the New Testament provides ample information regarding God's plan for His Church. Our responsibility is to search the scriptures and believe that what Jesus designed, He can and will build and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it. Remember the error of the Sadducees, who did not understand the scriptures or the power of God.

# The Church Jesus Designed

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts and ministrations to the brethren.

Each saint filled with the Holy Spirit, sharing God's word with the brethren and doing the mercy deeds of Jesus.



Elders, gentle and lowly in heart leading as undershepherds.

Where two or three gather in His Name, Jesus promises to be personally present to build and lead his Church.

The New Testament Church, with Jesus personally present as the actual Leader, the Holy Spirit, His Administrator, and with saints, each and every one, as priests to God, ministers to one another, and witnesses to the world.

# 1 Pictures of the Church

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that a picture is truly worth a thousand words. God harnesses the power of pictures to help us visualize the essential nature of His Church.

The New Testament describes the Church in at least eight ways:

- God's Dwelling Place
- God's Family
- Jesus' Body
- A Chosen Race; Royal Priesthood; Holy Nation
- The Bride of Christ
- The Pillar and Support of the Truth
- The Flock of God
- God's Field

## 1.1 God's Dwelling Place

Unlike any other institution, the Church is designed as a dwelling place for God on earth. Divinely conceived and divinely built. Made not with bricks or with stone but with lives that are our own. The Church is a living structure in which God resides in the joined lives of the pure-hearted.

***Ephesians 2:21,22:*** ...<sup>21</sup>in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup>in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

***1 Peter 2:5:*** ...<sup>5</sup>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.

## 1.2 The Church is God's Family.

The Church is the Family of God. God is our Father and we are all adopted sons and daughters. God sits at the head of the table. Jesus is the first born among many brethren.

In His family, the full range of strengths and weaknesses are manifested; faults and foibles along with goodnesses and graces. The joined lives of real people make up God's family, each one loved and adopted by God our Father.

A healthy family's bio might read: "Loving relationships, trust, responsibility, encouragement, training, discipline, commitment." If there ever were a complete family, God's family meets and exceeds all expectations.

**1 Timothy 3:14,15:** <sup>14</sup>I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; <sup>15</sup>but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will 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.

**John 1:12,13:** <sup>12</sup>But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**Mark 3:35:** <sup>35</sup>For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.

**Romans 9:26:** <sup>26</sup>And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," there they shall be called sons of the living God.

**Romans 8:10-16:** <sup>10</sup>If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

<sup>12</sup>So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— <sup>13</sup>for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God...

### 1.3 The Church is Jesus’ body - obedient to His command.

Jesus is the Head. We are His body, fulfilling His will in the world. Every human body functions with purpose and working parts. Its health depends on the wellbeing of each of its varied members. The Church, as the body of Christ, also performs tasks, but the purpose, power and plans are our Lord’s. Hallelujah! Jesus is alive and well. His body is alive; fulfilling His ministry. Through the body of Christ, the mercy deeds of Jesus expand exponentially.

**1 Corinthians 12:27:** <sup>27</sup>Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.

**Colossians 1:24:** <sup>24</sup>Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.

**Ephesians 5:28-30,32** <sup>28</sup>So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup>for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are members of His body... <sup>32</sup>This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

**Ephesians 1:22,23** <sup>22</sup>And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup>which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

#### 1.4 The Church - a chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation.

All who come to Christ are chosen by God to receive His promise of a ‘new heart’, enter the spiritual service of His ‘High Priest’ and come under the jurisdiction, protection, and provision of His government.

**John 3:7,8** <sup>7</sup>“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup>“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is every one who is born of the Spirit.”

**2 Corinthians 5:17** <sup>17</sup>Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

**1 Peter 2:5,9** ...<sup>5</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...

**Philippians 3:20,21** <sup>20</sup>For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>21</sup>who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

**Revelation 5:9,10** <sup>9</sup>And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals;

for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. <sup>10</sup>You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

### 1.5 The Church, The Pillar and Support of the Truth.

The Church shoulders a singularly solemn and sober responsibility, holding high the light of God’s truth in a world darkened by the “father of lies.” Jesus entrusted His Church with the sacred scriptures, inspired by the Holy Spirit and uniquely able to impart life, health, peace, joy, and the true love of God.

**1 Timothy 3:14-16** <sup>14</sup>I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; <sup>15</sup>but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will 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. <sup>16</sup>By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:

He who was revealed in the flesh,  
Was vindicated in the Spirit,  
Seen by angels,  
Proclaimed among the nations,  
Believed on in the world,  
Taken up in glory.

**Matthew 5:13-16:** <sup>13</sup>You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

<sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; <sup>15</sup>nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup>Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may

see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

## 1.6 The Church - The Bride of Christ.

The Church is the bride of Christ, its members betrothed, eagerly awaiting final and complete union with Christ in God. Similar to a man and woman joining as one in marriage, the dawn of the day of God will inaugurate the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the redeemed Church will unite with her Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. Even now, Jesus prepares heavenly Jerusalem and marriage supper. Soon, He will return for the Church, His bride.

**Revelation 21:9,10:** <sup>9</sup>Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” <sup>10</sup>And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup>having the glory of God...”

**Revelation 19:5-9:** <sup>5</sup>And a voice came from the throne, saying,

“Give praise to our God,  
all you His bond-servants,  
you who fear Him,  
the small and the great.”

<sup>6</sup>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.  
<sup>7</sup>Let us rejoice and be glad  
and give the glory to Him,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come  
and His bride has made herself ready.”

<sup>8</sup>It was given to her to clothe herself  
in fine linen, bright and clean;  
for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the  
saints.

<sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who  
are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb’” And  
he said to me, “These are true words of God.”

**Revelation 22:16,17:** <sup>16</sup>I, Jesus, have sent My angel  
to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the  
root and the descendant of David, the bright morning  
star. <sup>17</sup>The Spirit and the bride say, “Come” And let  
the one who hears say, “Come” And let the one who is  
thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water  
of life without cost.”

## 1.7 The Church is the flock of God.

A flock is a group of sheep; gathered and cared for by a shepherd. The picture of God’s flock illustrates two characteristics central to understanding the church; the flock needs its shepherd and the flock knows its shepherd. Take a good look at the brethren surrounding you. We are all wayward sheep gathered by Jesus into God’s fold. Thank God for our Good Shepherd and for His love, truth and Spirit that unite us! Psalm 23 deepens our understanding of the benefits of the Shepherd’s care.

**1 Peter 5:1,2:** <sup>1</sup>Therefore, I exhort the elders among  
you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings  
of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be  
revealed, <sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God among you...

**John 10:14-16:** <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd, and I  
know My own and My own know Me, <sup>15</sup>even as the  
Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay  
down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep,

which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.

## 1.8 The Church is God's field, a divine planting.

Many may tend His field, but God alone causes the growth.

**1 Corinthians 3:1-9:** <sup>1</sup>And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, <sup>3</sup>for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men?

<sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. <sup>7</sup>So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. <sup>8</sup>Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

## 1.9 Conclusion

The Church our Lord designed is presented in the form of word pictures, suggesting what is possible when believers unite their hearts and minds with Jesus as Head.

However, will the Church fulfill its destiny? That depends on you and me, wanting and working for what God desires, not only for ourselves but for our brothers and sisters in Christ as well, and for the sake of a broader world for whom our Savior died and

rose again and is now gathering into His fold through the agency of the members of His body, the church.



## 2 Jesus, the Ruling Christ

Next, let's discover the place of our Lord Jesus Christ in God's plan for the Church.

### 2.1 Jesus Christ is the supreme authority over all rulers and authorities.

Jesus, the Ruling Christ, holds the power and authority to completely accomplish His will in His Church and in the world.

***Colossians 2:10:*** ...<sup>10</sup>and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

***Matthew 28:18:*** <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

***Revelation 1:5:*** ...<sup>5</sup>and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood...

### 2.2 Jesus is the Head of His body, the Church.

Imagine the Church, the body of Christ, with Jesus as its actual head. The natural, reasoning mind retorts, "Preposterous!" And yet, Jesus is our Leader, present and able to direct His saints to accomplish His good will.

***Colossians 1:18:*** <sup>18</sup>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.

***Ephesians 1:22,23:*** <sup>22</sup>And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup>which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

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

### 2.3 Jesus manifests Himself personally present when the church assembles.

Jesus personally presides in our midst, fulfilling His “preeminence” with respect to the Church (Colossians 1:18). We gather at His command and in His presence. He is the One we need and He has what we need. He is the good shepherd. His sheep know His voice, hear His voice, and follow Him. How do we know that our Lord is present in our meeting? He promised. With eyes and ears of faith He is seen and heard by those who gather.

**Matthew 18:20:** <sup>20</sup>For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.

**Matthew 28:20b:** ...<sup>20b</sup>and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

### 2.4 Jesus is the builder of His Church.

The Church is a dwelling of God in the Spirit, and our Lord Jesus is the builder of the unique, divine structure. God questioned King David, “What kind of a house will you build for Me?” Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God is supremely qualified, able and willing to construct a house, a dwelling place, of the joined-lives of the saints. “I will build My Church,” He said.

**Matthew 16:15-18:** <sup>15</sup>He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup>And Jesus 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. <sup>18</sup>I also say to you that you

are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

**Hebrews 3:2-6:** <sup>2</sup>He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. <sup>3</sup>For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. <sup>4</sup>For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. <sup>5</sup>Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; <sup>6</sup>but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house— whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

**Colossians 2:19:** ...<sup>19</sup>and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

**1 Corinthians 3:1-9:** <sup>1</sup>And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, <sup>3</sup>for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not mere men?

<sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. <sup>7</sup>So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. <sup>8</sup>Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. <sup>9</sup>For we

are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

## 2.5 Jesus is the Cornerstone.

Our Lord, the Builder, also shoulders the burden as the Cornerstone of the Church, the supreme foundation stone, on whom all other stones rest. Each saint is set as a living stone, placed stone on stone by the hand of God. Any other BEGINNING STONE frustrates the building of a temple of God in the Spirit.

**Matthew 21:42:** <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'The Stone which the builders rejected, This became the Chief Corner Stone; This came about from the LORD, And it is marvelous in our eyes?'" <sup>43</sup>"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. <sup>44</sup>And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

## 2.6 Jesus is the Leader of His Church.

Jesus governs His Church. He leads each saint in life and service by His gentle and lowly spirit. Jesus leads as the Servant of All, calling, "Follow Me."

**Matthew 23:1-12:** <sup>1</sup>Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; <sup>3</sup>therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. <sup>4</sup>They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. <sup>5</sup>But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. <sup>6</sup>They

love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup>and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. <sup>8</sup>But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup>Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup>Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. <sup>11</sup>But the greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup>Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”

**Luke 6:46-49:** <sup>46</sup>“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? <sup>47</sup>Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: <sup>48</sup>he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. <sup>49</sup>But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”

## 2.7 Jesus is the Chief Shepherd.

One Chief Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, shepherds His flock. All others appointed to shepherd and guide are under-shepherds, accountable to the saints and answering to the one, supreme Shepherd.

**1 Peter 2:25:** <sup>25</sup>For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

**1 Peter 5:4 (Peter addressing elders):** <sup>4</sup>And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

**John 10:11-16 :** <sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, <sup>15</sup>even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.”

**Revelation 7:13-17:** <sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?” <sup>14</sup>I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup>For this reason, they are before the throne of God;

and they serve Him day and night in His temple;  
and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.

<sup>16</sup>They will hunger no longer,  
nor thirst anymore;  
nor will the sun beat down on them,  
nor any heat;

<sup>17</sup>for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd,  
and will guide them to springs of the water of life;  
and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”

## 2.8 Jesus is the great Guardian of our souls.

“If God is for us, who is against us?” (Romans 8:31). The devil, our adversary, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking all whom he may devour. Take heart, dear saint! Jesus stands at our side to guard and keep us safe now and forever.

**1 Peter 2:25:** <sup>25</sup>For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

**John 10:27-30:** <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup>and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. <sup>30</sup>I and the Father are one.

## 2.9 Jesus is our High Priest.

Within the Church, a kingdom of priests to God, Jesus functions as the High Priest of our confession; always making intercession for us from His seat at the right hand of God the Father.

**Hebrews 4:14-16:** <sup>14</sup>Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

## 2.10 Jesus is our Bridegroom.

Jesus is the Bridegroom. The Church is His bride. The ultimate proof of His love, a life sacrificed for another, culminated on the cross.

**John 3:28,29:** (John the Baptist speaks)...<sup>28</sup>You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, “I am not the Christ,” but, “I have been sent ahead of Him.” <sup>29</sup>He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.

## 2.11 Conclusion

As the song goes, “Jesus in the morning. Jesus in the noonday. Jesus at supertime.” Jesus. Jesus. Jesus! The One whose name is above every other name. The One in whom God is summing up all things...things in the heavens and things upon the earth. The One by whom all things were made and for whom all things were made.

This Jesus is the One who promised to meet with us in our assembly. Otherwise, why gather at all? Jesus, present and preeminent!

### 3 The Holy Spirit's Ministry in the Church

Have you ever wondered, "How far away is heaven?" When Jesus ascended in the glory cloud to join His Father, how far did He actually go? Was it "just around the corner" or "to the other side of the moon"? How far away is heaven?

Heaven's nearness is hinted at in the account of Stephen's death, told in the Book of Acts. Arrested, Stephen bravely faced the Jewish council and being full of the Holy Spirit made his good confession. Filled with rage, the eyes of Jewish leaders fumed dark with murder but Stephen's eyes looked upward and in the clearness of a pure heart beheld Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. What was our Lord doing... standing? He was standing with Stephen, leading His Church to victory. Hallelujah! Stephen's last words were addressed to the One Standing Near, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Then he fell asleep.

In that courageous moment, how far was Stephen from heaven? How far are you and I from that Holy Assembly? Is heaven any further than a baby can crawl from the safety of his mother's arms or as far as a kitten can wander from the litter? The Bible teaches that if the veil parted which separates this world from eternal splendor, you and I would see that same One Stephen saw "standing at the right hand of the Father." Can you imagine? Heaven is just an arm's length away - a spiritual, eternal dimension. Seen or unseen, Jesus is at this very moment in our midst! Glory!

Nearer still than the Blessed Standing One is the Helper, Comforter, Teacher and Promise of the Father. He comes to put us to life, quickening our spirits. By His indwelling presence, sealing our adoption, we cry out "Abba, Father." The mystery hidden from long ages passed and now providentially revealed... "Christ in you, the hope of glory!" Jesus is revealed as our Leader, the Holy Spirit as His Administrator.

### **3.1 The Holy Spirit creates the body of Christ through His indwelling presence.**

**1 Corinthians 12:12,13:** <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

**Romans 8:9:** <sup>9</sup>However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

**Romans 8:15-17:** <sup>15</sup>For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we might be glorified with Him.

### **3.2 In the Body of Christ, the Many, through the Holy Spirit, are made ONE.**

“That they may all be ONE,” was Jesus’ prayer, “even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You” (John 17:21).

**1 Corinthians 12:12,13,20,27:** <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit... <sup>20</sup>But now there are many members, but one body... <sup>27</sup>Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.

*Romans 12:5*: ...<sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

### 3.3 The Holy Spirit is present in the assembly of the Church.

*John 14:16,17*: <sup>16</sup>I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; <sup>17</sup>that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

*Acts 5:4 (Speaking to Ananias, Peter said...)*: <sup>4</sup>While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-22*: <sup>16</sup>Rejoice always; <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing; <sup>18</sup>in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit; <sup>20</sup>do not despise prophetic utterances. <sup>21</sup>But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

### 3.4 The Holy Spirit is the Administrator of spiritual gifts and ministries.

*1 Corinthians 12:4-16*: <sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup>And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. <sup>7</sup>But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup>For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, and

to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

<sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>For the body is not one member, but many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

### 3.5 The Holy Spirit leads God's people in life and service.

**Romans 8:14:** <sup>14</sup>For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

**Acts 2:17,18:** <sup>17</sup>"And it shall be in the Last days," God says, "That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; Even on my bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit, And they shall prophesy."

