

**A
TREASURY
OF
ASSEMBLY TRUTHS**

A resource book on the principles, features
and practices of the local assembly.

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Foreword

This booklet is intended as a resource for those seeking to study the word of God with respect to the local assembly.

The material found in this booklet was based upon ministry given on the local church by different brethren in fellowship in the West End Gospel Hall, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

*If you love God's assembly,
You won't forsake it.
You won't despise it.
You won't defile it.
You won't divide it.*

*If you love God's assembly,
You'll guard it.
You'll put everything you have into it.
You'll pray for God's assembly
- for its peace.
- for its perfection.
Alex Dryburgh*

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The pattern of a New Testament church is so clearly delineated in the Scriptures as to have made it possible for churches of this character to spring up in fresh places and among believers who did not know that disciples before them had taken the same path, or that there were some in their own time in other parts of the world.

*E. H. Broadbent,
The Pilgrim Church, p.2*

SECTION 1

Assembly basics

- i. The basis of fellowship
- ii. The blessings of God
- iii. The features of fellowship

*"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the
living God. ...*

*And I say unto thee, ... upon this rock I
will build my church; and the gates of
hell shall not prevail against it."*

Matthew 16:16, 18

The Basis of Fellowship: A people for God

Fellowship with a people for Himself has always been in the mind and heart of God. From the opening of the word of God, there has been an emphasis upon this time of fellowship and communion. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:" presents the mind of the Lord that believers be conformed to the Lord and present Him to the world.

But this has not always been the case. Man in his disobedience and rebellion against God has gone astray seeking his own way. God has sought after man that this fellowship might be restored. "and they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: .. and the Lord God called unto Adam ."

As we read through the Old Testament we find a few individuals such as Abraham, Moses and David who enjoyed this fellowship and communion with God. When we come to Malachi we read of a few "that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened, and heard it".

Here we read God's estimation of this gathering of His people. A book of remembrance was written and the Lord's declaration was given "they shall be mine saith the Lord of hosts in that day when I make up my jewels".

Let us look at a few verses of scripture that set out for us the foundations of an assembly. These verses show us the desires of God and men that are required if an assembly is going to be established and continue.

Psalm 50:5 "Gather my saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."

God's desire	to meet with His people
God's people	those redeemed by sacrifice
God's covenant	a covenant of promise
God's sacrifice	His own precious Son

Psalm 34:3 "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

Our desire	to exalt the Lord
Our worship	directed towards the Lord

Our consecration unto the Lord
Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together
in My name; there am I in the midst of them.”
Purpose to gather together
Communionwith the Lord and each other
Blessing from the Lord with His presence

The desire of the Lord for fellowship with His people must be met by a desire on the part of His people to meet with Him. It is when we have that desire to magnify in worship the Lord that we will be fulfilling His purposes for an assembly. But you will have noticed that there is a further requirement. Those who meet with God in fellowship will already have entered into a covenant with Him because of a sacrifice having been made.

The conditions will have been met. There is a group of people whose sins are dealt with by means of a sacrifice. Their lives are marked with purity. They have a desire to magnify and exalt the Lord. They meet and the Lord gathers with them that he might bless them. And no doubt it can be said that the Lord hearkens and hears it and a book of remembrance is written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.

We cannot overemphasize the importance the Lord places upon a group of people that meet to worship, honour, and praise Him. When we neglect this we are robbing God of that which is due to His name.

It is my intention in this little booklet to examine some of the features of an assembly.

¹Genesis1:26 ²Genesis3:8,9 ³Malachi3:16 ⁴Malachi3:17
⁵Malachi3:8

FEATURES OF FELLOWSHIP

by David Richards

1. The Fact of Fellowship

1Corinth.1:9 "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

- we are called of God unto the fellowship

2. The Focus of Fellowship

1Corinth.1:9 "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

- the focus, the purpose of fellowship is Christ
example: Israel in the wilderness took its focus from the position of the tabernacle

- it is Christ that holds us together

3. The Fabric of Fellowship

1John1:3,4 "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

- fellowship is vertical - with the Father
- fellowship is horizontal - with one another
~ both must be healthy for us to enjoy fellowship

- if we are out of fellowship with God, we will be out of touch with fellow believers

4. The Fostering of Fellowship

- the desires of the heart
- doing everything that will foster and develop fellowship
- we must work at this

5. The Fragility of Fellowship

1John2:1,2 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*"

- not provoking others to sin
- our fellowship can be easily interrupted with the Father - our communion can be broken

6. The Forgiveness of Fellowship

Eph.4:32 "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

- often the easiest things to understand are the hardest to put into practice
- if I foster an unforgiving spirit I will be out of fellowship with God and man

7. The Functioning of Fellowship

1Corinth.12:14-27 "... for the body is not one member, but many ... God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him ... and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

- the harmonious function of the fellowship is of utmost importance to the local assembly
- we must display a care and interest in one another
- we must have a mutual care for one another

8. The Flow of Fellowship

Heb.13:16 "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

- to do good and to communicate has in mind the helping of needy Christians

The Blessings of God

The establishing of an assembly for God is not something that is done for convenience, or is it to be an impulsive act.

A searching of the scripture is needed

Once an assembly is established God expects those in fellowship to live for Him. An assembly should be established only after much prayer and searching of the word of God. The actions of the believers at Berea shows for us the path of blessing "..., they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so". Acts17:11

Much prayer is needed.

Acts1:13,14 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James.

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.