**Acts 16:6,7,9:** <sup>6</sup>They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; <sup>7</sup>and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia,

and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them...<sup>9</sup>A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

### 3.6 The Holy Spirit is our Teacher.

**John 14:25-27:** <sup>25</sup>These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. <sup>26</sup>But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. <sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

**1 Corinthians 2:12,14:** <sup>12</sup>Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God... <sup>14</sup>But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

**1 John 2:20,21:** <sup>20</sup>But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. <sup>21</sup>I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

**John 16:13:** <sup>13</sup>But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

### **3.7 The Holy Spirit fully equips the local Church with spiritual gifts for particular ministries according to His plan.**

*1 Corinthians 1:1,2,4-7:* <sup>1</sup>Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, <sup>2</sup>To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours...

<sup>4</sup>I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, <sup>6</sup>even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, <sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

*1 Corinthians 12:4-6,11,18:* <sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup>And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. <sup>11</sup>But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills... <sup>18</sup>But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

### **3.8 The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to each saint enabling us to minister to our brothers and sisters in Christ and bless those outside the Church.**

*1 Corinthians 12:7:* <sup>7</sup>But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

*1 Peter 4:10:* <sup>10</sup>As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

*1 Corinthians 7:7:* <sup>7</sup>Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

### **3.9 The measure and manner of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are as deep as the needs of the human heart and as wide as the reach of Christ's Great Commission.**

*Romans 12:6-8:* <sup>6</sup>Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; <sup>7</sup>if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup>or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

*1 Corinthians 12:8-10:* <sup>8</sup>For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

*1 Corinthians 12:28-30:* <sup>28</sup>And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup>All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? <sup>30</sup>All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

### 3.10 The Holy Spirit appoints saints for service.

These ministries may take many forms including those listed below.

**1 Corinthians 12:28**

Apostles  
 Prophets  
 Teachers  
 Workers of Miracles  
 Healers  
 Helps  
 Administrations  
 Various kinds of tongues

**Ephesians 4:7-12**

Apostles  
 Prophets  
 Pastors (Elders)  
 Teachers  
 Evangelists

**1 Corinthians 12:28:** <sup>28</sup>And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

**Ephesians 4:7-12:** <sup>7</sup>But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

<sup>8</sup>Therefore it says,

“When He ascended on high, He led captive  
 a host of captives, And he gave gifts to  
 men.”

<sup>9</sup>(Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup>He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup>And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

**Romans 1:3-5:** <sup>3</sup>concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup>who

was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake...

### **3.11 An important purpose of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers is to equip the saints, who being effectively enabled, serve to build up the body of Christ.**

*Ephesians 4:7-16:* <sup>7</sup>But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup>Therefore it says,

“When He ascended on high, He led captive  
a host of captives, And he gave gifts to  
men.”

<sup>9</sup>(Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup>He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup>And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; <sup>13</sup>until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup>As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup>but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

<sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what 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.

### **3.12 Each and every saint arises as God's gift to the Church and belongs to the Church. God's Church belongs to no man or group of men.**

*1 Corinthians 3:1-23:* <sup>1</sup>And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, <sup>3</sup>for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men?

<sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. <sup>7</sup>So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. <sup>8</sup>Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

<sup>10</sup>According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup>For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup>Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup>each man's work will become evident;

for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. <sup>14</sup>If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

<sup>16</sup>Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? <sup>17</sup>If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

<sup>18</sup>Let no man deceive himself If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. <sup>19</sup>For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God For it is written, "He is the One who catches the wise in their craftiness"; <sup>20</sup>and again, "The LORD knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless." <sup>21</sup>So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, <sup>22</sup>whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, <sup>23</sup>and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

### 3.13 Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is the great Empowerer. When He comes into a person's life to fill them with Himself, limitations of every kind evaporate, overwhelmed by the Limitless One!

Jesus, present and preeminent, governs His Church. The Holy Spirit indwells, empowers and leads each believer. God's Church marches forward in triumph and victory!



## 4 Authority and Church Leadership

The New Testament describes and teaches a plan for Church leadership and authority remarkably different from the common practices of today. Historians record the emergence of “ecclesiasticism”, church hierarchy and clear clergy/laity distinctions, traced to the 2nd century. From early times the unchallenged rise of secular authority models adopted by the Church eventually transformed religious leaders into civil authoritarians, exercising powers of life and death.

**The Dark Ages** with its feudalism and barbarism were supported by leaders of the Christian Church in their quest to gain, hold, and exercise power. The Spanish Inquisition of the 1600’s, with its horrific brutality and greed, only magnified the abusive pattern.

What other outcome could be expected from the “work of the Nicolaitans” which Jesus said, “I also hate” (Revelation 2:6). The word Nicolaitan means “one who rules over the laity” and their deeds are described in the New Testament:

**Revelation 2:1-6:** <sup>1</sup>To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

<sup>2</sup>“I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; <sup>3</sup>and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup>But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. <sup>5</sup>Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. <sup>6</sup>Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

**2 Corinthians 11:13-20:** <sup>13</sup>For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup>No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

<sup>16</sup>Again I say, let no one think me foolish; but if you do, receive me even as foolish, so that I also may boast a little. <sup>17</sup>What I am saying, I am not saying as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting. <sup>18</sup>Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. <sup>19</sup>For you, being so wise, tolerate the foolish gladly. <sup>20</sup>For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face.

**Colossians 2:** <sup>1</sup>For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, <sup>2</sup>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, <sup>3</sup>in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup>I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. <sup>5</sup>For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, <sup>7</sup>having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

<sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, <sup>10</sup>and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; <sup>11</sup>and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; <sup>12</sup>having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, <sup>14</sup>having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— <sup>17</sup>things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. <sup>18</sup>Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, <sup>19</sup>and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

<sup>20</sup>If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,

<sup>21</sup>“Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”  
<sup>22</sup>(which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? <sup>23</sup>These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

**3 John 1:9,10:** <sup>9</sup>I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. <sup>10</sup>For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church.

God allowed the evil planting to grow and blossom for a moment of time. In His administration of the ages, He raised up a man to turn over the soil of His garden and plant new seeds of grace, truth and, ultimately, glory.

In the early 1500's, Martin Luther stood in opposition to the Church teaching of his day by declaring the Bible truth of “salvation by grace through faith” and endured severe persecution from Church leaders. Luther's harsh experience, the penalty and death dealt by the Church to those who paved the way for him, the ill treatment of those who followed his footsteps, the suffering inflicted on those whose only offense was to disobey Church leaders in translating and distributing Bibles printed in commonly understood languages, all testify to the death grip the spirit-of-the-world held on the Church.

An early bloom in this reformation planting was the 1611 publication of the King James Bible, the first legally authorized English language Bible. In spite of this breakthrough, worshiping outside the Anglican Church in England resulted in serious civil penalties and punishments. The continued lack of religious freedom was responsible for the flight of the pilgrims to the New

World, which despite its dangers and hardships, promised freedom to worship God as personal conscience dictated.

## 4.1 Revivals

Beginning with the Protestant Reformation of Martin Luther, many movements have been breathed by God to plant, prune, tend, and harvest His garden. Revivals stir His people, restoring to the Church lost truths and forgotten experiences. Chief among these revivals are:

### 4.1.1 Protestant Reformation

**The Protestant Reformation** (early 1500's) restored the individual believer's personal approach to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as opposed to the church's teaching which placed priest between the saint and his Savior. In the established church salvation was obtained through ordained priests who administered holy sacraments. The Protestant Reformation broke the Church's monopoly for dispensing salvation. Once again as in Early Church times, it was clearly understood that anyone could by grace, through faith in Christ's propitiatory work, receive forgiveness of sins and begin an eternal relationship with God.

*Ephesians 3:8,9:* <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup>not because of works, lest any man should boast.

### 4.1.2 Wesleyan Revival

**The Wesleyan Revival**, in the early to mid 1700's, witnessed the reading and practice of Bible truth embraced by common working folks in an organized and methodical way. The movement emphasized the study and application of the Bible to everyday life. The revival began in England with John Wesley, the leading figure, and spread widely in America with the establishment of the Methodist Church. Methodists held two core beliefs; radical at

the time. First, Methodists believed individuals could “know” or have the assurance of their salvation... a witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart, confirming their adoption as sons of God. Second, that each believer could be “entirely sanctified” or perfected in love as a second work of grace.

**Romans 8:14-16:** <sup>14</sup>For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

**1 Thessalonians 5:23:** <sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 John 3:1-10:** <sup>1</sup>See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. <sup>3</sup>And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

<sup>4</sup>Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup>You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup>No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. <sup>7</sup>Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; <sup>8</sup>the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup>No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he

cannot sin, because he is born of God. <sup>10</sup>By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

#### 4.1.3 Pentecostal Revival

**The Pentecostal Revival**, starting with the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, reintroduced the infilling and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit.

*Luke 11:13:* <sup>13</sup>If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

*Mark 1:8:* <sup>8</sup>I (John the Baptist) baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

*John 3:33,34:* <sup>33</sup>”He who has received His witness has set his seal to this, that God is true.<sup>34</sup>For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.”

#### 4.1.4 Charismatic Revival

**The Charismatic Revival** in the mid 1900’s emphasized Bible truths regarding the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to ordinary Christian people. The revival empowered “lay” people to seek and use spiritual gifts to minister to the saints and the world (1 Corinthians 12; also see Chapter 3: “The Ministry of the Holy Spirit”).

### 4.2 What’s our place in God’s Administration of the Ages?

It is possible to be so captivated by our own generation, the traditions, concerns and daily events, that we lose sight of God’s

acting in history to fulfill His plan for the ages, “the summing up of all things in Christ” (Ephesians 1:10).

We live two thousand years after Jesus birthed the Church by giving the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Important New Covenant truths revealed in New Testament scriptures were “lost” to the Church-at-large for almost fifteen hundred years. Mercifully, the Protestant Reformation and revivals that followed restored many of these truths. What is God heading for?

Can you imagine a Church with each saint filled with the Holy Spirit? Can you imagine those saints meeting together in gladness and sincerity of heart; Jesus personally present leading unopposed and the Holy Spirit ministering unhindered through each saint to build up His body and gather in sheep not of His fold? It is time for our Lord to take His rightful place in the midst of His gathered ones. I believe this is what the Bible teaches as the will of God. Ours is to understand Jesus’ rightful place and yield that position to Him; to know our rightful place and surrender ourselves to His will and service.

## 5 Jesus, Himself, teaches us about authority and its role in His Church

“Who will rule?” always takes its place as the central issue and greatest struggle. Who will rule in the heart? Who will rule in the home? Who will rule in the Church? Who will rule in the earth? The answer to these fundamental questions slowly comes to light. Christ alone rightfully claims supreme authority over the human heart. Christ alone rightfully claims final authority in the home. Our Lord affirms ownership of the singular title as Leader in His Church. Someday soon the kingdoms of the earth will become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever! Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords! Hallelujah!

### 5.1 Our Lord reserves for Himself the sole right to the title of Leader.

All authority is vested in God the Father, and He gave it to His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 23:1-12:** <sup>1</sup>Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; <sup>3</sup>therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. <sup>4</sup>They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. <sup>5</sup>But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. <sup>6</sup>They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup>and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. <sup>8</sup>But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup>Do not call anyone on

earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup>Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. <sup>11</sup>But the greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup>Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”

**Matthew 28:18-20:** <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

**1 Peter 3:22:** <sup>22</sup>(Jesus) who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.”

**1 Corinthians 15:20-28:** <sup>20</sup>But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. <sup>21</sup>For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection from the dead. <sup>22</sup>For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. <sup>23</sup>But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, <sup>24</sup>then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and authority and power. <sup>25</sup>For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. <sup>26</sup>The last enemy that will be abolished is death. <sup>27</sup>For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. <sup>28</sup>And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.”

## 5.2 Jesus rejects human, positional authority roles and establishes actual servanthood as the controlling principle of greatness in His Church.

We can receive Jesus as our actual Leader or continue to repeat the mistake of the early Israelites who demanded that God's prophet appoint a human king to rule over their nation, similar to the monarchs of neighboring countries. Receive Jesus as your true King, the One who is gentle and lowly in heart. The One who stoops to serve. The One who actually serves.

**Matthew 20:25-28:** <sup>25</sup>But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup>It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, <sup>27</sup>and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; <sup>28</sup>just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

**Mark 10:42-45:** <sup>42</sup>Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup>But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; <sup>44</sup>and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

**Mark 9:33-37:** <sup>33</sup>They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, "What were you discussing on the way?" <sup>34</sup>But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. <sup>35</sup>Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." <sup>36</sup>Taking a child, He set him

before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, <sup>37</sup>“Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.”

**Luke 22:24-27:** <sup>24</sup>And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. <sup>25</sup>And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ <sup>26</sup>But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. <sup>27</sup>For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”

### 5.3 Conclusion: Jesus is Lord. We are all brethren.

Jesus preeminent and present! His leadership guarantees each and every saint the opportunity to follow the Shepherd. History proves man incapable of ‘benevolent rule’. The role of human leadership in the church Jesus designed is the peculiar, lowly service of upholding the rights and responsibilities of all - smallest to greatest, oldest to youngest, richest to poorest, exceptionally gifted to ordinary, man or woman - each member an essential part of His body; engaged in our Lord’s work to fullest possible measure.

Jesus instructs us not to be called “Leader”, a title that includes an entire range of possible ministry roles. It reinforces Christ’s admonition that Paul, the apostle, never referred to himself as “Apostle Paul”, nor did any of his early church contemporaries use a title when addressing or referring to him. The honor of title commonly bestowed on civil authorities, (for example: King Saul, King David, Ceasar Augustus, King Agrippa to name a very few) is conspicuously absent in Bible references to those engaged in spiritual service. Ministry roles (elder, pastor,

prophet, apostle, deacon, etc.) are never used in the Bible as a prefix to an individual's name.

At the same time, our Lord enjoins us not to call anyone "Father", because God is our Father and as believers in Christ and children of God, we are all brothers. In the human family each of us was fathered (conceived) and most of us, blessed to have a father. If we call our human dad, "Father", he is rightly named; but in the Church, our Father is in heaven.

That human beings naturally crave a physical face in place of God's unseen spiritual presence is as predictable as the fleshly desire for position, prestige and power. Nevertheless, in the Church designed by Jesus, the title of Lord and Leader is Christ's alone.

***Phillipians 2:9-11:*** <sup>9</sup>Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Hallelujah!



## 6 Jesus exercises His authority In His Church

### 6.1 Jesus exercised His authority and leadership through Paul who was an apostle (a 'sent one').

Paul's writings are authoritative for faith and practice, not merely as the writings of an apostle, but as the message of Jesus Christ spoken through and written by Paul. Paul possessed no absolute authority inherent in his position as an apostle. Paul submitted to Christ and in consequence, Jesus lived, worked and spoke through him.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13:** <sup>13</sup>For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, 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.

**1 Thessalonians 4:2,8:** <sup>2</sup>For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus... <sup>8</sup>So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

**1 Timothy 6:3-4:** <sup>3</sup>If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, <sup>4</sup>he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions...

**2 Peter 3:2,14-16:** <sup>2</sup>that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles... <sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, <sup>15</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our

beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, <sup>16</sup>as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

**1 Corinthians 14:37:** <sup>37</sup>If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

**Romans 16:25-27:** <sup>25</sup>Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, <sup>26</sup>but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

**2 Timothy 2:8:** <sup>8</sup>Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel...

**2 Thessalonians 3:11,12:** <sup>11</sup>For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. <sup>12</sup>Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

## 6.2 Paul's pattern for life (both faith and practice) is a standard for us today. Why? Because Paul imitated Jesus Christ as The Example of fullness of life.

**1 Corinthians 11:1,2:** <sup>1</sup>Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. <sup>2</sup>Now I praise you because you

remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

**Philippians 3:17:** <sup>17</sup>Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

### **6.3 Paul taught a standard code of faith and practice for all to follow.**

**1 Corinthians 4:14-17:** <sup>14</sup>I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. <sup>15</sup>For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. <sup>16</sup>Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me. <sup>17</sup>For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

**1 Corinthians 7:17:** <sup>17</sup>Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches...

**Philippians 4:9:** <sup>9</sup>The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

### **6.4 The saints of the early Church received Paul's instruction and obeyed, a reverent response to God's Word.**

**Philippians 2:12,13:** <sup>12</sup>So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

**Philippians 3:17-19:** <sup>17</sup>Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. <sup>18</sup>For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, <sup>19</sup>whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

**1 Corinthians 11:2:** <sup>2</sup>Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13:** <sup>13</sup>For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, 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.