Acts2:1 - they were still found together in prayer

continued in prayer:

basis of a work for God

basis of any revival

basis of any assembly for God

Seeking the Lord's blessing is of utmost importance.

Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

"Bring in" placing God first in your desires

"meat in mine house" spiritual meat - something for God

"prove me" seek God's blessing and guidance

Gen.7:11 window of heaven opened in judgment

2 Kings 7:2 we are not to mock the thought that the windows of heaven may be opened

Malachi 3:10 the promise of blessing when the windows of heaven are opened

SECTION 2

- Basic differences found in the church
- i. The church in the dispensation
 - ii. The church in the district

*"And hath put all things under his
(Christ's) feet, and gave him to be the
head over all things to the church,
which is his body, the fulness of him
that filleth all in all."*

Ephesians 1:22, 23

BASIC DIFFERENCES FOUND IN THE CHURCH

by Richard McCammon, April 2, 1996

The church in the dispensation The church in the district

The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is composed of all believers everywhere at all times. More scripturally, it is called the church which is His body, (Eph.1:22) the body of Christ.

The LOCAL CHURCH is the church at a specific locality composed of believers who gather at that locality. (Such as the church of God which is at Corinth, or the church of the Thessalonians.) That is a LOCAL CHURCH. It is composed of a group of believers who meet on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in a specific place.

That is the fundamental difference between the two churches.

Read Matthew 16:13 - 20

This portion gives the first mention of the church in the Bible. The church is the translation of the Greek word ekklesia, which is a called out group or company of people, called out from the world.

The Lord is here revealing (although the people were not aware of it at the time) the existence of the UNIVERSAL CHURCH, the church which is His body.

The first important lesson that we learn about the church is that it is indestructible. You can not destroy the UNIVERSAL CHURCH. It is built upon the foundation, the rock. The rock being Christ, not Peter. The confession that Peter made could also be the rock. It all points to Christ. "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt.16:18)

The second thing we learn about it is the inevitability of its construction.

We learn that it is indestructible. We learn that it will be constructed. "I will build my church". We learn that the foundation of it is the Lord Jesus Christ. We learn that it will conquer, "the

gates of hades shall not prevail against it". (Matt.16:18)

Read Matthew 18:15 - 20

It is interesting to compare Matt.18:18 with Matt.16:19. There what was given individually to Peter, "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth", is now given plurally, collectively to the church, "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven". Responsibility for this has now devolved upon the LOCAL CHURCH.

Matt.18, is the first mention of the LOCAL CHURCH. It is interesting that in Matt.16 we have the foundation of the UNIVERSAL CHURCH being emphasized. Its foundation being Christ and from that its indestructibility and its invincibility, in the sense that it will prevail and conquer. It will be constructed no matter if the gates of hades oppose it.

In Matt.18, we have a different thing emphasized. We have a function of the LOCAL CHURCH emphasized. I think it is interesting that here we have a function of the LOCAL CHURCH that seems to be in judgment and restoration of differences between brothers who are in the church.

I think it is a mistake to take Matt.18:20 on its own. Even the little word for, links it to what has gone before in the preceding verses. It is linked to a function of the LOCAL CHURCH. With that function is given authority and power. The authority is in Matt.18:18 "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven". In Matt.18:19 power is given, "and again I say unto you", he is establishing another principle, "if you shall agree on earth as touching anything", it shall be done for them. That's power. Obviously it is linked in with what has gone before, but I think it has a more, (because of what the Lord gives in parallel portions in the gospel by John) and wider application. This is united believing collective pray of a LOCAL CHURCH. If we pray in the will of God (1John 5:14, 15) "this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and we know that He hear us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." The key here is praying in the will of God. Discerning the will of God and praying in the will of God.

Matt. 16 talks about foundation and Matt 18 talks about function. In that function there is power and authority. That power and authority obviously leads into church government.

I am just going to give you some ideas that spring out of the facts of these two scriptures.

One of these is that the UNIVERSAL CHURCH is indestructible.

It is composed of all believers.

The LOCAL CHURCH is destructible. For example the church at Corinth is no longer around. There have been many churches that have ceased. They are no longer there because of sin, moving populations, the acts of Satan, etc. A LOCAL CHURCH can be destroyed. It is destructible.

The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is composed of all believers from Pentecost unto the rapture.

The LOCAL CHURCH is composed of some believers. Not all believers meet in any given LOCAL CHURCH.

The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is concerned with all of time, all of the day of grace.

The LOCAL CHURCH is composed of specific periods. For example the churches mentioned in the New Testament.

Most of the believers in the UNIVERSAL CHURCH are in heaven.

All believers that in the LOCAL CHURCH are on earth.

Everybody who is saved is in the UNIVERSAL CHURCH, whether they are on earth or in heaven.

Not everybody who is saved and on earth is in a LOCAL CHURCH. Most of us know people who are saved and they don't go anywhere. They don't go to any church of any description. They don't meet with any group of Christians.

The UNIVERSAL CHURCH was baptized at Pentecost, Acts 2:1 and 1Corin.12:13, baptized there in the Holy Spirit.

The LOCAL CHURCH is not baptized, although it is composed of baptized believers. Scripture is so strong on this point that it links salvation and baptism very, very closely. It does not recognize even the existence of an unbaptized believer.

However that is not to say that you need to be baptized to be saved. It merely presupposes that you will be baptized if you are saved. It assumes that you will be.

In the UNIVERSAL CHURCH there is no government, except Christ as head. Christ is head of the body and he energizes and directs it.