**1 Thessalonians 4:1:** <sup>1</sup>Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-3,15:** <sup>1</sup>Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, <sup>2</sup>that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. <sup>3</sup>Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction... <sup>15</sup>So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

**2 Thessalonians 3:4:** <sup>4</sup>We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command.

## 6.5 Paul distinguishes between his own opinion and the Lord's word.

**1 Corinthians 7:5-14:** <sup>5</sup>Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

<sup>6</sup>But this I say by way of concession, not of command. <sup>7</sup>Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

<sup>8</sup>But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. <sup>9</sup>But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

<sup>10</sup>But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband <sup>11</sup>(but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

<sup>12</sup>But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.

<sup>13</sup>And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. <sup>14</sup>For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

**1 Thessalonians 4:15:** <sup>15</sup>For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain

until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

**1 Corinthians 14:37:** <sup>37</sup>If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

## **6.6 The authority and leadership of Jesus are made flesh in the lives of Timothy and Titus, traveling ministers.**

Timothy, an evangelist, and Titus taught with authority, an authority not inherent in their positions, but embodied in what they believed and how they lived; a standard which originated with Paul who in turn received it from Jesus Christ, Himself.

**2 Timothy 2:1-2:** <sup>1</sup>You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup>The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

**Titus 2:15:** <sup>15</sup>These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

**1 Corinthians 4:17:** <sup>17</sup>For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

## **6.7 Jesus exercises His authority and leadership through the lives and service of elders.**

Elders are men who know and follow Jesus Christ as evidenced by their character and conduct. Their teaching and example of life carry the force of moral and spiritual authority. Both the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit attest their lives and doctrine worthy of imitation, having originated from the teaching of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and ultimately from the Lord Himself.

**1 Peter 5:1-3:** <sup>1</sup>Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, <sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; <sup>3</sup>nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

**Philippians 3:17:** <sup>17</sup>Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. (Elders followed the example of Paul's life.)

**Hebrews 13:17:** <sup>17</sup>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.

## **6.8 Our Lord's authority and leadership were rejected by errant saints and outright impostors who followed secular leadership principles; doing the deeds of the Nicolaitans.**

Those who adopt secular leadership roles in the church reject the authority and leadership of Jesus. Diotrephes, an example of the secular model of authority, Jesus rejects and declares inappropriate in His Church. Jesus alone reigns as the sole authority and leader of His brethren. Diotrephes acted as the FIRST, CHIEF, and THE LEADING ONE among the saints of the church and was sternly reprimanded. As the LEAST, SERVANT-OF-ALL, or SLAVE-OF-ALL, as Jesus commanded, Diotrephes would have both blessed and been blessed. Instead, he erred in attitude and action by lording over the brethren and following the ways of the Nicolaitans (ones who "rule over" or "conquer" the laity). Jesus is the Chief Shepherd - all elders are under shepherds.

**3 John 1:9,10:** <sup>9</sup>I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. <sup>10</sup>For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church.

**Revelation 2:6 (to the Church of Ephesus):** <sup>6</sup>Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15,19-20:** <sup>13</sup>For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup>No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds... <sup>19</sup>For you, being so wise, tolerate the foolish gladly. <sup>20</sup>For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face.

## **6.9 Jesus governs His Church through the many saints as each individual believer, in faith, submits to Him and obeys Him.**

In submitting to one another, we submit to our Lord as He ministers through our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Ephesians 5:17-21:** <sup>17</sup>So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup>And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; <sup>20</sup>always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; <sup>21</sup>and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

**6.10 We recognize Jesus' leading in the Church as producing a unity of agreement, an agreement involving the entire Church and revealed to each believer through the Holy Spirit. God's Church is neither episcopal (ruled by elders) nor congregational (ruled by majority vote). Jesus is Lord! He alone has preeminence.**

Jesus, Lord of His Church, reveals His will in the hearts of His saints. The settled agreement, a divinely inspired unity, requires neither discussion, debate or argument (although we should not be afraid to discuss differences of opinion and especially to pray about these matters). Those abiding in Christ, as led by the Holy Spirit, will recognize the will of their Leader. The patience of love waits for unity of understanding and direction.

*Acts 6:1-7:* <sup>1</sup>Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. <sup>2</sup>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 tables. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." <sup>5</sup>The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. <sup>6</sup>And these they brought

before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

<sup>7</sup>The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

**Acts 13:1-3:** <sup>1</sup>Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup>While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup>Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

**Acts 15:22-30:** <sup>22</sup>Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, <sup>23</sup>and they sent this letter by them, "The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings. <sup>24</sup>Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls, <sup>25</sup>it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, <sup>26</sup>men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>27</sup>Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth. <sup>28</sup>For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: <sup>29</sup>that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from

such things, you will do well. Farewell.”<sup>†</sup> <sup>30</sup>So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

### **6.11 Conclusion: The Lord Jesus Christ alone has authority over His people.**

Jesus is our Leader and Lord. We are all brothers and sisters. Secular authority positions function in their proper place - in the secular world. In God’s Church, Jesus tolerates no “popes,” little or big. He alone governs His Church and presides personally in the assembly. He leads through His written Word, through the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and through each and every believer, as each of us speaks and lives out His message in the life of the Church and the world.

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<sup>†</sup>*The Western Text of the Acts of the Apostles* reads: “that ye abstain from idol sacrifices, and from blood, and from fornication and whatsoever ye would not should be done to yourselves, ye do not to another.” (*The Acts of the Apostles* translated by Canon J. M. Wilson, D.D.)



## 7 How God's Children Live Together

What kind of family is the family of God? What is it like to live in His house? **Can you imagine?**

Society familiarizes our culture with two terms regarding families, “functional” and “dysfunctional.” Born again into God’s family, Christians function uniquely toward each other. Grace flows abundantly for each member to interact in a large and diverse group, where unity may not have naturally occurred.

### 7.1 We are taught by God to love one another.

How? Not as we love ourselves, but in the same manner and measure as Christ loved us. The new commandment of the New Covenant takes Love and Love’s service to a higher plane. God’s love modeled in Christ is described link by link in the Bible’s “Love” chapter, 1 Corinthians 13.

**John 13:34-35:** <sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

**1 John 3:23:** <sup>23</sup>This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

**John 15:12:** <sup>12</sup>This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

**Romans 13:8:** <sup>8</sup>Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

**Romans 13:10:** <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

**1 Thessalonians 4:9:** <sup>9</sup>Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

**1 Thessalonians 3:12:** ...<sup>12</sup>and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you;

**1 Peter 4:8:** <sup>8</sup>Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

**1 Peter 1:22:** <sup>22</sup>Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart...

**Romans 12:10:** <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

**1 John 3:14-16:** <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. <sup>16</sup>We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

**1 Corinthians 13:1-8:** <sup>1</sup>If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. <sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup>does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, <sup>6</sup>does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; <sup>7</sup>bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup>Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

## 7.2 We are taught to be at peace with one another.

The presence of peace manifests our hearts' settled agreement with the King of Love. This is the simple happiness of love.

**Mark 9:50:** <sup>50</sup>Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.

**Romans 12:18:** <sup>18</sup>If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

## 7.3 We are taught to show forbearance to one another.

Forbearance is the perseverance of love. We bear the annoyances, thoughtless words and actions, and weaknesses of others; intent on being a blessing to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Colossians 3:13:** <sup>12</sup>So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; <sup>13</sup>bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. <sup>14</sup>Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

## 7.4 We are taught to confess our sins to one another and pray for one another.

Confessing and praying flows easily in the tenderness of love's fellowship.

**James 5:16-18:** <sup>16</sup>Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. <sup>17</sup>Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not

rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup>Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

## 7.5 We are taught to forgive one another.

The cost of forgiveness is the hurt that love gladly accepts as its own.

**Colossians 3:13:** <sup>13</sup>bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

**Ephesians 4:32:** <sup>32</sup>Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

## 7.6 We are taught to accept one another.

Acceptance is the open arms of love receiving another freely into one's own heart.

**Romans 15:7:** <sup>7</sup>Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

## 7.7 We are taught to be of the same mind with one another.

Living as “one among equals” is the companionship of love.

**Romans 15:5:** <sup>5</sup>Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus...

**Philippians 2:1,2:** <sup>1</sup>Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, <sup>2</sup>make my joy complete by

being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

**Romans 12:16:** <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

## 7.8 We are taught to give preference to one another in honor - to practice the humility of love.

Love puts the other person first.

**Romans 12:10:** <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

**1 Peter 5:5:** <sup>5</sup>You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

**Philippians 2:3:** <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

## 7.9 We are taught to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

The respect that love gives to the brethren (because Christ also dwells in them) allows each person to receive from all for each individual's up-building. In all things, it is to the word of God acted upon and spoken by fellow believers that we humbly submit.

**Ephesians 5:21:** ...<sup>21</sup>and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

**1 Peter 5:5:** <sup>5</sup>You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

**2 Corinthians 11:3,4,18-21; 2 Corinthians 12:1-6:**

<sup>3</sup>But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.<sup>4</sup>For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.<sup>18</sup>Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also.<sup>19</sup> For you, being wise, bear with the foolish gladly.<sup>20</sup> For you bear with anyone if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, if he hits you in the face.<sup>2C12:1</sup>Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable...<sup>2</sup>I know a man in Christ...such a man was caught up to the third heaven...<sup>4</sup>...and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.<sup>5</sup>On behalf of such a man will I boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses.<sup>6</sup>For if I do wish to boast I shall not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one may credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me.

## 7.10 We are taught to be kind to one another.

Kindness, the generosity of love.

**Ephesians 4:32:** <sup>32</sup>Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

## 7.11 We are taught to bear one another's burdens.

Burden-bearing, the priesthood of love.

**Galatians 6:2:** <sup>2</sup>Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

## 7.12 The Bible says, "Have the same care for one another."

Laying aside all noble motivations, simple self-interest should lead us to hold the well-being of each member of the body of Christ dear to our hearts. Simply put, we need each other...without exception or qualification.

**1 Corinthians 12:20-27:** <sup>20</sup>But now there are many members, but one body.<sup>21</sup>And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."<sup>22</sup>On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;<sup>23</sup>and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness,<sup>24</sup>whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked,<sup>25</sup>that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. <sup>27</sup>Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

**Luke 16:1-9:** <sup>1</sup>Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions. <sup>2</sup>"And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' <sup>3</sup>"And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup>I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.' <sup>5</sup>"And he summoned

each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'<sup>6</sup> "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'<sup>7</sup> "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'<sup>8</sup> And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.<sup>9</sup> And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings."

### **7.13 We are taught to be hospitable to one another without complaint.**

Hospitality, the open arms of love inviting and receiving others into the circle of our home.

**1 Peter 4:9:**<sup>7</sup> The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.<sup>8</sup> Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.<sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without complaint.<sup>10</sup> As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

### **7.14 We are taught to do good to those who are of the household of faith.**

Well-doing, the plodding service of love.

**Galatians 6:9,10:**<sup>9</sup> Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.<sup>10</sup> So then, while we have opportunity, let us

do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

### **7.15 We are taught to greet one another with affection.**

Love for a shared Savior accents the bond of love's greeting.

**1 Peter 5:14:** <sup>14</sup>Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 5:26:** <sup>26</sup>Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

**1 Corinthians 16:20:** <sup>20</sup>All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

**Romans 16:16:** <sup>16</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

### **7.16 We are taught not to be angry with one another.**

Love cannot hold a grudge or continually burn with anger.

**Matthew 5:22:** <sup>22</sup>But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

**Ephesians 4:26,27:** <sup>26</sup>Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and do not give the devil an opportunity.

### **7.17 We are taught to be reconciled with our brother.**

Separation, the heartache of love, cries out to be healed with love's reconciling balm.

**Matthew 5:23,24:** <sup>23</sup>Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

### **7.18 We are taught not to be haughty in mind toward one another.**

Conceit is love-of-self. Love never adopts the Adversary's attitude or employs his methods.

**Romans 12:16:** <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

### **7.19 We are taught not to be puffed up (arrogant) one against another.**

Love does not vaunt itself.

**1 Corinthians 4:6,7,18-20:** <sup>6</sup>Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. <sup>7</sup>For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? ... <sup>18</sup>Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. <sup>19</sup>But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power. <sup>20</sup>For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.

## 7.20 We are taught not to lie to one another.

For those who have received the love of the truth, lying strikes at the taproot of a fruitful life.

**Colossians 3:9:** <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices...

## 7.21 We are taught not to complain against one another.

Grievances, oft repeated, sour the sweetness of love's table.

**James 5:9:** <sup>9</sup>Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

## 7.22 We are taught not to speak against one another.

Love speaks to build-up, not to tear down.

**James 4:11:** <sup>11</sup>Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

## 7.23 We are taught not to judge one another.

Love "lives and lets live," blesses and is blessed.

**Romans 14:13:** <sup>13</sup>Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this— not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

**Romans 14:4:** <sup>4</sup>Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

## **7.24 We are taught not to repay evil for evil to one another.**

Love repays evil with good.

*1Thessalonians 5:15:* <sup>15</sup>See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men.

## **7.25 Conclusion: loving relationships in the body of Christ.**

The “Rules of the House” may sound a bit far-fetched and impossible to live by; an extensive list. Equal to the challenge the church Jesus designed, unlike any human organization, is quickened by the greatest force in the universe - the love of God. Together with our brothers and sisters we can, by the Holy Spirit, cry out, “Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).

No exemptions are offered. The “rules of engagement” apply to the whole Church, whether apostle or miracle worker or teacher or elder or speaker in tongues - everyone! In this regard though, let’s be hard on ourselves; easy on others. Love endures all things and acquires the prize. Love covers a multitude of sins.

The Bible says that as believers we “have tasted of the powers of the age to come” (Hebrews 6:5). Chief among those powers reigns the power to love one another as God in Christ loved us! The proof of our love for God is found in our love shown to the brethren. United in love we radiate the unmistakable witness to the world that Jesus is the Christ (John 17:23). Let us all join together, Church, and love one another!

## 8 The Ministry of the Many: Jesus Leads Through Our Obedient Service

The remarkable involvement of the first Christians as recorded in the New Testament depicts an unhindered flow of the Holy Spirit, absent of the controlling hand of man. Within the sacred pages, the budding smells, sights and sounds announce a long awaited spiritual Springtime. As Winter's icy grip cannot arrest the coming of Spring, the powers of darkness and the dread of death cannot shackle the New Covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit. All the demons in Hell and every imagination and tradition of man raised up against the knowledge of God are overthrown when confronted by Jesus. Our triumphant Lord leads His Church, making disciples of all nations and filling the earth with His kingdom come.

The acts of the body of Christ awaken with the advent of Pentecost, recorded in Acts and the Epistles of the New Testament. We read of God's people speaking in tongues, prophesying, witnessing, praying, working miracles and signs, and doing deeds of kindness. His people gather together with gladness and sincerity of heart, taking care of widows and orphans, joyous in persecution, weeping with the sorrowful, and rejoicing with the glad hearted. Bible history recalls Jesus' disciples carrying on His work, seeking and saving the lost wherever they can be found.

Conspicuous by its absence is even the hint of an overbearing organization, ecclesiastical distinctions or artificial constraints of time. Instead, within the Church, the presence of delightful happiness, freshness of first love, and generosity like the Spirit of Christmas abound through lives given to God and joined in one body, sharing one purpose, having one hope, and accepting one another just as they are accepted by God in Jesus Christ.

His Church, a motley crew and uncontrollable, humanly speaking, rejoices, not drunk with wine, but filled with the Holy Spirit. A church designed for the Ministry of the Many, Jesus leads and builds His Church through the obedient service of the many saints gathered.

## 8.1 The Ministry of the Many is foretold in the Old Testament.

### 8.1.1 God's intention revealed by Moses.

Moses, the man of God, talked with God face to face as a man speaks with his friend (Exodus 33:11) and yet he also received the description as the most humble man on earth (Numbers 12:3). For these two confirming reasons it isn't surprising that Moses first revealed God's heart and intention to accomplish His will by working through His many saints.

**Numbers 11:24-29:** <sup>24</sup>So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. Also, he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and stationed them around the tent. <sup>25</sup>Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again.

<sup>26</sup>But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp. <sup>27</sup>So a young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." <sup>28</sup>Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, "Moses, my lord, restrain them." <sup>29</sup>But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"

### 8.1.2 Prophesied by Joel.

Joel, the prophet, also foretold a coming day when the office of prophet and the personal experience of the indwelling Holy Spirit would expand exponentially.

*Joel 2:28,29:* <sup>28</sup>It will come about after this  
That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;  
And your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
Your old men will dream dreams,  
Your young men will see visions.  
<sup>29</sup>Even on the male and female servants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

## **8.2 Our Lord Himself practiced the Ministry of the Many.**

### **8.2.1 Jesus began His ministry alone.**

*Luke 3:23:* <sup>23</sup>When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph...

### **8.2.2 Then Jesus trained and sent out 12 apostles to minister as servants of God.**

*Luke 9:1-6:* <sup>1</sup>And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. <sup>2</sup>And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. <sup>3</sup>And He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have two tunics apiece. <sup>4</sup>Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. <sup>5</sup>And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." <sup>6</sup>Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

### 8.2.3 Jesus commissioned seventy unnamed disciples to minister in the same manner as the first 12 apostles.

**Luke 10:1-20:** <sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. <sup>4</sup>Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. <sup>5</sup>Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house.’ <sup>6</sup>If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; <sup>9</sup> and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ <sup>10</sup>But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup>‘Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ <sup>12</sup>I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

<sup>13</sup>Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup>But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. <sup>15</sup>And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!

<sup>16</sup>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.”

<sup>17</sup>The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”

<sup>18</sup>And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. <sup>19</sup>Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. <sup>20</sup>Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”

#### **8.2.4 Importantly, Jesus commanded His disciples not to hinder others from doing God’s work.**

*Luke 9:49,50:* <sup>49</sup>John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us.” <sup>50</sup>But Jesus said to him, “Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.”

### **8.3 Jesus commissioned hundreds and thousands and millions in His “Great Commission” delivered before ascending to Heaven. He called each and every person who would ever carry the name “Christian” into ministry – the Ministry of the Many.**

#### **8.3.1 Marching Orders for the Ministry of the Many**

**Jesus commanded all His followers for all time, each and every one, to:**

**GO!** Make disciples. Baptize them. Teach them to obey Jesus’ commands.

**KNOW...** His guiding, providing, comforting, loving, strengthening presence.

*Matthew 28:18-20:* <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me

in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Jesus has the right to **COMMAND based on His supreme authority over all creation**, including you and me. He owns the right to command and the right to demand obedience. We simply obey and experience the peace and joy of entering into our mission.

***Matthew 28:18:*** <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**”

### **8.3.2 His command extends to all who hear his command, whether directly from Him or relayed through others.**

I can't remember the last time I saw an honest to goodness “chain letter,” but Jesus' commission recorded in the Gospels has all the distinguishing features. Our Lord's command and promise, initially delivered to the immediate few (perhaps as many as 500) at His ascension, initiated “marching” orders which are to be passed on to all disciples until the End of the Age.

***Matthew 28:20:*** ...<sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe **all that I commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Jesus directed His final earthly command to His apostles and disciples present with Him on the mount as well as all those called by His name for all time.

In doing so He unleashed a mob in the world; a throng of mercy doers sent out across the face of the earth, led by the Holy Spirit, filled with the love of God and who carry with them their personal, intimate relationship with Jesus and the sacred and

imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. “Believe on Him whom I believe. Follow Him whom I follow. Love Him whom I love and by whom we are all loved.”

Our Lord coupled His awesome command with two equally incredible provisions: (1) His personal presence - “...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” and (2) The promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Spirit. “Wait until you receive the promise of the Father which I will send to you and you will be endued with power and you will be My witnesses” (Acts 1:8). We need to joyfully abide in His presence and gratefully receive His promised One, asking God to make us poor in spirit, fill us with the Holy Spirit, and make us to know Jesus more and more. He gladly gives.

**Experiencing** the personal presence of Jesus Christ and knowing His promise of the same to each one of His followers fulfills all. Jesus is Who we need and He has what we need.

## **8.4 Other commands of the Lord regarding our duty to participate in the ministry of the many include the command to:**

### **8.4.1 Teach one another.**

Allow the Holy Spirit to write God’s word on your heart. Share it with your brothers and sisters in the Lord. Use the treasure you have been given in Christ to benefit another. Give generously; receive thankfully; live joyously!

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

**Ephesians 5:19:** ...<sup>19</sup>speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

### 8.4.2 Admonish one another.

Iron sharpens iron and consequently a man sharpens his friend's countenance (Proverbs 27:17 paraphrased). We mold together on this journey, for whatever we possess models the gift of His grace in our personal life. If we believe ourselves wise in one matter, chances are we are foolish in another. With humility surrender and engage the aid of brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Romans 15:14:** <sup>14</sup>And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

**1 Thessalonians 5:14:** <sup>14</sup>We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

### 8.4.3 Serve one another.

Jesus lived a life of service and enjoins us to imitate Him. After all, He is the Bread of Life reaching from the wantless realms of glory to serve famished ones; their hunger to satisfy. He is the One who pours forth rivers of Living Water, flooding parched souls in a waterless world, their thirst to assuage. You and I are called to follow in His footsteps.

**Galatians 5:13:** <sup>13</sup>For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

**Mark 10:45:** <sup>45</sup>For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

**1 Peter 4:10,11:** <sup>10</sup>As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup>Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of

God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

#### 8.4.4 Encourage one another.

A roaring campfire quickly begins to smolder once the burning pieces of wood are kicked apart. You and I need each other to help keep the kindled love of God blazing in our hearts. Distractions sap our zeal and dampen our love; so also “little-fox” sins, small discouragements, unexpected oppositions, or the simple predictability of daily, mundane responsibilities. When warmed by the flame of another saint’s burning-life love, our own zeal for Jesus and His brethren reignites.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11:** <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

**Hebrews 10:25:** ...<sup>25</sup>not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

**Hebrews 3:12,13:** <sup>12</sup>Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>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.

#### 8.4.5 Build up one another.

Let’s work to enrich our brothers and sisters in every way possible, whether by encouragement, teaching, admonishment, or our example of faithfulness, hope, cheerfulness, boldness or joy. Be generous with God’s grace. It is more blessed to give than receive.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11:** <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

#### **8.4.6 Stimulate one another to love and good deeds.**

The spark of your faith and example of your love-in-action energizes souls around you to do the mercy deeds of Jesus.

**Hebrews 10:24:** ...<sup>24</sup>and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds...

### **8.5 The Ministry of the Many will continue throughout all eternity as His bondservants serve Him in heavenly Jerusalem.**

**Revelation 22:3:** <sup>3</sup>There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;

### **8.6 Conclusion: Greater Works Shall You Do!**

Jesus, the supremely able and wise Leader, intends His followers to be fully equipped, trained, mobilized, and engaged in ministry; carrying out His will in the world. His will is to seek and save the lost, baptize new believers in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, follow our Lord's commands, and teach His disciples to do likewise. Each one joining this happy throng is being built up and equipped; oblivious to the traditions of man and the norms of the age. Together with the many, we set about the sacred and urgent task to seek and save the lost, baptize new converts, build up, equip and encourage the brethren to be led by the Holy Spirit till Jesus returns.

The Problem: those lost in sin. The Solution: Jesus Christ, Savior of the world. His saving vehicle is the Church and His method is the Ministry of the Many. The madness of His method provides no place for the controlling hand of man; unleashing a

mob in the world - a tidal wave of mercy does sent out across the face of the earth, completely free to follow Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is a fulfillment of Moses' heartcry, "would that all God's people were prophets" and realization of Joel's prophetic tongue.

God the Father answered Jesus' prayer to send workers into his harvest field. His answer came in the marching orders Jesus gave the Church before his ascension, "Go into all the world." It is a filling-full and to overflowing of the divine inner council rhetorically asking Isaiah the prophet, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

All Jesus' followers are now sent and and all who are willing, go. The Christian worker is one whose service is intentional. Every other qualifier and distinction is revealed as a tradition of man and of a religion that is man-made. The service of the many in the body of Christ is God's plan to reconcile the world to Himself in living and proclaiming the Good-News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



## 9 How the Ministry of the Many functions when the Church gathers.

The most explosive power known to man lies in the dreaded detonation of a nuclear bomb. An awesome, frightening wonder arises at the sight of that singularly ominous, mushroom silhouette... a cloud shadowing beneath its vast canopy the release of energy so intense that material at “ground zero” simply vaporizes.

The secret of this “Mother-of-all-Bombs” is nothing more than the gathering together into one small place some thirty or forty ounces of highly enriched uranium. Dispersed, the metal can do no more than excite a Geiger counter. When smashed together, one energy charged atom excites another in an instantaneous chain-reaction... and in one split-second of time, the powers that hold the universe together unleash.

Nature’s lessons teach us about the manner in which the early, New Testament Church assembled. Like an atomic bomb, the gathering united uncontrollably, explosively and dangerously. Endued with power equal to their commission they turned the known world upside down (Acts 17:6), destroying the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and setting free those held in slavery through fear of death (Hebrews 2:15).

It was said of those who inhabited the first century that they were a crooked and perverse generation (Philippians 2:15). Twenty centuries later, the flowering of evil in the heart of man blossoms evermore full. The Bible predicts that in the last days “men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power...” (2 Timothy 3:2-5). Jesus designed His church with this challenge in mind; a church more than able to fulfill His Great Commission in a world awash in a flood of evil, now seemingly near high tide.

**Considering the assembly of the Church, we benefit by reflecting on the Sadducees' bold argument.** The Sadducees convinced themselves that the resurrection of the dead could never occur. Ponder the absurdity of seven men married to the same woman in an eternity of resurrection life. In view of this ridiculous scenario, the practicality of life after death appears impossible to the natural reasoning mind. Likewise impossible, the total impracticality of the Ministry of the Many in the assembly and spiritual life of the Church. Indeed, New Testament teaching proves the impossible not only possible but practical, yes, even necessary.

## **9.1 God instructs us how to meet together as His Church.**

One particular chapter in the New Testament focuses on the mechanics of assembling as a Church. The entire chapter follows:

**1 Corinthians 14:** <sup>1</sup>Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. <sup>2</sup>For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. <sup>3</sup>But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. <sup>4</sup>One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. <sup>5</sup>Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

<sup>6</sup>But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? <sup>7</sup>Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp?

<sup>8</sup>For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? <sup>9</sup>So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. <sup>10</sup>There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. <sup>11</sup>If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. <sup>12</sup>So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. <sup>14</sup>For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup>What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. <sup>16</sup>Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? <sup>17</sup>For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified. <sup>18</sup>I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; <sup>19</sup>however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

<sup>20</sup>Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. <sup>21</sup>In the Law it is written, “By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to me,” says the Lord. <sup>22</sup>So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. <sup>23</sup>Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? <sup>24</sup>But if all prophesy,

and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; <sup>25</sup>the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

<sup>26</sup>What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. <sup>27</sup>If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; <sup>28</sup>but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. <sup>29</sup>Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. <sup>30</sup>But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. <sup>31</sup>For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; <sup>32</sup>and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; <sup>33</sup>for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

<sup>34</sup>The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. <sup>35</sup>If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.

<sup>36</sup>Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? <sup>37</sup>If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. <sup>38</sup>But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. <sup>39</sup>Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. <sup>40</sup>But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

### 9.1.1 Each one's responsibility in the assembly.

Those inclined to disregard this chapter may point to “tongues” or perhaps “women talk” as the key problem. However, these issues serve only as “red herrings,” for by and large the tradition of man in conducting church meetings makes void the Word of God, especially as it relates to verse 26 which is the focus of the entire chapter:

**“What is the outcome then, brethren?”**

We should pause and consider, “the outcome of what?” Chapter 14 follows the famous “LOVE” chapter of 1 Corinthians 13. We need to ask, “What is the outcome then, brethren, of having the flame of the love of God burning in our hearts?” Not an ordinary love, but the LOVE without which I can say nothing, I am nothing, and I can accomplish nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). How will God’s Church assemble if love as God defines it, expresses itself in fullest measure?

Let us consider what the outcome should be, as we are instructed to “Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy” (1 Corinthians 14:1).

Words speak high value in God’s kingdom; particularly, God’s words. “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). The Word of God took on material form in Jesus Christ. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:1,2,14).

Prophesying involves speaking words of edification (to build-up), exhortation (to charge-up or stir-up) and consolation (to bind-up) (1 Corinthians 14:3). Prophesying words are God’s words, spoken in the Holy Spirit by God’s people as they meet together. No human imagination could utter speech more wonderful than this; sharing words that build and strengthen the saints in their faith, in knowledge, and in wisdom. Prophesying words stir up our hearts and convictions and determination and perseverance and courage to obey God and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Words of prophecy lift-up and bind-up the weak

in faith or bruised or heavy hearted. Discouraged souls wax strong when they hear God's words spoken in the assembly.

And concerning tongues: love expresses itself in the assembly of the saints in words understood by those present. Tongues only edify others if someone present in the meeting interprets the message, thereby transforming the unintelligible into understandable words of prophesy. Otherwise, speaking in tongues builds up a saint's own inner man (spirit) but cannot edify, exhort or console the brethren. In the assembly of the saints, five words of prophesy are worth ten thousand words spoken in tongues, if the tongues are not interpreted (1 Corinthians 14:19).

**And now, "What is the outcome then, brethren?"**

**1 Corinthians 14:26:** <sup>26</sup>What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

Some might wonder how long a Sunday service would last if each one present prophesied as the Bible defines it. Others might be concerned with the orderliness of the meeting. Let's obey God and find out.

## **9.2 Instructions: How to assemble as a church.**

The first letter to the Church in Corinth, Chapter 14, provides specific instructions on how to conduct ourselves in an assembly of the saints.

### **9.2.1 Prophecy**

**Relating to prophecy:** There is adequate time for all to prophesy; no more than two or three should speak consecutively; (interruptions are perfectly in order and to be expected); then what is spoken is subject to the review of the saints. There's no hurry and no presumption as to the truth or value of what will be spoken.

**1 Corinthians 14:29-32:** <sup>29</sup>Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. <sup>30</sup>But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. <sup>31</sup>For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; <sup>32</sup>and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets;

**1 Thessalonians 5:20,21:** ...<sup>20</sup>do not despise prophetic utterances. <sup>21</sup>But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;

**1 Corinthians 14:5:** <sup>5</sup>Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

### 9.2.2 Tongues

**Speaking in tongues** is linked in the assembly of the saints with interpretation of tongues so that the words spoken become prophecy to those present. Again, two or at the most three should speak in turn and then some gifted one should interpret. Notice that the “limit” of two or three relates to the number of consecutive messages in tongues and not to the total number of tongues and their interpretation that may be verbalized in a meeting.

**1 Corinthians 14:27-28:** <sup>27</sup>If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; <sup>28</sup>but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.

### 9.2.3 All things edifying are suitable to share as we gather.

All things done –the saints words and actions in the assembly– should edify the brethren. The list given in the first part of verse 26, (psalms, teachings, revelations, tongues and interpretation of

tongues), does not exhaust the permissible. The exact **opposite** is true. The Holy Spirit in one short sentence of Scripture pulls the rug out from under those who seek preeminence in the assembly and who would limit the participation of those present in the meeting in expressing God's message.

**1 Corinthians 14:26:** <sup>26</sup>What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

#### 9.2.4 How on earth can this Gathering maintain its orderliness?

Order maintains simply by the Holy Spirit's leading and the saint's individual obedience to Jesus who is present where two or three gather in His name. The role of elders ensures that saints can freely minister and guards against those who would dominate the assembly or otherwise act out of order. The Law of Perfect Love works to produce perfect order in the midst of what should by all rights be utter chaos. **Can you imagine?**

**1 Corinthians 14:33:** ...<sup>33</sup>for God is not a God of confusion but of peace...

**1 Corinthians 14:40:** <sup>40</sup>But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

#### 9.2.5 Now concerning "women-talk" - "women are to remain silent; not permitted to speak." (1 Corinthians 14:34-35).

Alexander R. Hay introduced this subject in his excellent book, *The Woman's Ministry in Church and Home*, by saying, "The restriction of the witness of more than half the members of the Body of Christ, the Church of the Living God, is a most serious matter." Surely, his was a great understatement.