In the LOCAL CHURCH there is government. There are elders and deacons and various spheres of authority.

The LOCAL CHURCH is visible. You can see the group of believers here.
The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is invisible. You can't see it.
The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is eternal. It exists beyond time. It existed before time, Eph.1:4, before time in the mind of God. The book of the Ephesians is primarily concerned with the church which is His body. You read of the body nine times in Ephesians, and eight of the times it refers to the church which is His body, or the UNIVERSAL CHURCH.
The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is united. It is united in the mind of God.
The LOCAL CHURCHES are fragmented. They exist in different areas and there are divisions of theology between various local bodies of believers that gather.
Baptism is an ordinance of the UNIVERSAL CHURCH. Baptism is a function of the LOCAL CHURCH. You can baptize believers and not be a member of a LOCAL CHURCH. Normally it is conducted in our day in conjunction with a LOCAL CHURCH.
An ordinance of the LOCAL CHURCH is the Lord's Supper.
The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is going to judge angels, 1Corin.6:2, 3. The LOCAL CHURCH judges temporal issues, 1Corin.5, Matt.18.

I believe that the priesthood of all believers is both a universal and a LOCAL CHURCH function. If you carefully look at 1Peter 2, "ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Christ Jesus. . . . Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded but ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;" These are terms that speak of the UNIVERSAL CHURCH, an holy nation, a peculiar people that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" For example, sisters are priests. I hope you realize that. Sisters are priests just as much as brothers. It is your role here to offer up spiritual sacrifices, the sacrifice of your praise, the sacrifice of your person, and the sacrifice of your possessions. That's your sisters' role to do that. It is the sisters' role to show forth the excellencies of "Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light". (1Peter 2:9)

Now when it comes to the LOCAL CHURCH, there is a confinement of that priesthood. It is only the men who are by the scriptures allowed to audibly take part in church gatherings. That is a relatively confined function of priesthood.

We are priests twenty-four hours of the day, seven days a week. We meet together 2 - 3 - 4 hours a week, and in that time our priesthood is a little bit more defined. We can show forth the "praises or the excellencies of Him who hath called us out of darkness", in our neighbourhood, with our friends, at our places of work. We can (and I hope we do) offer up spiritual sacrifices of praise more often than when we come together.

Priesthood is both a local and a universal function. In the UNIVERSAL CHURCH there is no difference between sexes. There is neither male nor female, Galatians 3:27. In the LOCAL CHURCH there is definitely a difference and God has made that. It is something that He has chosen, and it is to His glory.

PICTURES

There are pictures of the LOCAL CHURCH and the UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

John 10:16	the UNIVERSAL CHURCH is called a flock
Acts 20:29	the LOCAL CHURCH is called a flock
Eph.1:22	the UNIVERSAL CHURCH is called a body
1Corin.12:27	the LOCAL CHURCH is called body of Christ
Eph.5: and Rev.19	the UNIVERSAL CHURCH is likened unto a bride
2Corin.11:2	the LOCAL CHURCH is likened unto a chaste virgin
1Corin.3:9	the LOCAL CHURCH is a tilled field
Eph. 2:21	the UNIVERSAL CHURCH is a building
1Corin.3:9	the LOCAL CHURCH is a building
Eph.2:21	the UNIVERSAL CHURCH is a temple
1Corin.3:16	the LOCAL CHURCH is a temple
1Peter 4:17	the UNIVERSAL CHURCH is called house of God

1Tim.3:15 the LOCAL CHURCH is called house of God

Believers are: - living stones 1 Peter 2:5-10,
- precious stones 1 Corinth 3:12.

GIFTS

Now the gifts given to the church. Look at Ephesians 4:11-13, 16; you have men that are given to the church. Ephesians is primarily talking to the church which is His body. These people, (evangelists, pastors and teachers) are given to the church which is His body. They are men that are given. They are gifted for the UNIVERSAL CHURCH. However they usually act within the confines of the LOCAL CHURCH, but not necessarily. An evangelist, obviously is going to act outside the confines of the LOCAL CHURCH, although he will be under its authority. But can act outside its confines in proclaiming the gospel. Pastors and teachers usually act within the sphere of the LOCAL CHURCH.

If you read the whole passage from Eph.4:12-18, the purpose there is for the building up of the body, its increase. That's the main interest of the gifts here. This harkens back to Matt.16 "I will build my church". These gifts are given to build up the church which is His body. However in so doing they should be acting to build the LOCAL CHURCH as well. They will be building both things.

An example of that; if you go out and see someone saved, you have added something to the UNIVERSAL CHURCH. There is another living stone added to the UNIVERSAL CHURCH. That's great, that's tremendous to see someone saved. But if you then see them come into the fellowship of the LOCAL CHURCH, you have not only seen them saved and saved for eternity, and going on to praise God and worship God for eternity, you have also seen them function locally within the LOCAL CHURCH. You actually get a double benefit out of that. I think that is what is in view here in Eph.4. The building up of the universal body and also the building up of the local body as well.

SECTION 3

Pictures of the local church in scripture

- i. A temple
- ii. God's husbandry
- iii. A body
- iv. others

*"Jesus Christ himself being the chief
corner stone; in Whom all the building
fitly framed together groweth unto an
holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye
also are builded together for an
habitation of God through the Spirit."
Ephesians 2:20-22*

PICTURES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

by Robert Wilson, April 9, 1996

A study of the pictures of the local church in scripture reveals that there are many lessons to be learned.