But what can be said, since the Bible clearly states that, “women are to keep silent in the churches;” ...? The following thoughts might help glean the meaning of this passage:

1. The “keeping silent” Paul referred to seems to be the refraining of wives from asking all kinds of questions during the meeting; bringing the meeting to a stand-still in order to satisfy themselves by learning some specific point of interest. (Read the entire verse 35 below.)

Insisting that this “keeping silent” is a blanket rule, will also require asserting that women shouldn’t desire to learn anything in the assembly, but should learn everything from their husbands at home (also in verse 35, if read in part only). If this path of understanding is followed, how then will women who are not married learn anything since they have no husband to teach them everything they might desire to learn?

If the Bible is read “in part” or “parts” only, it is simply not possible to “handle accurately the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

2. The New Covenant has everything to do with the Holy Spirit infilling all believers of every sex and age and any other characteristic the world uses to discriminate between people - “your sons and daughters will prophesy”; and “...even on your male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28, 29). Prophecy, as we have noted is an activity described as taking place in the assembly.

3. Prophesying has to do with speaking words that edify others - not seeking to learn something, which is what Paul is addressing in this part of his letter to the church.

4. “just as the law says” (verse 34). The law refers to wives being subject to their husbands - this is sometimes misconstrued as women in general are subject to men in general.

5. 1 Corinthians 11:5 - (see 9.2.6 below) - gives instruction for women who are praying or prophesying- going to vs 16, 17, and 18 it seems that the first 15 verses are part of his instruction regarding how believers should act in their assembly as a church.

6. Philip, the evangelist, had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:8, 9).

“Speaking” that is disruptive and improper is the kind that interrupts the assembly with a blizzard of questions that can be addressed later at home. Clearly, the “speaking” referred to by Paul was other than that which would edify, exhort or console.

**1 Corinthians 14:33b-35:** ...<sup>33b</sup> as in all the churches of the saints, <sup>34</sup>the women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. <sup>35</sup>If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.

**Acts 21:8,9:** <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.

### **9.2.6 Head Covering or Covering Her Head - the Tradition of Man or the Word of God. 1 Corinthians 11:2-18**

This issue is raised three chapters earlier in the first letter to the Corinthians, but can also present a dilemma to sincere followers similar to “women talk” discussed above.

We shouldn’t be surprised that the traditions of men and self-made religion are not reliable guides to the correct understanding of God’s Word. At every turn these high pillars and low thickets block our path into the freedom and life intended for God’s children. Insight into this passage is furthered greatly by noting three simple aspects of the scripture that follows: (1)The term, “head covering”, is never used - it is the language of man’s tradition; (2)The Bible identifies only one covering for a woman’s head - her hair (vs.15); and (3)The exact length of “long” hair is not specified (vs. 14,15). Attention to these Bible specifics is probably sufficient to point us in the right direction - without delving into the meaning of “angels”. Let’s

take care not to add man's thoughts to God's Word or come under the false authority of those who do.

**1 Corinthians 11:2-18:** <sup>2</sup>Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. <sup>3</sup>But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.<sup>4</sup>Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying, disgraces his head. <sup>5</sup>But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved. <sup>6</sup>For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head. <sup>7</sup>For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.<sup>8</sup>For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man;<sup>9</sup>for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.<sup>10</sup>Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. <sup>11</sup>However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. <sup>12</sup>For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God. <sup>13</sup>Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with head uncovered? <sup>14</sup>Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, <sup>15</sup>but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering. <sup>16</sup>But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.<sup>17</sup>But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you

come together not for the better but for the worse.<sup>18</sup>For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it.

This brief warning is given to the wise:

**2 Peter 3:15-18:** <sup>15</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,<sup>16</sup> as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.<sup>17</sup>You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness,<sup>18</sup> but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

### **9.3 The Ministry of the Many, the Divine Pattern of Assembly is established at the command of our Lord through Paul, the apostle, by the Holy Spirit.**

**1 Corinthians 14:36-40:** <sup>36</sup>Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? <sup>37</sup>If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. <sup>38</sup>But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. <sup>39</sup>Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. <sup>40</sup>But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

Dear Saint, ours is to believe. Ours is to choose. Ours is to obey. Believe in your heart's hunger... follow after God. Our Lord

stands ready to meet with us in ways more wonderful than we have experienced when we join Him in His plan for the Church. His beckoning is gentle, leading into a path of life.

**9.3.1 The Lord's command concerning the assembly of the saints may be like many other commands He gave during His earthly ministry (see the excerpt below); offered to the gentle and lowly of heart; to the ones who are childlike in faith.**

His hand extends, not threatening, but offering life giving mercy. Often, it seems, God's mercies open wide to us as we obey Him. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). The heart tugs to believe God and obey Him.

*Matthew 19:9-12:* <sup>9</sup>And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.

<sup>10</sup>The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry." <sup>11</sup>But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. <sup>12</sup>For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it."

The ability to accept Jesus' sayings awakens to the Many. But if we are like the Scribes who loved salutations in the marketplaces, chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts; who devoured widows' houses, and for a pretense made long prayers (Luke 20:46,47), His sayings are unreceivable. If we are like the Sadducees who set their hope on this life (Mark 12:18) and who understood not the scriptures or the power of God (Matthew

22:29), His sayings are rejected. If we are like the Pharisees who were lovers of money (Luke 16:14), hypocrites (Matthew 23:13), who loved to be seen by men (Matthew 6:1), who “strained out the gnat and swallowed the camel” (Matthew 23:24), and who did not have the love of God in their hearts (John 5:42), His sayings evoke derision and scorn.

In holding to human reasoning, man-made religion and the traditions of men, we too can find ourselves rejecting God’s instructions. As our Lord explained...

**Mark 7:6-13:** <sup>6</sup>And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

“This people honors me with their lips,  
but their heart is far away from me.

<sup>7</sup>But in vain do they worship me,  
teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.”

<sup>8</sup>Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.”

<sup>9</sup>He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. <sup>10</sup>For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who speaks evil of Father and Mother is to be put to death’; <sup>11</sup>but you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God)’; <sup>12</sup>you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; <sup>13</sup>thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”

Successfully navigating the hindrances outlined above, leave us with still other potential pitfalls. We cannot truly receive His sayings if our hearts are like the thorn patch in Jesus’ parable of the sower and the seed. The thorns choked the word of God in the saint’s heart rendering him weak and unfruitful. Jesus identified the thorny culprits as the worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things (Mark 4:18,19).

With this in mind, I offer this simple prayer taught at Hebron Gospel Fellowship, in Hebron, Kentucky:

Judge us, each one, in our hearts, O Lord,  
Separate the evil from the good.  
Make us poor in spirit,  
Fill us with the Holy Spirit,  
And make us to know Jesus, more and more.  
Make us ready for Your soon coming.  
Send forth workers into Your harvest field,  
And fill the earth with Your glory. In Jesus' name.

#### **9.4 What is the result of saints meeting in The New Testament Order of Assembly?**

As we meet according to God's pattern, the saints are built up, unbelievers brought face to face with God, and Jesus leads his Church forward in victory.

*1 Corinthians 14:23-25:* <sup>23</sup>Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? <sup>24</sup>But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; <sup>25</sup>the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

#### **9.5 Beyond 1 Corinthians 14, The New Testament provides additional teaching regarding the assembly of God's Church:**

##### **9.5.1 It's important to meet together.**

*Hebrews 10:25:* ...<sup>25</sup>not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

### 9.5.2 The Lord's Supper should be celebrated in our meeting.

**1 Corinthians 11:20-34:** <sup>20</sup>Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, <sup>21</sup>for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. <sup>22</sup>What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.

<sup>23</sup>For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; <sup>24</sup>and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." <sup>25</sup>In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." <sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

<sup>27</sup>Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. <sup>30</sup>For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. <sup>31</sup>But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup>But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

<sup>33</sup>So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. <sup>34</sup>If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together

for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.

**Luke 22:19-20:** <sup>19</sup>And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” <sup>20</sup>And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”

### 9.5.3 We should be careful not to quench the Holy Spirit.

To Him and His leading, we must give full sway.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-22:** <sup>16</sup>Rejoice always; <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing; <sup>18</sup>in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit; <sup>20</sup>do not despise prophetic utterances. <sup>21</sup>But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

### 9.5.4 We should treat all believers alike, regardless of their wealth or social standing.

Special honor or preferential treatment based on worldly values has no place in God’s Church.

**James 2:1-9:** <sup>1</sup>My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. <sup>2</sup>For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, <sup>3</sup>and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” <sup>4</sup>have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? <sup>5</sup>Listen, my beloved

brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? <sup>6</sup>But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? <sup>7</sup>Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

<sup>8</sup>If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well. <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

## **9.6 A serene and settled agreement exists, a perfect correspondence, between the Ministry of the Many and the truths concerning Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church, the saint, the world and the adversary.**

- It agrees with the truth of Jesus' lordship, preeminence and intimate participation in the life of His Church.
- It agrees with the truth and purpose of the New Covenant and ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- It agrees with the nature of the Trinity, the Oneness of the Many.
- It agrees with the nature of the supreme witness to the unbelieving world, the oneness of the body of Christ as it proclaims an undeniable proof that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.
- It agrees with the truth that we are incomplete, apart from one another, and are made in such a way as to actually need one another.
- It agrees with the truth of the mortal conflict between Spirit and flesh, between the saint and the Adversary who seeks all whom he may devour. As only one among the ministering

many, saints are protected from coming under the heavy foot of pride or becoming flush with lust for power. The dreadful “I Am The One” spirit attacks all who would minister as if they were the only one. Throughout the ages, this evil spirit has undermined the Church’s success.

### **9.7 Conclusion: The leadership and love of our Lord bloom in the assembly of His people.**

Speaking through the assembled believers, Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, pastors His flock, exercising the tender care only the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls can give. Like a diamond of many facets, our Lord ministers to His Church in ways too wonderful to be effectively related by any one person or even a handful of persons. He chooses the MANY to minister. Only one thing stands to be seen: Will you and I take our place in His Church as one of the ministering many?



## 10 Church Discipline - another Ministry of the Many.

Along the nation's highways stretch miles and miles of guard rails. Ever present, yet seemingly seldom used. Only on rare occasion does one notice the striking signs of a wayward driver kept from the ditch by the sturdy stretch of railing.

In similar fashion, the Church provides discipline, a guardrail along the road of life. Church discipline is not set in the middle of the lane as a road block, but can be seen as a series of protective measures: a guiding white line, then warning bumps to arrest the driver's attention; next the broad shoulder and at last the guardrail itself.

Church Discipline runs along side the life of the Church as a set of protective measures that help prevent saints from straying from the path of life and becoming shipwrecked in their faith. Discipline also protects the church from harm caused by fellowshiping with those who claim to be believers (followers of Christ), but who willfully engage in sinful practices.

Through the arm of the local church, the Good Shepherd exercises His loving hand of discipline in the life of His child. When called upon, it is our unpleasant duty to join the Lord in His ministry of correction.

**Hebrews 12:** <sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

<sup>3</sup>For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. <sup>4</sup>You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against

sin; <sup>5</sup>and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and he scourges every son whom He receives.”

<sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup>Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? <sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. <sup>11</sup>All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble <sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. <sup>14</sup>Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup>See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; <sup>16</sup>that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. <sup>17</sup>For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

<sup>18</sup>For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, <sup>19</sup>and to the blast of a

trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup>For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." <sup>21</sup>And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling." <sup>22</sup>But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, <sup>23</sup>to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup>and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

<sup>25</sup>See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. <sup>26</sup>And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven." <sup>27</sup>This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup>Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; <sup>29</sup>for our God is a consuming fire.

**10.1 Discipline in the local Church involves a range of corrective measures from gentle, private correction to stern, public rebuke and disassociation.**

**Reproving or rebuking a brother or sister who sins.**

**Matthew 18:15:** <sup>15</sup>If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

**Luke 17:3:** <sup>3</sup>Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

**Withholding fellowship from a Christian who willfully continues to practice sin.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:6,14:** <sup>6</sup>Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us... <sup>14</sup>If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.

**1 Corinthians 5:2,11,13:** <sup>2</sup>You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst... <sup>11</sup>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... <sup>13</sup>But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

**Matthew 18:17:** <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to

the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

**In extreme situations, the good of the believer and Church requires turning the willfully sinning saint over to Satan.**

*1 Timothy 1:19,20:* ...<sup>19</sup>keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. <sup>20</sup>Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

## **10.2 The purpose of Church discipline is five-fold:**

**10.2.1 First, to honor by our holy living the Holy One Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ; the One who is personally present in the gathering of His Church. With eyes of hearts made pure, we see Him and join with Him as co-laborers in His ministry of Perfect Love.**

Living a holy life means living in loving fellowship with Christ and His saints and in loving relationship with neighbors. The path of holiness sums up the two greatest commandments: to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourself (Mark 12:29-31).

When we live daily in loving relationship with Jesus, we tune our hearts to Him, are aware of His presence and sensitive to His leading. Paul, the apostle, lost in the love of our Savior, could say, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Desiring to walk by His side through the moments of everyday life, we need to walk as He walks, in the light, for "...God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do

not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:5-7).

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). God’s Church embodies the fellowship of those with eyes of faith who see Jesus and join with Him, following His lead. Furthermore, each disciple brings to the fellowship the blessing of his own personal relationship with Christ and the unique manner in which Jesus ministers through him.

That the Church falls short of the fellowship of Heaven on Earth is a constant reminder of our need of grace. This is a time of preparation for the bride of Christ. From time to time certain members of the church require special attention. As part of the body of Christ they require the encouragement, insight, consolation or other divinely directed mercy that fulfills their particular need to overflowing.

Yes, needs and problems will always exist. The secret is Christ. As long as we abide in Christ, He will lead us in His way. Conversely, if saints become lukewarm in faith, the reality of Jesus “in our midst” fades from present-tense vibrant to future-hope vague. The stern letter written to the church in Laodicea serves to warn us in this regard. Jesus speaks as the One standing outside the church, reproaching the saints and declaring, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20). In the broadest sense, local church discipline safeguards the spiritual health of the body of Christ by ensuring that the Life of the saint and the Life of the church, Christ Himself, abides in our midst, preeminent.

**Exodus 33:14:** <sup>14</sup>And He said, “My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.” <sup>15</sup>Then he said to Him, “If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. <sup>16</sup>For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and

Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?"

**Matthew 18:15-20:** <sup>15</sup>If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. <sup>16</sup>But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.

### 10.2.2 Second, to help ensure the continuing and increasing love of the brethren, one for another.

**1 Peter 1:13-23:** <sup>13</sup>Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, <sup>15</sup>but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; <sup>16</sup>because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." <sup>17</sup>If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; <sup>18</sup>knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,

<sup>19</sup>but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. <sup>20</sup>For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup>who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

<sup>22</sup>Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, <sup>23</sup>for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

### **10.2.3 Third, to restore a straying disciple to the way of life (voluntary obedience to Christ).**

*James 5:19,20:* <sup>19</sup>My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, <sup>20</sup>let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

### **10.2.4 Fourth, to protect the Church from the negative moral and spiritual influences of a backslider.**

*1 Corinthians 5:* <sup>1</sup>It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. <sup>2</sup>You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.

<sup>3</sup>For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. <sup>4</sup>In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and

I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,  
<sup>5</sup>I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>6</sup>Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? <sup>7</sup>Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

<sup>9</sup>I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; <sup>10</sup>I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? <sup>13</sup>But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

**Revelation 2:20:** <sup>20</sup>But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

**Joshua 7:10-15:** (The sin of Achan caused Israel's defeat at Ai.) <sup>10</sup>So the LORD said to Joshua, "Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? <sup>11</sup>Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things. <sup>12</sup>Therefore

the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst.

<sup>13</sup>Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the LORD, the God of Israel, has said, “There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst.” <sup>14</sup>In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes by lot shall come near by families, and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households, and the household which the LORD takes shall come near man by man. <sup>15</sup>It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.’”

#### 10.2.5 Fifth, to reinforce the serious nature of the Christian life.

**1 Timothy 5:20:** (Paul’s instruction regarding elders.)

<sup>20</sup>Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.