As you meditate upon these pictures in the word of God, a question comes to mind. Why has God recorded for us these pictures of the local church ?

1. To illustrate vital truths
 - the local church is God's possession
 - that Christ is present in the midst of the local church gatherings
 - that God is a jealous God and will deal severely with those who oppose him or defile his possession
 - that Christ will deal in judgment with the church that does not follow him

2. To convey an important message
 - that the local church is precious to God
 - that we might realize that fellowship in the local assembly is serious business - it is not something to be taken lightly

Assembly membership brings with it responsibility. We are each building something into the assembly. Whether positive or negative. Our contribution has an effect upon the assembly's character, testimony, spiritual progress, the tone of the meetings.

Two important questions should come to our minds often;

WHY AM I IN THE ASSEMBLY?

HOW IS THE ASSEMBLY BENEFITING FROM MY PRESENCE ?

Each picture has come in answer to problems that arose in the early churches - attacks from outside - divisions - false teachings - defilement - departure from the truth - poor testimony - getting their eyes off the Lord.

Each picture of the local church presents a whole object, a

completed structure (it is complete in itself) with the individual contributing to the whole.

We can see in the scriptures the following pictures of the local church:

Acts 20:28-30	Flock
1Corin.3:4-9a	Husbandry (vineyard, garden, field)
1Corin.3:9b-15	Building
1Corin.3:16, 17	Temple
1Corin.12:12-27	Body
2Corin.2:17-3:3	Epistle
2Corin.11:2-3	Chaste Virgin
1Timothy 3:14-15	House of God
Revelation 1:12-20	Candlestick (lampstand)

In each of the pictures of the local church we have presented for us the ideas of

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Have I been spending time reading the word of God, and meditating on what I have read?

FRUITFULNESS

What does God get out of my life?

DEVOTION

Is my relationship with God greater now than when I first believed?

- * In the building, temple and house we see that God has a plan, a blue print for the assembly's development.
- * In the flock, body and the bride (virgin) we see that God has a love for the assembly.
- * In the garden, epistle and the lampstand we see that God takes pleasure (is glorified) in the assembly

What God sought in the garden of Eden, he now seeks from the local assembly - fellowship and communion.

Viewing the assembly from these different pictures is to see the assembly from different viewpoints.

FLOCK	- eyes of the assembly (on guard)
GARDEN	- voice of the assembly (perfume of fruit)
BUILDING	- hands of the assembly
TEMPLE	- heart of the assembly
BODY	- walk of the assembly
VIRGIN	- mind of the assembly
HOUSE	- wisdom of the assembly
EPISTLE	- reputation of the assembly
LAMPSTAND	- the character of the assembly

In the seven churches of revelation I see a corresponding relationship to the pictures of the local assembly. Each one was a lampstand for Christ. Each of the churches show us the fulfillment of the dangers that threatened the pictures of the local assembly.

EPHESUS	CHASTE VIRGIN	- left first love
SMYRNA	FLOCK	- attacked by Satan (grievous wolves)
PERGAMOS	BUILDING	- adding that which is false
THYATIRA	TEMPLE	- defiled by idolatry
SARDIS	EPISTLE	- a hollow reputation
PHILADELPHIA	GARDEN	- a little strength
LAODICIA	HOUSE	- a careless attitude towards the things of God

The pictures of the local church are miniatures (illustrations) of the universal (dispensational) church.

UNIVERSAL CHURCH

the bride of Christ
Eph 5:25-32
the body of Christ
Eph. 1:22,23
the temple of God
Eph 2:21,22
the house of God
1 Peter 4:17
the building
Eph 2:21
one fold
John 10:16
light in the Lord
Eph 5:8

LOCAL CHURCH

a chaste virgin
2 Corinth. 11:2-3
body of Christ
1 Corinth. 12:12-27
temple of God
1 Corinth. 3:16, 17
house of God
1 Timothy 3:14, 15
God's building
1 Corinth. 3:9b-15
the flock
Acts 20:28-30
a lampstand
Revelation 1:12-20

like a watered garden	a garden
Isa. 58:11	1 Corinth. 3:4-9a
a book	an epistle
Eph. 3:10	2 Corinth. 2:17- 3:3

There are nine pictures presented to us in the word of God

1. THE FLOCK Acts 20:22 - 32

Flock refers to the whole company of believers at Ephesus

Luke 12:32 "flock" refers to the company of the apostles

1 Peter 5:2 "flock" refers to a company of believers gathered together in one locality

ADDRESSED TO: Overseers

overseers - are appointed by the Holy Spirit

- need to be attentive to own needs

- need to be attentive to the needs of the flock

- feed the flock - see that they get what they need

Luke 15:3 - 7 - the shepherd seeking the lost sheep left the flock in the care of an overseer

PURPOSE: Guarding and feeding

key - guarding and protecting Psalm 23:4 "thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" looking at the needs of the assembly in the face of danger

CHARACTERISTIC of the overseer in view of the flock:

Watchfulness

Hebrews 13:17 "for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account"

PRINCIPLE: Preservation

flock suggests: need and care - unity

- attentiveness to the shepherd's voice John 10:27

- wealth - in the flock was the whole of the shepherds possessions Matt.18:11-13, Luke 15:4-6

- waywardness

DANGERS: Assembly going astray willfully

Assembly lead into wrong paths

grievous wolves - attacked from without

self-motivated men - perverted (attacked) by those within

2. GOD'S HUSBANDRY - GARDEN 1Corinthians 3:1 - 9a

Numbers 24:6 Israel is viewed as a garden

Song of Solomon 4:12 - 15 a picture of God's people as a garden enclosed

John 18:1 Gethsemane is called a garden and contained a winepress. Jesus entered into the garden of Gethsemane, from which there arose to God that prayer of complete surrender.