**2 Corinthians 7:12:** <sup>12</sup>So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God.

### 10.3 The procedure for disciplining is four-fold:

#### 10.3.1 First, the one who sees a brother committing a sin should:

a) Pray for the erring one's restoration and pray again and again.

*1 John 5:16,17:* <sup>16</sup>If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. <sup>17</sup>All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.

b) Examine oneself, considering our own personal faults and need for grace.

*Galatians 6:1:* <sup>1</sup>Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

c) Approach the erring brother in a spirit of gentleness. Love seeks the wanderer, as fellow wanderers kept by grace... never content to merely wait for the erring one to "return to the fold."

*Galatians 6:1:* <sup>1</sup>Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

d) Reprove him in private.

*Matthew 18:15:* <sup>15</sup>If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

e) If he repents, (God willing he does), forgive him.

*Luke 17:3,4:* <sup>3</sup>Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. <sup>4</sup>And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, "I repent," forgive him.

**10.3.2 Second, if he does not listen, take one or two with you as witnesses and approach him again.**

*Matthew 18:16:* <sup>16</sup>But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact maybe confirmed.

**10.3.3 Third, if he continues to refuse to listen, tell it to the assembled church. This is not a matter of gossip but a report confirmed by two or three witnesses.**

*Matthew 18:17:* <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

**10.3.4 Fourth, if he still refuses to listen, the whole congregation should take action and...**

a) Remove him/her from your assembly.

*Matthew 18:17:* <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

b) Don't associate with him on an individual/personal level.

*1 Corinthians 5:2,3,11:* <sup>2</sup>You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who

had done this deed would be removed from your midst. <sup>3</sup>For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present... <sup>11</sup>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.

**2 Thessalonians 3:6,14:** <sup>6</sup>Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us... <sup>14</sup>If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.

**Romans 16:17:** <sup>17</sup>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.

### c) Pernicious offenders need to be turned over to Satan.

**1 Timothy 1:18-20:** <sup>18</sup>This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, <sup>19</sup>keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. <sup>20</sup>Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

**1 Corinthians 5:1-5:** <sup>1</sup>It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. <sup>2</sup>You

have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.

<sup>3</sup>For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. <sup>4</sup>In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, <sup>5</sup>I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>6</sup>Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?

### **10.3.5 Finally, if he repents, forgive him and comfort him, reaffirming your love for him.**

**2 Corinthians 2:6-11:** <sup>6</sup>Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, <sup>7</sup>so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. <sup>8</sup>Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. <sup>9</sup>For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. <sup>10</sup>But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, <sup>11</sup>so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

## **10.4 Conclusion: Discipline in the body of Christ.**

The discipline Jesus designed for His Church is not mechanical, awkward, callous or cruel. It is the divine working of love expressed in the body of Christ; one for another. As the fellowship of those working out their salvation with fear and

trembling, the “narrow way” and “small gate” are much more than mental concepts or quaint imagery. So too are the rewards of Heaven and the terrors of Hell.

Day in and day out, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Love covers a multitude of sins. And a little sugar usually works better than the threat of a big stick.



# 11 Church Discipline regarding Itinerant Christian Workers

## 11.1 Beware of evangelists, prophets and teachers who are false and not of God. Do not accept at face value the character and credentials of those who claim to be servants of Christ.

**2 Peter 2:1:** <sup>1</sup>But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

**2 Corinthians 11:12-15:** <sup>12</sup>But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. <sup>13</sup>For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup>No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

**Matthew 7:15:** <sup>15</sup>Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

**Philippians 3:2,3:** <sup>2</sup>Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;<sup>3</sup>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,

## 11.2 Test those who come to you.

**1 John 4:1-3:** <sup>1</sup>Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; <sup>3</sup>and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

**Revelation 2:2:** <sup>2</sup>I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

## 11.3 Look for two signs that will reveal their true nature:

### 11.3.1 Their doctrine; confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

**1 John 4:2,3:** <sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; <sup>3</sup>and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

### 11.3.2 Their manner of life and influence on others.

**Matthew 7:16-20:** <sup>16</sup>You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? <sup>17</sup>So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup>A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree

produce good fruit. <sup>19</sup>Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup>So then, you will know them by their fruits.

**Jude 1:3-23:** <sup>3</sup>Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. <sup>4</sup>For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

<sup>5</sup>Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. <sup>6</sup>And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, <sup>7</sup>just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

<sup>8</sup>Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. <sup>9</sup>But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" <sup>10</sup>But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. <sup>11</sup>Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. <sup>12</sup>These are the men who are

hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; <sup>13</sup>wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

<sup>14</sup>It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, <sup>15</sup>to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” <sup>16</sup>These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

<sup>17</sup>But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>18</sup>that they were saying to you, “In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.” <sup>19</sup>These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, <sup>21</sup>keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. <sup>22</sup>And have mercy on some, who are doubting; <sup>23</sup>save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

## 11.4 Take action if they are found to be false by:

### 11.4.1 Contending earnestly for the truth of God.

*Jude 1:3:* <sup>3</sup>Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

### 11.4.2 Turning away from them (refusing to fellowship with them).

*Romans 16:17:* <sup>17</sup>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.

### 11.4.3 Refusing to give them hospitality.

*2 John 1:10,11:* <sup>10</sup>If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, (the teaching of Jesus Christ; *author's note*) do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; <sup>11</sup>for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

## 11.5 Conclusion: The Church holds traveling ministers accountable to the faith.

The ministry of itinerant, traveling workers is strengthened through careful, loving reception by the local church. Those found true to the faith bring with them blessings purposed by our Lord. However, if discovered to be false, Jesus protects His bride by exposing and repelling servants of darkness.



## 12 Responsibilities of God's Local Church - Responsibilities of the Many

God's Word addresses God's people in His Church; the many, not the few. The duty to respond to God's Word is a responsibility of the many; each and every believer, individually. The body of Christ comes alive as each of the many brethren respond to our Lord's leading.

**Romans 1:7:** <sup>7</sup>To all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:2:** <sup>2</sup>To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

**2 Corinthians 1:1:** <sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:

**Galatians 1:1,2:** <sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), <sup>2</sup>and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

**Ephesians 1:1:** <sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

**Philippians 1:1:** <sup>1</sup>Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

**Colossians 1:1,2:** <sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, <sup>2</sup>To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are

at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

**1 Thessalonians 1:1:** <sup>1</sup>Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

**3 John 1:9:** <sup>9</sup>I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say.

**Jude 1:1** <sup>1</sup>Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:

## 12.1 The Church's responsibility to Traveling Workers (apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers):

### 12.1.1 Honor those who work faithfully for the cause of the Lord Jesus.

**Philippians 2:29,30:** <sup>29</sup>Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; <sup>30</sup>because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

**1 Corinthians 16:15,16:** <sup>15</sup>Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), <sup>16</sup>that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors.

### 12.1.2 Pray for those who diligently labor.

**1 Thessalonians 5:25:** <sup>25</sup>Brethren, pray for us.

**2 Thessalonians 3:1,2:** <sup>1</sup>Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; <sup>2</sup>and that we

will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.

**Colossians 4:3,4:** ...<sup>3</sup>praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; <sup>4</sup>that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

**Ephesians 6:18-20:** <sup>18</sup>With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, <sup>19</sup>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, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

**2 Corinthians 1:10,11:** ...<sup>10</sup>who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, <sup>11</sup>you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.

**Hebrews 13:18,19:** <sup>18</sup>Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things. <sup>19</sup>And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner.

**Romans 15:30-32:** <sup>30</sup>Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, <sup>31</sup>that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; <sup>32</sup>so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

**12.1.3 Give hospitality to those sent by God to serve temporarily in your area or who are passing through your area.**

**Acts 21:7:** <sup>7</sup>When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day.

**Acts 21:15-17:** <sup>15</sup>After these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup>Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge. <sup>17</sup>After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

**Colossians 4:10:** <sup>10</sup>Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas's cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him)...

**3 John 1:10:** <sup>10</sup>For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church.

**Acts 28:13,14:** <sup>13</sup>From there we sailed around and arrived at Rhegium, and a day later a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. <sup>14</sup>There we found some brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome.

**12.1.4 Provide material support for those temporarily laboring in your area.**

**1 Corinthians 9:1-18:** <sup>1</sup>Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? <sup>2</sup>If to others I am not an

apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup>My defense to those who examine me is this: <sup>4</sup>Do we not have a right to eat and drink? <sup>5</sup>Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? <sup>6</sup>Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? <sup>7</sup>Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?

<sup>8</sup>I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? <sup>9</sup>For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? <sup>10</sup>Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. <sup>11</sup>If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? <sup>12</sup>If others share the right over you, do we not more?

Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? <sup>14</sup>So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

<sup>15</sup>But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one. <sup>16</sup>For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. <sup>17</sup>For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if

against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. <sup>18</sup>What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

**Galatians 6:6-10:** <sup>6</sup>The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. <sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. <sup>8</sup>For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup>Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. <sup>10</sup>So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

### 12.1.5 Send them on their way in full provision.

**3 John 1:5-8:** <sup>5</sup>Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; <sup>6</sup>and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. <sup>7</sup>For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup>Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

**1 Corinthians 16:5-7:** <sup>5</sup>But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia; <sup>6</sup>and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go. <sup>7</sup>For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.

**1 Corinthians 16:10,11:** <sup>10</sup>Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for

he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. <sup>11</sup>So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren.

### 12.1.6 Send support to traveling workers laboring for Christ abroad.

**Philippians 4:14-18:** <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. <sup>15</sup>You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; <sup>16</sup>for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. <sup>17</sup>Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. <sup>18</sup>But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

**Philippians 4:3:** <sup>3</sup>Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

### 12.2 The Church has a responsibility to help brethren in need.

**2 Corinthians 8:1-15 (Regarding the relief supplied by the saints for brethren living in Judea who were suffering from famine.):** <sup>1</sup>Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup>that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of

their liberality. <sup>3</sup>For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, <sup>4</sup>begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, <sup>5</sup>and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. <sup>6</sup>So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. <sup>7</sup>But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also.

<sup>8</sup>I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. <sup>9</sup>For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. <sup>10</sup>I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it. <sup>11</sup>But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability. <sup>12</sup>For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. <sup>13</sup>For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality— <sup>14</sup>at this present time your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality; <sup>15</sup>as it is written, “He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little had no lack.”

**James 1:27:** <sup>27</sup>Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

### **12.3 The decision to give is a decision of the many... each one, individually.**

*Acts 11:29:* <sup>29</sup>And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.

### **12.4 Our love for the saints reflects our love for God.**

*1 John 3:11-18:* <sup>11</sup>For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; <sup>12</sup>not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

<sup>16</sup>We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup>But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? <sup>18</sup>Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

### **12.5 Conclusion: Responsibilities of the local church belong to each member.**

The church Jesus designed is without any organizational structure that acts as the "agent" fulfilling the duties of the members of the body of Christ. God's Word is directed to each individual believer - not to the elders alone, or prophets or evangelists or someone else. The responsibility to hear and obey

God falls on each one of us. As a result, the response of God's Church enlarges as each member follows the unique leading of our Lord.

## 13 Elders: Real Servants in God's Church

Elders are men appointed in the local church as overseers to shepherd or pastor a local assembly of God's people. Understanding that all Christians are called to minister both to the saints of the Church as well as in outreach to the world, we can better appreciate the goal to which elders shepherd.

Elders carry the health and safety of the Church as their appointed responsibility; their vision, Jesus Himself, leading through the many saints and they embrace as their marching orders the equipping of the saints for the work of service which has been described in this study as the Ministry of the Many.

### 13.1 Elders shepherd or pastor God's people in His local assembly.

**Acts 20:28-31 (Paul's message to the elders of Ephesus):** <sup>28</sup>Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. <sup>29</sup>I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup>and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup>Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

Shepherding or "keeping watch" involves faithfully living out a mature Christian life, leading others to follow Christ more fully, and helping to guard the Church from false brethren.

**1 Peter 5:1-3:** <sup>1</sup>Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, <sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God among you,

exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; <sup>3</sup>nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

## 13.2 What are elders specifically instructed to do?

As fellow believers, elders participate in the Ministry of the Many, each adding his voice of encouragement or teaching or tongue or prophesy or interpretation of tongues or song. The Holy Spirit leads elders to serve by exercising spiritual gifts in the assembly and in outreach of Christian witness to the world.

### 13.2.1 Elders are charged to hold fast to the faithful Word of God's truth.

God's Word provides the objective truth, the standard for faith and practice.

**Titus 1:7-11:** <sup>7</sup>For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, <sup>8</sup>but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, <sup>9</sup>holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

<sup>10</sup>For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, <sup>11</sup>who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.

### 13.2.2 Elders should feed and guard the flock of God.

Elders are not the only ones led to teach the gathered saints or refute the teaching of false doctrines; however the “buck stops” with these appointed individuals.

**Titus 1:9:** ...<sup>9</sup>holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

**Acts 20:28-31:** <sup>28</sup>Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. <sup>29</sup>I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup>and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup>Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

### 13.2.3 Elders should help equip the saints to participate in the ministry of the many.

**Ephesians 4:11-16:** <sup>11</sup>And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; <sup>13</sup>until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup>As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup>but speaking the truth in love, we are to

grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, <sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what 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.

#### **13.2.4 Elders should pray over and anoint saints taken ill.**

In this regard elders carry with them the united faith, love, and prayers of the entire congregation.

**James 5:14,15:** <sup>14</sup>Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; <sup>15</sup>and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

#### **13.2.5 Elders are instructed to be examples to the saints... examples of true disciples of Jesus Christ.**

**1 Peter 5:1-3:** <sup>1</sup>Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, <sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; <sup>3</sup>nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

The duties listed above are not exclusive to elders, but include responsibilities common to all believers. (See: Chapter 8, “The Ministry of the Many”) Elders, not placed over God’s people in the manner of secular, hierarchical authority roles, are set among

the saints as shining examples of the manner of life God desires for all His children; men who walk so closely with Jesus that their lives produce a longing for Him in the hearts of others. Elders, characterized by their age, Christian maturity, and sanctified life, rise to guard the church in situations involving false brethren and those who take advantage of the freedom to minister in the assembly. Age and personal knowledge of God's triumph in the storms of life enable elders to provide counsel for trying times. Their living knowledge of the Word of God enriches the Church.

### **13.3 Multiple elders were appointed in every local church.**

A plurality of elders provides provision and protection for both elders and the Church as a whole; provision in supplying a pool of wisdom and support; protection in holding all elders accountable to each other and the Church.

The group of elders models the love and oneness found in God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If God is One in love and the elders of the Church display oneness in love, the path of love's unity for the Church is laid.

*Acts 14:23:* <sup>23</sup>When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

*Titus 1:5:* <sup>5</sup>For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you...

#### **13.3.1 The Bible does not provide for a hierarchy within the group of elders just as it does not teach positional authority within the Church as a whole.**

The only distinction between one elder and another is in the degree to which he rules well and works hard at preaching and teaching.

F.G. Smith in his forward looking book, *The Last Reformation*, explains this eloquently: "...the difference existing between elders in the primitive (New Testament) church was not a difference in kind but in degree only, varying in accordance with their ability to put forth some portion of that moral and spiritual power by which alone Christ governs his church."

**1 Timothy 5:17,18:** <sup>17</sup>The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup>For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

**Galatians 2:1-6,11-14:** <sup>1</sup>Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. <sup>2</sup>And it was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. <sup>3</sup>But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. <sup>4</sup>But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. <sup>5</sup>But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. <sup>6</sup>But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) - well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me...<sup>11</sup>But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup>For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. <sup>13</sup>The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with

the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup>But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

### 13.4 Qualifications

No other role in the Church demands qualifications so strict and broad. Although plurality is the general principle, no man can be appointed as an elder who is not already an elder in character, conduct, and knowledge of the Scriptures.

Prior to appointment as an elder, men who desire the responsibility of overseer must first prove themselves to be:

**Above reproach:** Having nothing that would bring on themselves blame or censure; shame; or disgrace.

**Temperate:** Moderate; not excessive; Not marked with passion; not violent; cool; calm; Moderate in the indulgence of the natural appetites or passions.

**Sensible:** Having judgments and conduct that are marked and governed by sound judgment or good common sense.

**Prudent:** Sagacious in adapting means to ends; circumspect in action, or in determining any line of conduct; practically wise; judicious; careful; discreet; sensible.

**Just:** Not transgressing the requirement of truth and propriety; conformed to the truth of things, to reason, or to a proper standard; exact; normal; reasonable.

**Respectable:** Worthy of respect; fitted to awaken esteem; deserving regard.

**Having a good reputation with outsiders:** Held in favorable regard; public esteem; having a good name.

**Devout:** Committed to the careful cultivation of one's relationship with God.

**Not addicted to wine:** Not an alcoholic.

**Not quick tempered:** Doesn't fly off the handle.

**Not pugnacious:** Not disposed to or inclined to fighting; not quarrelsome.

**Not self-willed:** Not governed by one's own will; yielding to the wishes of others; not obstinate.

**Not fond of sordid gain:** Finding no delight or pleasure in unseemly gain in money or goods; gain at another's expense; gain from immoral or unrighteous practices; gain from activity for which remuneration is not warranted.

**Free from the love of money:** Not motivated or controlled by greed or avarice.

**Gentle:** Having to do with nature, temper, or disposition as in a gentle manner; Not wild, turbulent, or refractory; quiet and peaceable; Soft; not violent or rough; not strong, loud, or disturbing; easy; soothing; pacific.

**Peaceable:** Not given to angry debate; not provoking dispute or contention; not quarrelsome.

**Hospitable:** Receiving and entertaining strangers or guests with kindness and without reward.

**Loving what is good:** Having a heart whose satisfaction and pleasure is found in what is good as God describes it. Good is generally what makes for life and happiness.

**The husband of one wife:** This rules out polygamists.

**Having children who believe:** Generally, if the head of the house is a believer, his children will follow.

**Able to manage his own household well:** If a man can manage his own family with its diverse relationships, personalities, needs and challenges, he likely has the wisdom and skills to manage the family of God.

**Holding fast to the faithful word:** One who patterns and orders his life without deviation by the teaching, precepts and commandments found in the Holy Scriptures.

**Able to teach:** Having a broad and sound understanding of the Scriptures so as to effectively explain the Word of God to other believers.

**Able to exhort in sound doctrine:** To incite, animate or urge by arguments based on sound Bible principles, as to a good deed or laudable conduct; to urge strongly; hence, to advise, warn, or caution.

**Able to refute those who contradict:** To disprove and overthrow by argument, evidence, or countervailing proof; to prove to be false or erroneous those who teach false doctrine.

**Not a new convert:** The test of sufficient time is required to prove the Christian character, maturity, and skills of those who aspire to be elders.

*1 Timothy 3:1-7:* <sup>1</sup>It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. <sup>2</sup>An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup>not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. <sup>4</sup>He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity <sup>5</sup>(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), <sup>6</sup>and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall

into the condemnation incurred by the devil. <sup>7</sup>And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

**Titus 1:6-11:** ...<sup>6</sup>namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. <sup>7</sup>For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, <sup>8</sup>but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, <sup>9</sup>holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. <sup>10</sup>For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, <sup>11</sup>who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.

Only men who own the personal qualities of overseer in character, conduct and grounding in the Word of God, qualify as elders. God chooses men who exemplify His effective, redeeming grace as models for His Church and to the world. Successfully shepherding the Church of God requires proven godly character.

The reference to "men" as a qualifying characteristic of an elder has been questioned since the advent of the Women's Rights Movement. There is a very simple and biblical way to understand women's role in the Church. The Scriptures clearly provide for all saints, men and women alike, to participate in ministry, the Ministry of the Many. Elders engage in the same ministry, and, in fact, more than that, they support and encourage it. As a result, it is not necessary to be an elder in order to minister in the assembly or outreach of the Church. However, in most traditional churches only the titled pastors or "ministers" have the authority to minister in the church, causing much unnecessary

disappointment and spiritual emptiness. As we have seen, this restrictive practice is contrary to our Lord's instructions and robs the saints of their essential and fulfilling role in building up one another.

### **13.5 The crown of glory will be awarded to elders by Jesus at His appearing.**

Elders receive the reward of the approval given by God and His people among whom they serve. Held in high esteem by the brethren, God's people honor the good and God Himself promises an unfading crown of glory for elders who serve well. These servants lay up for themselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal (Matthew 6:19,20).

*1 Peter 5:4 (addressing elders):* <sup>4</sup>And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

### **13.6 Elders should take care not to succumb to the temptation to be THE ONE, "front and center," having all the say and directing and controlling the brethren.**

Yielding to lust for power and love of position is an all too common thread in the tapestry of Church history. God's plan is so much better.

*3 John 1:9-11:* <sup>9</sup>I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. <sup>10</sup>For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, do not imitate

what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.

### **13.7 Elders are reprov'd for unchristian character and conduct.**

*1 Timothy 5:19-20:* <sup>19</sup>Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. <sup>20</sup>Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.

### **13.8 Conclusion: Elders- peculiar leaders for an unnatural organization.**

Little wonder God calls men such as these, “gifts to the Church.” In every respect the Church Jesus designed perfectly fits the pattern of an organization not of this world but of the Kingdom of God. Certainly, the fact that flesh and blood men can serve in the capacity of elders, as the Bible describes, is another proof of the divine origin of the body of Christ.

Blessed by the service of such men, Jesus, present and preeminent, governs His Church unchallenged, the Ministry of the Many flourishes and the body of Christ advances in triumph. God’s mercies are showered on the needy and the works of the devil destroyed. The lost are gathered in... All this to the glory of God and the joy of the redeemed along with their Leader and all the angels in Heaven.

## 14 Financial Support of Those Who Serve

The New Testament teaching on financial support demonstrates tension between a number of truths:

1. Those who are sent by God, go, without regard to their financial situation, trusting that God who sent them will also provide all their needs;
2. No soldier serves at his own expense, yet at the same time he yearns to provide the gospel free of charge;
3. Saints are instructed not to burden the church, but to work diligently to support themselves while serving the Church; and lastly,
4. Elders are admonished not to serve in exchange for monetary compensation and are cautioned to guard themselves against the love of money.

### 14.1 The Bible illustrates and teaches obedience to a faith that follows Christ without visible means of support.

Those who venture forth go at the Lord's command, trusting in His faithfulness to supply all their needs. They do the work of the ministry, laboring without promise or expectation of payment from those they serve. Their hearts seek not to gain but to give, and to win not earthly rewards but lives given without reservation to God.

**Matthew 6:24-34:** <sup>24</sup>No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

<sup>25</sup>For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more

than clothing? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? <sup>27</sup>And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? <sup>28</sup>And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, <sup>29</sup>yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. <sup>30</sup>But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! <sup>31</sup>Do not worry then, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear for clothing?” <sup>32</sup>For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup>But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

<sup>34</sup>So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

**Mark 6:7-13:** <sup>7</sup>And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits; <sup>8</sup>and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belt—<sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals; and He added, “Do not put on two tunics.” <sup>10</sup>And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town. <sup>11</sup>Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.” <sup>12</sup>They went out and preached that men should repent. <sup>13</sup>And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.

**2 Corinthians 12:14-19:** <sup>14</sup>Here for this third time I

am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. <sup>15</sup>And I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you the more, am I to be loved the less? <sup>16</sup>But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit. <sup>17</sup>Certainly I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I? <sup>18</sup>I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit and walk in the same steps? <sup>19</sup>All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved.

#### **14.2 Traveling workers, apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers, deserve financial support.**

Itinerant Christian ministers ought not demand pay or Church salary. Instead, workers should freely serve, knowing God will supply their needs, often through the generous gifts of the saints. In the same way saints will recognize that the Scriptures agree with the leading they may receive from the Holy Spirit to help support these workers with material means.

**3 John 1:5-8:** <sup>5</sup>Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; <sup>6</sup>and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. <sup>7</sup>For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup>Therefore we

ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

**1 Corinthians 9:1-14:** <sup>1</sup>Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? <sup>2</sup>If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup>My defense to those who examine me is this: <sup>4</sup>Do we not have a right to eat and drink? <sup>5</sup>Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? <sup>6</sup>Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? <sup>7</sup>Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?

<sup>8</sup>I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? <sup>9</sup>For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? <sup>10</sup>Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. <sup>11</sup>If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? <sup>12</sup>If others share the right over you, do we not more?

Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? <sup>14</sup>So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

**14.3 Paul, the apostle, exemplified working day and night to provide for the physical needs for both himself and his fellow workers. Paul gave several reasons why he worked to earn the money needed to support himself:**

**14.3.1 To provide the gospel free of charge.**

**1 Corinthians 9:14-18:** <sup>14</sup>So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. <sup>15</sup>But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one. <sup>16</sup>For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. <sup>17</sup>For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. <sup>18</sup>What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

**1 Thessalonians 2:5-12:** <sup>5</sup>For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed— God is witness— <sup>6</sup>nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. <sup>7</sup>But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. <sup>8</sup>Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

<sup>9</sup>For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. <sup>10</sup>You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and

uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; <sup>11</sup>just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, <sup>12</sup>so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

### **14.3.2 To set an example for elders in imitating his practice to provide their own support, not burdening the Church.**

*Acts 20:33-36 (Paul, speaking specifically to elders):* <sup>33</sup>“I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes. <sup>34</sup>You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. <sup>35</sup>In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” <sup>36</sup>When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

### **14.3.3 To expose false and deceitful workers.**

True spiritual ministry is the labor God calls one to do without human promise of compensation or expectation of financial remuneration, but with unshakable faith that God will provide for all needs. The true nature of false workers becomes clearly visible “when the money dries up”. In this event, they become upset and soon fly to greener pastures.

*2 Corinthians 11:7-15:* <sup>7</sup>Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? <sup>8</sup>I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to serve you; <sup>9</sup>and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when

the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so. <sup>10</sup>As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. <sup>11</sup>Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

<sup>12</sup>But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. <sup>13</sup>For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup>No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

#### **14.3.4 To “cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ”.**

Manifold are the problems that arise from paying those who would minister “full-time” in order to free them from the responsibility to earn a living, or the necessity to live by faith.

**1 Corinthians 9:11-12:** <sup>11</sup>If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? <sup>12</sup>If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

#### **14.4 Financial Support Regarding Elders**

Elders (pastors) who heed New Testament instruction support themselves by working in honorable occupations or professions, not burdening the Church for their needs. As men of faith in the secular world, elders model the mode of life God calls all to follow. Furthermore, they understand their brothers and sisters and keep

watch over their souls, themselves also engaged in the “work a day” world. Elders’ hardworking way of life discourages those who would pretend to bless the saints through ministry but with the ulterior motive of securing income.

#### **14.4.1 Paul instructed elders to follow his example by working to provide for their own daily needs.**

**Acts 20:33-36 (Paul, speaking specifically to elders):** <sup>33</sup>“I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes. <sup>34</sup>You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. <sup>35</sup>In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” <sup>36</sup>When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

**2 Thessalonians 3:6-15:** <sup>6</sup>Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. <sup>7</sup>For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, <sup>8</sup>nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; <sup>9</sup>not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example. <sup>10</sup>For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. <sup>11</sup>For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. <sup>12</sup>Now such persons we command

and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

<sup>13</sup>But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. <sup>14</sup>If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. <sup>15</sup>Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

#### **14.4.2 Peter, the apostle, also instructs elders not to work as “hire-for-pay” ministers.**

The Bible says simply, “be eager to serve.” Saints in Peter’s day may have been inclined to hire out “pastoral” services as is common today. Certainly there were elders who expected or demanded payment. However, serving for “filthy lucre” or “sordid gain” contrasts with the Bible’s description of recompense for an honest day’s work.

*1 Peter 5:2:* ...<sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

#### **14.4.3 Elders who “rule well”, especially those who labor diligently preaching and teaching, deserve appropriate honor by respect and material gifts.**

*1 Timothy 5:17,18:* <sup>17</sup>The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup>For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”

**The Bible speaks directly to individual saints to give respect and material gifts to elders He designates. No**

**corporate offerings or organized collections are taken for this purpose. The Lord, Himself, directs this activity as He leads through the Holy Spirit in the specifics of what should be given, to whom, how, and when.**

If a saint feels prompted by the Holy Spirit to honor an elder with a material gift, he will check this leading by considering if in fact the elder rules well. Satisfied that his leading lines up with the Word of God, he simply obeys with a personal gift. When one feels led to give material honor again, the second gift follows as simply as the first.

#### **14.5 Conclusion: Supporting those who serve.**

It is clear that Jesus intends to be in charge of providing for the material support of His servants. The teaching given serves as guidelines that can be followed only at the leading of the Holy Spirit. Conspicuously absent are any clear rules that direct “always”, “never”, etc.; the type of procedures that are easily defined and managed by human thinking and human systems of compensation.

In as much as the burden of support rests on God’s shoulders, the duty to trust and obey sits squarely on our own. The Christian worker’s answer to God’s call must not depend on seeing the money in advance, but seeing Him who is unseen; believing that He will supply - even if it means getting a job and paying one’s own way.

At the same time, the leading one may feel to give material support to an itinerant worker must first be checked against Scripture’s guidelines - and if found in agreement, simply obeyed.

Through the madness of this ingenious method, the Kingdom of God surely advances; the sincerity, faith and fortitude of God’s servants are tested and strengthened, and Jesus’ followers are freed to serve Him in their “Great Commission” call; loosed from temptation to demand or beg support and unencumbered by the expectations, wants and wishes of those who would provide it.

## **15 Financing the Church: Part One**

**15.1 God's Church, designed, built and led by the Son of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit is an organization of few costs and simple financing.**

**15.2 The leadership serves on a volunteer basis.**

The Lord graciously prompts saints to bless those who serve and deserve the honor of material gifts, without requiring or extending the promise of salary or payroll. (Chapter 14 covers this subject in depth.)

**15.3 Evangelistic and church planting efforts, while largely self supported, also benefit from the gracious gifts of the saints. These follow the leading of the One who calls and provides.**

*Philippians 4:10-19:* <sup>10</sup>But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. <sup>11</sup>Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup>I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

<sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. <sup>15</sup>You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; <sup>16</sup>for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. <sup>17</sup>Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. <sup>18</sup>But I have received everything in full and have an

abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.  
<sup>19</sup>And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

#### 15.4 Church assembly costs are prudently managed.

A home, rented meeting room, or other suitable facility is sufficient for the meeting of the Church. The local Church reflects the power and love of its Leader, not its ownership of brick and mortar assets.

**Acts 1:8:** ...<sup>8</sup>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.”

**Acts 4:31:** <sup>31</sup>And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

**Acts 5:12:** <sup>12</sup>At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s portico.  
<sup>13</sup>But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. <sup>14</sup>And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number...

**Philemon 1:1,2:** <sup>1</sup>Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker, <sup>2</sup>and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: <sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## 15.5 Church administered welfare programs are limited.

Only older widows, those modeling piety, charity, and without family to assist them, receive material help from the Church. Needy saints in other vicinities also constitute a cause worthy of charity. For these efforts, the church accepts offerings and distributes material help by designated representatives.

The narrow focus of “official” church welfare contrasts with the broad spectrum of good works the Holy Spirit may lead individual believers to do. “So then,” the Bible says, “As we have opportunity, let’s do what is good toward all men, and especially toward those who are of the household of the faith” (Galatians 6:10).

**1 Timothy 5:3-16:** <sup>3</sup>Honor widows who are widows indeed; <sup>4</sup>but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup>Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. <sup>6</sup>But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. <sup>7</sup>Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. <sup>8</sup>But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

<sup>9</sup>A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, <sup>10</sup>having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. <sup>11</sup>But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to

get married, <sup>12</sup>thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. <sup>13</sup>At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. <sup>14</sup>Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; <sup>15</sup>for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. <sup>16</sup>If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

**Acts 6:1-6:** <sup>1</sup>Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. <sup>2</sup>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 tables. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." <sup>5</sup>The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. <sup>6</sup>And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

**Acts 11:27-30:** <sup>27</sup>Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup>One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world And this took place in the

reign of Claudius. <sup>29</sup>And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. <sup>30</sup>And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

**2 Corinthians 8:1-24:** <sup>1</sup>Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup>that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. <sup>3</sup>For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, <sup>4</sup>begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, <sup>5</sup>and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. <sup>6</sup>So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. <sup>7</sup>But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also.