John 19:41 the tomb of the Lord was in a garden - that place of victory - Christ arose victorious over the grave

Rev.22:1, 2 the habitation of God is viewed as a garden

ADDRESSED TO: the whole assembly

Mark 12:1 husbandman is linked with the keeper of a vineyard

PURPOSE: working together in the gospel
- planting and cultivating

Gen.2:15 "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."

The care of God's things was a principle established at the beginning of the world.

CHARACTERISTIC: of the assembly viewed as a garden

Fruitfulness John 15

What God sought in the garden of Eden he seeks in the local assembly - fellowship and communion

Gen.3:8 "the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden"

Rev.1:13 "in the midst ... the Son of Man"

Matt.18:20 "there am I in the midst"

Pictured in a garden is; - growth and variety in the types of plants and the fruit that is produced

PRINCIPLE: Association

1Corin.1:1 "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ"

Romans 1:1 "Paul a servant (bond-servant) of Jesus Christ"

Am I available for God to use in service?

What do I do for God as a member of this assembly?

We are fellow-labourers in the assembly

We are to be united together in the proclamation of the gospel

DANGERS: Exalting self/special people

- 3John presents to us the danger that can result from one being given the place of preeminence.

Gen.13:10 Lot supposed that the conditions of the world were favourable for the development of a garden for the Lord.

the vineyard - Luke 13:6-7 seeking fruit in the vineyard

- John 15 pruning the branches of the vineyard

- S of S 4:12-15 fruitfulness in the garden
- Gal. 5:22-23 fruit of the Spirit

3. GOD'S BUILDING 1Corinthians 3:9b - 15

ADDRESSED TO: teachers of God's word

PURPOSE: Fostering spiritual growth in the assembly

CHARACTERISTIC emphasized: Carefulness

being careful about what we teach by word, by actions,
by example

Requires responsibility and seriousness.

PRINCIPLE: Edification

seeing that the assembly is benefiting from the
teachings being presented

There is a need for assessment - quality not quantity.

DANGERS: Adding that which is false

There is no question as to whether or not we are building - if
we are a part of the local assembly, we are building into the
assembly.

We are building one of two things;

- a. gold, silver, precious stones
- b. wood, hay, stubble

We must be careful - how we build - what we build

A building has in view a time of evaluation (the
judgment seat of Christ).

pattern - according to the foundation - Christ

wisdom - differentiate between spiritual and worldly

seriousness - what - how - why you build

- motive - action - results

responsible - to God - to the assembly

4. GOD'S TEMPLE 1Corinthians 3:16 - 17

ADDRESSED TO: individual believers in the local
assembly

PURPOSE: Maintaining spiritual and moral purity

CHARACTERISTIC emphasized:

Carefulness to walk circumspectly

PRINCIPLE: Sanctification

DANGERS: defiling the local assembly

bring reproach upon the assembly

- temple - 1Corin.3:17 it is to be holy

- 2Corin.6:16 separated from the religions of the world

5. BODY OF CHRIST 1Corinthians 12:27

ADDRESSED TO: individual believers in the local assembly

PURPOSE: Working together

CHARACTERISTIC emphasized: Usefulness

How is the assembly benefiting from my contribution?

PRINCIPLE: Unification

What am I doing to preserve the unity of the assembly?

DANGERS: Showing an independent spirit

1Corin.12:21 - seeking to be independent is harmful to the body

1Corin.12:26 - all members of the body suffer and rejoice together

Eph.4:16 "the effectual working ... of every part maketh increase of the body" - it is when the whole body is working together that growth occurs

6. EPISTLE OF CHRIST 2Corinthians 2:17 - 3:3

ADDRESSED TO: individual believers in the local assembly

PURPOSE: Living ambassadors for Christ

CHARACTERISTIC emphasized: Clearness & Legibility

presenting a clear message of Christianity to the world around us

PRINCIPLE: Examination

1 Corinth. 11:28, 31 "But let a man examine himself, ... for if we judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

DANGERS: a corrupted message being presented to the world 2 Corinth. 2:17

2Corin 3:2 - an epistle is read of all men

The effect of a corrupted message 2Sam 12:14 - gives cause for the ungodly to speak against God

Rom 2:23-24 - by our conduct do we give the world cause to blaspheme God

7. CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST 2Corinthians 11:2

ADDRESSED TO: the whole assembly

PURPOSE: Guarding the mind of the believer

- maintaining the simplicity found in Christ

CHARACTERISTIC emphasized

Devotedness to Christ

Faithfulness to Christ

PRINCIPLE: Consecration

DANGERS: - turning away from the things of Christ
- allowing Satan to beguile us
- showing an indifference to the things of Christ
Gen.3 beguiled means questioning God's Word - enticed
to doubt God's word and goodness
2Corin.11:3 beguiled means adding to the Word of God
- enticed to doubt the wisdom of God
Rev.2:4 beguiled means turned aside from first love
- enticed to doubt God's ability to satisfy

8. HOUSE OF GOD 1Timothy 3:14

ADDRESSED TO: individual believers in the local assembly

PURPOSE: Encourage reverence for the things of God

CHARACTERISTIC emphasized:

Maintaining orderliness in our conduct

PRINCIPLE: Dedication

DANGERS: showing a careless attitude to the things of the
local assembly

1Peter 4:17 - judgment must begin at the house of God

1Tim.2:8 - 3:13 - orderliness is required of those who are a
part of the house of God

9. LAMPSTAND FOR CHRIST Revelation 1:12 - 20

ADDRESSED TO: the whole assembly

PURPOSE: show that the assembly was accountable for
their actions

CHARACTERISTIC emphasized:

Witness and Conduct in the world

PRINCIPLE: Restoration

DANGERS: departure from the truth of God's word

Each local assembly belongs to God (1Corin.1:1 "church of
God"), and has its establishment in the will of God
Psalm 132:17 "I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed"
It doesn't require much imagination to see that the speaker
is God, and the anointed is the Lord Jesus Christ

Candlestick - Luke 8:16 - light is put on high to draw men in
Luke 11:33 - light is not hidden but is shared with all
who come in

Three ways are used in the epistles to refer to the local church
1Corin 1:1 "church of God"

1Thess 1:1 "church ... which is in God the Father

1Thess 1:1 "church ... which is ... in the Lord Jesus Christ

Pictures of the Church

by Sydney Maxwell
Bible Reading Notes

A. THE FLOCK Acts 20:22 - 32

The responsibility associated with this picture is WATCHFULNESS. Watchfulness is necessary in tending, feeding, guarding the sheep, going after them when they go astray - all that is involved in shepherding the flock.

Linked with the church in this character - whether in connection with the church universal (as in John 10), or the church in its local aspect (as in Acts 20), is always the idea of SECURITY.

B. GOD'S TILLED FIELD 1 Corinth. 3:9

These Corinthians were making much of men; and although there was as yet no open division, the spirit of "party-ism" was evident. So the apostle likens the assembly to a tilled field, where the man who sows and the man who reaps are alike unimportant, because God is the One who gives the increase. And the responsibility associated with this picture is FRUITFULNESS.

This idea - as well as that of the FLOCK - is found in the Old Testament, too. In Psalm 80, Israel is looked upon as a vineyard, and what God looked for was FRUITFULNESS. In the book of Ruth, after Ruth was brought into Boaz's favour (ch.1), she desired to be associated with his field (ch.2). And if a child of God is submissive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, he will be led to God's "tilled field".

So linked with the church in this character is the idea of PRODUCTIVITY.

The fruitfulness here is not fruit in the gospel; it is the fruit of the Spirit, the spiritual features of Christ, seen in our lives. That is the fruitfulness connected with the picture of the field.

The word FIELD is a singular word indicating a plurality of people. It all depends on my individual conduct whether I add to the spiritual character of the assembly. Every individual believer is responsible to cultivate spiritual fruit, so that the assembly may be marked by PRODUCTIVITY in the things of God.

see John 15 fruitfulness of the individual

C. A BUILDING 1 Corinth. 3:9

The responsibility associated with this picture is CAREFULNESS - "let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon." The apostle isn't speaking of reception of persons to the assembly. He is speaking about those who teach, thereby edifying (building up and strengthening) a building already in existence.

Linked with the church in this character is the idea of MINISTRY, or EDIFICATION.

D. A TEMPLE 1 Corinth. 3:16

In 1 Corinth. 6, "temple" refers to the believer's body. In Eph. 2:21, "temple" refers to the church comprised of all saints. In 1 Corinth. 3:16, "temple" refers to the church of God at Corinth. In every case, the responsibility associated with the picture is HOLINESS.

It is easy to see why. This word "temple" is the word "naos", which means "inner shrine", the "holiest of all". The assembly of God is God's dwelling place; and I believe it would make a vast difference to our behaviour in the assembly if we recognized this truth and took heed to the warning given here that "if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy."

Linked with the church in the character of a temple is the idea of SANCTIFICATION.

E. A BODY 1 Corinth. 12:27

In verses 12 and 13 of this chapter, "THE body" (with the article) refers to the body of Christ, which embraces all believers. Verse 27 says, "Ye are body of Christ", without the article, speaking of the church at Corinth. Wherever the article is present, it identifies. Wherever the article is absent, it qualifies. So the church at Corinth has the CHARACTER of the body of Christ. It is a MINIATURE of the whole, but not a PART of it. The body is made up of individuals - not assemblies. Besides that, there is no guarantee that every individual in an assembly is in "the body" of Eph. 1:23, which in scripture, is the ideal.

Neither is the assembly a part of an association of churches. It is a complete entity, autonomous, not a part of something else. Our responsibility in connection with this picture is USEFULNESS.

If you read this whole chapter you will see that linked with the church in this character are the two ideas of UNITY and DIVERSITY. Unity is not uniformity. It is associated with diversity, and mutual dependence, the one member upon the other.

F. AN EPISTLE 2 Corinth. 3:2

The Corinthians were demanding a letter of commendation from Paul. Such a letter should be forthcoming in the case of a person who is unknown; but Paul was not unknown to the Corinthians. It was through his labours that God had raised up the assembly at Corinth; and Paul says to them, "Ye are our letter of commendation." A man's commendation is the work that he does, and the fruit that accrues from it. As an epistle, the responsibility of the assembly is CLEARNESS and LEGIBILITY. Is this true of us? Is our testimony clear? Are our comings together legible? Do we practice things that are really a contradiction of what we, as a letter, ought to be teaching?