<sup>8</sup>I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. <sup>9</sup>For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. <sup>10</sup>I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it. <sup>11</sup>But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability. <sup>12</sup>For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. <sup>13</sup>For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality— <sup>14</sup>at this present

time your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality; <sup>15</sup>as it is written, "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little had no lack."

<sup>16</sup>But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. <sup>17</sup>For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. <sup>18</sup>We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; <sup>19</sup>and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, <sup>20</sup>taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; <sup>21</sup>for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. <sup>22</sup>We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of his great confidence in you. <sup>23</sup>As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. <sup>24</sup>Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

**1 Corinthians 16:1-4:** <sup>1</sup>Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. <sup>2</sup>On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. <sup>3</sup>When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; <sup>4</sup>and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.

## 15.6 Conclusion: Financing the Church.

Startling as it may seem, the New Covenant relationship between God and man and its expression in the organization and function of the church Jesus designed carries forward absolutely none of the cost of personnel or physical structures critical to Old Covenant religious life.

During our Lord's final visit to Jerusalem, the apostles drew His attention to the marvelous temple buildings; a stunningly beautiful monument to a forty-six year construction effort. "And He answered and said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down'" (Matthew 24:2). In 70 A.D. God put His seal on this prophecy with the total destruction of the Jerusalem temple at the hands of the Roman legion. This event obliterated the physical focus as well as essential religious objects needed to maintain one's individual, spiritual relationship with God under Old Covenant law. Furthermore, this loss left both priest and levite without their professional tools of the trade.

Unencumbered by magnificent buildings to erect and maintain and salaried staff to support, members of the body of Christ are free to direct their financial resources as the Holy Spirit leads; doing the mercy deeds of Jesus, Head of the body, and fulfilling His command given before ascending to His Father.



## 16 Financing the Church: Part Two

- 16.1 The mission of our Lord's Church is fueled not by gifts of silver and gold but human lives given unreservedly to Him. The Old Testament law of tithing is not taught in the New Testament. Instead, a new higher law is introduced by our Lord: renounce all and follow Me.**

*Luke 14:25-35:* <sup>25</sup>Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup>“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. <sup>27</sup>Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. <sup>28</sup>For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup>Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup>saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ <sup>31</sup>Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup>Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup>So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. <sup>34</sup>Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup>It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

## **16.2 The Old Testament “Church” or religious order relied on tithes and offerings to support designated personnel and unique spiritual supplies required by this covenant.**

### **16.2.1 Tithes were required under Old Covenant law.**

The Israelites (eleven tribes) paid tithes to the Levites for their service in keeping the Tabernacle and later the Temple. The Tribe of Levi was not given a large portion of the Promised Land as every other tribe. Instead, the Levites received forty-eight cities scattered throughout Canaan and a small allotment of land surrounding each city for cultivating. Furthermore, their duty of religious service was an obligation forbidden to members of all other Hebrew tribes.

*Numbers 18:21-24:* <sup>21</sup>To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. <sup>22</sup>The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die. <sup>23</sup>Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance. <sup>24</sup>For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, “They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.”

### **16.2.2 The Levites tithed the tithe they received, offering a “heave offering” given to Aaron and his sons as payment for their designated service as priests.**

*Numbers 18:26-32:* <sup>26</sup>Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them, “When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from

them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe. <sup>27</sup>Your offering shall be reckoned to you as the grain from the threshing floor or the full produce from the wine vat. <sup>28</sup>So you shall also present an offering to the LORD from your tithes, which you receive from the sons of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD'S offering to Aaron the priest. <sup>29</sup>Out of all your gifts you shall present every offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the sacred part from them." <sup>30</sup>You shall say to them, "When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be reckoned to the Levites as the product of the threshing floor, and as the product of the wine vat. <sup>31</sup>You may eat it anywhere, you and your households, for it is your compensation in return for your service in the tent of meeting. <sup>32</sup>You will bear no sin by reason of it when you have offered the best of it. But you shall not profane the sacred gifts of the sons of Israel, or you will die."

### **16.2.3 Furthermore, priests also received specific parts of designated offerings, establishing additional sources of provision.**

*Leviticus 7:* <sup>1</sup>Now this is the law of the guilt offering; it is most holy. <sup>2</sup>In the place where they slay the burnt offering they are to slay the guilt offering, and he shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. <sup>3</sup>Then he shall offer from it all its fat: the fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, <sup>4</sup>and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe on the liver he shall remove with the kidneys. <sup>5</sup>The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar as an offering by fire to the LORD; it is a guilt offering. <sup>6</sup>Every male among the priests may eat of it. It shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy. <sup>7</sup>The guilt offering is like the sin offering, there is one law for

them; the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it. <sup>8</sup>Also the priest who presents any man's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has presented. <sup>9</sup>Likewise, every grain offering that is baked in the oven and everything prepared in a pan or on a griddle shall belong to the priest who presents it. <sup>10</sup>Every grain offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to all alike.

<sup>11</sup>Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the LORD. <sup>12</sup>If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of well stirred fine flour mixed with oil. <sup>13</sup>With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread. <sup>14</sup>Of this he shall present one of every offering as a contribution to the LORD; it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings. <sup>15</sup>Now as for the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace offerings, it shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall not leave any of it over until morning. <sup>16</sup>But if the sacrifice of his offering is a votive or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what is left of it may be eaten; <sup>17</sup>but what is left over from the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire. <sup>18</sup>So if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings should ever be eaten on the third day, he who offers it will not be accepted, and it will not be reckoned to his benefit. It shall be an offensive thing, and the person who eats of it will bear his own iniquity.

<sup>19</sup>Also the flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. As for other flesh, anyone who is clean may eat such flesh.

<sup>20</sup>But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, in his uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from his people. <sup>21</sup>When anyone touches anything unclean, whether human uncleanness, or an unclean animal, or any unclean detestable thing, and eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people.'

<sup>22</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>23</sup>"Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall not eat any fat from an ox, a sheep or a goat. <sup>24</sup>Also the fat of an animal which dies and the fat of an animal torn by beasts may be put to any other use, but you must certainly not eat it. <sup>25</sup>For whoever eats the fat of the animal from which an offering by fire is offered to the LORD, even the person who eats shall be cut off from his people. <sup>26</sup>You are not to eat any blood, either of bird or animal, in any of your dwellings. <sup>27</sup>Any person who eats any blood, even that person shall be cut off from his people.'"

<sup>28</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>29</sup>"Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to the LORD shall bring his offering to the LORD from the sacrifice of his peace offerings. <sup>30</sup>His own hands are to bring offerings by fire to the LORD. He shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may be presented as a wave offering before the LORD. <sup>31</sup>The priest shall offer up the fat in smoke on the altar, but the breast shall belong to Aaron and his sons. <sup>32</sup>You shall give the right thigh to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. <sup>33</sup>The one among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat, the right thigh shall be his as his portion. <sup>34</sup>For I have taken the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace

offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their due forever from the sons of Israel. <sup>35</sup>This is that which is consecrated to Aaron and that which is consecrated to his sons from the offerings by fire to the LORD, in that day when he presented them to serve as priests to the LORD. <sup>36</sup>These the LORD had commanded to be given them from the sons of Israel in the day that He anointed them. It is their due forever throughout their generations.”

<sup>37</sup>This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering and the ordination offering and the sacrifice of peace offerings, <sup>38</sup>which the LORD commanded Moses at Mount Sinai in the day that He commanded the sons of Israel to present their offerings to the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai.

**16.2.4 The Levitical priests’ unique work (performed only by Aaron and his sons) involved representing the people to God at the altar and behind the veil, offering sacrifices through which God covered their sins. All other Israelites were forbidden to execute this duty on pain of death.**

Leviticus, chapters one through seven, provides a fuller understanding of the priests’ functions on a day-in, day-out basis.

**Numbers 18:1-7:** <sup>1</sup>So the LORD said to Aaron, “You and your sons and your father’s household with you shall bear the guilt in connection with the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the guilt in connection with your priesthood. <sup>2</sup>But bring with you also your brothers, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you, while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony. <sup>3</sup>And they shall thus attend

to your obligation and the obligation of all the tent, but they shall not come near to the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die. <sup>4</sup>They shall be joined with you and attend to the obligations of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent; but an outsider may not come near you. <sup>5</sup>So you shall attend to the obligations of the sanctuary and the obligations of the altar, so that there will no longer be wrath on the sons of Israel. <sup>6</sup>Behold, I Myself have taken your fellow Levites from among the sons of Israel; they are a gift to you, dedicated to the LORD, to perform the service for the tent of meeting. <sup>7</sup>But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.”

### 16.3 God also commanded a feast as a tithe.

This single longest instruction for tithing found in the Bible is particularly interesting. It seems to describe a big party thrown on God’s dime.

***Deuteronomy 14:22-29:*** <sup>22</sup>You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. <sup>23</sup>You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. <sup>34</sup>If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you, <sup>35</sup>then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the

LORD your God chooses. <sup>26</sup>You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. <sup>27</sup>Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you. <sup>28</sup>At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town. <sup>29</sup>The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

**16.4 The progression from Old to New Testament, Old to New Covenant, necessitated a change both of priesthood and law. Jesus, with all His saints, replaces the levitical priests; the body of each saint replaces the Ark of the Covenant overshadowed by God's glory; and the gathered saints, the Church, replaces the Tabernacle, Temple and Tent of Meeting.**

Jesus eliminates the need for a priestly caste by virtue of His atoning death and resurrection. Jesus' death on the cross, the final sacrifice and offering, renders unnecessary further sacrifice or offering for sin. Additionally, the Levites' tasks were also eclipsed when the focus of God's glory-presence moved from resting over the Ark in the Temple's Holy of Holies, to indwelling His saints and presiding in the midst of His assembled Church.

**Hebrew 7:1-28:** <sup>1</sup>For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, <sup>2</sup>to whom also Abraham

apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. <sup>3</sup>Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

<sup>4</sup>Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. <sup>5</sup>And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. <sup>6</sup>But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. <sup>7</sup>But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. <sup>8</sup>In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. <sup>9</sup>And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, <sup>10</sup>for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

<sup>11</sup>Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? <sup>12</sup>For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. <sup>13</sup>For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. <sup>14</sup>For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

<sup>15</sup>And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, <sup>16</sup>who has

become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. <sup>17</sup>For it is attested of Him, “Your are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>18</sup>For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness <sup>19</sup>(for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

<sup>20</sup>And inasmuch as it was not without an oath <sup>21</sup>(for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him:

“The LORD has sworn  
and will not change his mind,  
‘You are a priest forever’”);

<sup>22</sup>so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

<sup>23</sup>The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, <sup>24</sup>but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. <sup>25</sup>Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

<sup>26</sup>For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; <sup>27</sup>who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. <sup>28</sup>For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

**Hebrews 10:1-39:** <sup>1</sup>For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. <sup>2</sup>Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup>But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. <sup>4</sup>For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. <sup>5</sup>Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says:

“Sacrifice and offering you have not desired,  
but a body you have prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup>In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for  
sin

you have not taken pleasure.

<sup>7</sup>Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come  
(in the Scroll of the Book it is written of  
me)

to do your will, O God.”

<sup>8</sup>After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have not desired, nor have you taken pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the Law), <sup>9</sup>then He said, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup>By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

<sup>11</sup>Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; <sup>12</sup>but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup>waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. <sup>14</sup>For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

<sup>15</sup>And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

<sup>16</sup>“This is the covenant that I will make with them,

After those days, says the Lord:  
I will put My laws upon their heart,  
And on their mind I will write them,”

He then says,

<sup>17</sup>“And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

<sup>18</sup>Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

<sup>19</sup>Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup>by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup>and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; <sup>24</sup>and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

<sup>26</sup>For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup>but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup>Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup>How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and

has insulted the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup>For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" And again, "The LORD will judge His people." <sup>31</sup>It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

<sup>32</sup>But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, <sup>33</sup>partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. <sup>34</sup>For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. <sup>35</sup>Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. <sup>36</sup>For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

<sup>37</sup>For yet in a very little while,  
He who is coming will come, and will not  
delay.

<sup>38</sup>But my righteousness ones shall live by  
faith;  
And if he shrinks back,  
My soul has no pleasure in him.

<sup>39</sup>But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

## **16.5 The New Covenant replaces the law of tithes, sacrifices and offerings with a new and better law, instructing us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice.**

It's not as simple as giving a tenth and spending the rest as we please. Instead Jesus calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him through life and beyond. All that we are and all

that we can be, offered to Him unconditionally. Everything we own, used as He directs.

**Romans 12:1:** <sup>1</sup>Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

**1 Corinthians 6:12-20:** <sup>12</sup>All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. <sup>13</sup>Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. <sup>14</sup>Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. <sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! <sup>16</sup>Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "The two shall become one flesh." <sup>17</sup>But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. <sup>18</sup>Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup>For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

## 16.6 Conclusion: Money, the Church, and the Ministry of the Many.

In the life of the Church few occasions arise where pooling money is warranted: (1) supporting widows, (2) relief of impoverished brethren and (3) support of apostles (sent ones). These ministries aside, Jesus entrusts each one of His many

ministers (all of His followers) to use their own personal resources to do the mercy deeds He inspires. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

It is fitting that the many saints, each and every one, should be empowered in this simple way.

Brought into peace with God through faith, repentance and forgiveness;  
Filled with the Holy Spirit;  
Strengthened by the Word of God;  
Led by the Holy Spirit to do deeds of destiny;  
Drawing on all available resources  
Both divine (mercy to meet every need to overflowing)  
And natural (time, talents, and treasure).  
Accomplishing every good work for which we were created in Christ Jesus to do.

“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed (2Cor. 9:8).”

Jesus is leading His Church to victory! Hallelujah!



## 17 In Summary

Exploring how Jesus designed His Church might prod the mind to critically compare and contrast these truths with the church as we know it. Armed with this knowledge, temptation could lead us to sit in judgment; pronouncing sentence on others we deem less enlightened.

Listening intently, a totally different response is indicated as our Lord's words come to us, "Repent and return." Strong scriptural example urges us to take this action. During King Josiah's reign, the Book of the Law resurfaced in a temple cleaning, revealing God's long abandoned instructions. After reading The Book, Josiah immediately tore his clothes in repentance and led God's people in a revival of scriptural practices (2 Kings 22 and 23).

Today, God calls each of us as individuals to repent and return. Our personal responsibility is to obey Jesus and offer ourselves as living stones in the church He is building. Coming together in His presence is not complicated; no expenses, no legalities, no worship team, no specific sermon, only Jesus, Himself. When brethren assemble as the Bible teaches, our gathering is transformed into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit, where the Lord Jesus has preeminence.

Even so, our best intentions and actions can miss the mark. Thankfully, we can rely on our Lord to call us back as He did the saints of the church in Ephesus. The Bible witnesses to their faithfulness (Revelation 2:2,3). Yet their lives and consequently, the life of the church, began to miss the mark. Jesus, ever the Good Shepherd, called them back, saying,

"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lamp stand out of its place – unless you repent (Revelation 2:4,5)." The 'first love' of the saint and church is Jesus, Himself, personally in the midst. The deeds we 'did at first' are the good works His love inspires.

Noah built an ark, a rescue vessel, according to God's plan. The Lord outfitted the ship with provision and called within its cavernous hold the lives He intended to save. In the eyes of the world the ark stood as an object of derision and scorn. Yet Noah preached from its deck the saving message of God, "repent and return." With ark and preparations complete, the Lord Himself shut the door and raised the vessel to safety, buoyed on waters of judgment and destruction.

The church Jesus builds as we meet with Him may be small in number and absent traditional trappings. The Builder adorns His house with His own personal presence. As God adds to our number those who are being saved, the brethren rejoice and joy in the love of God, witnessing His grace in Christ reconciling the world to Himself! Religious traditions once considered indispensable, simply fade away in the presence of Jesus, His Church and His purposes.

Dear saint, follow your heart's hunger for God. Jesus promised, "...where two or three have gathered in My name, I am there, in their midst." God will build His Church with Jesus Himself present as our actual Leader, the Holy Spirit as His administrator and His disciples, each and every one of us, as priests to God, ministers to one another, and witnesses to the world. There the flame of the love of God blazes, unquenchable, lighting the path for the world to know Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God. God willing, I want to be a part of His Church. I'm sure you do, too. Let's do it together.

In Christ,  
Rob Weber

## Notes

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