Linked with the church in this character is the idea of SCRUTINY. Those who scrutinize us should be able to see clearly that God is in us, of a truth. (1 Corinth. 14:26)

G. A CHASTE VIRGIN 2 Corinth. 11:2

The responsibility connected with this picture is DEVOTEDNESS and FAITHFULNESS. It isn't the individual Paul means here, although the individual is looked at as a virgin in Rev. 14. This is the collective company, the church at Corinth, that Paul desires to present as a "chaste virgin to Christ". Paul wants them to be pure in their devotion to Christ, that at the judgment seat of Christ he may enter into the good of his work and not lose his full reward - as in 2 John 8. If the assembly is to be a virgin, there must be no illicit intercourse with the world, no spiritual fornication.

In other words, the assembly in this character must be marked by FIDELITY. All our affection must be maintained for the Lord Jesus.

H. A HOUSE 1 Timothy 3:15

This is different from the building and the temple. The HOUSE has ORDERLINESS and CONDUCT in mind. We are told here how we ought to behave ourselves in the house of God.

Linked with the church in this character is the thought of SOBRIETY.

I. A LAMPSTAND Rev. 1:20

The responsibility of the assembly as a lampstand is connected with WITNESS and TESTIMONY. These lampstands were golden. That means they were divine in origin, even though most of them were severely criticized by the Lord. The church at Corinth had that character. It was GOD'S CHURCH - even though Paul found it necessary to point out the wrongness of their conduct.

Linked with the church in this character is the idea of RECOVERY and RESTORATION. The Corinthian assembly was divine in origin, and because they bowed to the Word of God and put their house in order, the door was open for full recovery and fellowship. (see 2 Corinth. 7)

SECTION 4

Worship and prayer

- i. Is it a gift?
- ii. How often should the Lord hear from me?
- iii. Examples

*"By him (Christ) therefore let us offer
the sacrifice of praise to God
continually, that is, the fruit of our lips
giving thanks to his name."*

Hebrews 13:15

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

by C.H. Parker, May 1996

What is our estimate of God's worth?

Worship is an attitude of our hearts toward God.

John 4:23 " the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Worship is a voluntary act.

Lev.2 - the offering prepared at home then brought to the priest - speaks of our preparation for the Remembrance Meeting.

Heb.13:15 - worship is the sacrifice of today

How should we worship?

Luke 22:19 - in remembrance of Christ

Gen. 45:13 - tell my father of all my glory - God is pleased to hear of the glories of his Son, Jesus Christ

- we can thank God for our salvation

Luke 24:39 "handle me and see" - the essence of worship

Gen.45:13 "tell my Father of all my glory" - the basis of worship

Types of worship

1. individual worship
2. assembly worship

Individually, we can worship God at any time telling Him of the sweet thoughts we have of Him.

Collectively, we gather at appointed times as an assembly to worship.

When we gather to worship, we are not trying to outdo or be better than another, we are bringing the meditations of our hearts to the Lord.

Our worship can be audible or inaudible.

Requirements of worship

1 Corin. 11:27-28 - no unconfessed sin - no barrier between us and God

Gen.22:5 - first mention of worship - worship reveals the faith and character of the worshipper

John 3:16 - reminds us of God's love

Examples of worshippers

Gen.22:5 - Abraham

Matt. 2:2 - wise men

Heb.11:21 - Jacob - the last recorded act is worship

Matt.6 the Lord's Prayer

- begins with worship
- moves on to God's will
- then mentions needs
- there is nothing too small or too big for God

examples of prayer requests

Nehemiah prayed for Jerusalem

Daniel prayed for guidance

Elijah prayed for famine

Paul prayed to have the thorn in the flesh removed

Is worship a gift?

No it is not.

Everyone who is truly saved worships at one time or another.

There are different levels of intelligence, and different abilities to express worship.

We can ask to be taught to pray - "Lord teach us to pray"

Faith is an integral part of prayer.

How often should the Lord hear from me in worship?

John 4:23,24 - God will never tire of hearing your worship

We do not pray often enough.

We can never pray too much.

Why should we pray?

- prayer is laying hold of God
- it shows our dependence upon God
- we are exhorted to pray
 - Heb.4:16 "come boldly"
 - 1Thess.5:14 "pray without ceasing"
 - 1Tim.2:8 "pray everywhere"
- we show our concern for others in prayer

Preparation for Worship

Gen.22:5 "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

Matt.2:11 worship is unto Him

Phil.3:3 we worship God in the Spirit

Gen.18:1-8 "And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."
This is an illustration of worship.

Abraham's worship

- in haste - he was not going to let anything prevent him from worshipping
- the satisfaction of God was of first importance to him
- he worshipped under the tree - all things separating from God were put away
- he brought milk, butter and the calf - everything was presented to God

Three important aspects of worship

Responsibility - me grasping something in relation to the Father

Preparation - me grasping something in relation to the Son

Presentation - me grasping something in relation to the Spirit

Responsibility of worship

- the whole assembly is responsible for worship
- one brother praying is the mouth piece of the assembly
- the brother worshipping (leading the assembly) must be conscious of the leading of the Spirit
- worship is not a gift, but is the exercise of a grateful heart
- the heart of worship is the offering up of the work and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus
- worship is giving back to God what he has given you
- in corporate worship it is explicit and imperative that worship be given to the Father through the Son
- When do I worship in the meeting?
 - worship begins at the beginning of the meeting
 - a brother leads in worship under the direction of the Holy Spirit

- when preparation is made beforehand, there will be no problems in rising in worship
- there is a responsibility on the part of believers to worship (John 4:23)
- all believers as priests are to worship

Preparation for worship

- the Lord Jesus is central in our preparation
- the life and death of Christ should be kept in mind
- ingredients of worship
 - i. milk ~ reading the word of God
 - ii. butter ~ taking the word to study and meditate on the word of God
 - ~ taking the cream of God's word and working it into your heart and mind
 - iii. calf ~ a revelation of Christ from the word of God
- all true worship is guided by the Holy Spirit
- the wise men came many miles with their gifts that they might worship

Presentation of worship

Psalm 45:1 worship is a heart full of Christ and bubbling over with praise

In worship, the burnt offering is in view. Worship is linked with the burnt offering because it is wholly for God. In Lev.1 the Spirit is drawing our attention to different animals and to the different aspect of Christ in view.

bullock - the fields

sheep - the hills

goat - the mountains

dove - the heavens

- the smaller the animal the higher up the animal moves

Worship is showing affection towards God. Worship is a heart exercised in affection.

Worship requires individual preparation and will cost us something.

All should come prepared to worship.

None should come determined to worship.

None should come determined not to worship.

FUNDAMENTALS OF WORSHIP

at the Remembrance Meeting

R. Wilson

1. Worship is addressed to the FATHER.
John 4:23 "... the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ..."

2. Worship has as its theme ~ CHRIST

Luke 22:19 "... this do in remembrance of me ..."
Gen.45:13 "... tell my father of all my glory ..."

3. What are some of the topics we do well to mention at a Remembrance Meeting?
 - a. the promises of Christ's birth
 - b. the birth of Christ
 - c. the life of Christ upon earth
 - d. the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ
 - e. prophetic teachings concerning Christ found in the Old Testament

4. The best thing to tell the Father is what you have been enjoying and meditating upon of the beauties and perfections of the Lord Jesus Christ during the week.

2 Peter 1:16 "... we were eyewitnesses of His majesty ..."
1 John 1:1 "... we have heard ...
we have seen ...
we have looked upon
... have handled ..."

These men spoke of the one they were familiar with. They told of one whose company they had enjoyed.

5. During the worship meeting:

The Holy Spirit may bring out one theme in relation to Christ, but not always. As the Spirit leads in the meeting there will be a flow in the meeting as the melodies of Christ are presented.

Example 1: Abraham worships God

Gen.18, Abraham brought a calf, milk and butter

- i. milk ~ reading the word of God
- ii. butter ~ taking the word to study and meditate on the word of God
~ taking the cream of God's word and working it into your heart and mind
- iii. calf ~ a revelation of Christ from the word of God

Example 2: gifts presented to the Lord

Matt.2, the wise men brought gold, frankincense and myrrh
gold - the deity of Christ
frankincense - the perfect humanity of Christ
myrrh - the sacrifice of Christ

Luke 7, the woman brought an alabaster box of ointment
ointment - the moral glories of Christ

His speech - Luke 4:22 "gracious words"

His understanding Luke 4:32 "astonished at his doctrine"

His compassion Matt.9:36

His concern for his own John 14:1

John 12, Mary brought a pound of spikenard
the spikenard - the sacrificial death of Christ

Song of Solomon 5:16 "yea, he is altogether lovely"

SECTION 5

Reception into the local church

- i. Privileges
- ii. Responsibilities

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Acts 2:41, 42

RECEPTION into the LOCAL CHURCH

by Sylvan Stephenson, April 1996

Acts 2:41-47 First mention of a local assembly started here
Acts 9:26-29 Reception to a local assembly
Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 24-27 Visiting other assemblies
Romans 16:1-2 Letter of commendation
1Corin.16:10-11 Commending workers

Initial reception:

Acts 2:41-47

Requirement for reception into the assembly

1. must be saved
2. must be baptized
3. must be taught the word of God (the apostles doctrine)
4. must be living a clean, holy life

The elders may talk to you concerning reception, but a person is received by the whole assembly, not by the elders.

Similarly, you must receive the whole assembly. A WHOLE HEARTED ACCEPTANCE OF EVERYONE.

Receiving the assembly means to receive all the teachings of the assembly and the assembly has a responsibility to make known the teachings of the assembly.

Reception must be mutual or it fails to be fellowship.

You are not received to the breaking of bread. You are received into the fellowship of the assembly. This is a partnership.

When we come into the assembly, we come under the assembly's authority.

Visitors:

Romans 16:1, 2

Visitors should have a letter of commendation if they are not well known.

New residents:

Acts 18:2, 18, 19, 24-26; Romans 16:2
When you move to a new area you should bring a letter of introduction and commendation.
The assembly should help them with their needs Rom.16:2;
Acts 18, 24-26

Full time workers or teachers:

Acts 9:26-29, Acts 18:27 1Corin.4:17;
1Corin.16:10,11; 2Corin.8:16-24
They were very careful of what comes into the assembly.
This should be true today.
Workers and teachers should be well known or take along a letter of commendation.
A preacher going to an area where he is not known should have a letter. Acts 18:27, 1Corin.16:10-11
This will establish the character of the man. 2Corin.8:16-19
If he is well known a letter is not needed. 2Corin.3:1-2

Privileges and responsibilities of being in the assembly:

Acts 2:42,44,47; John 4:23,24;
1Corin.11:24-26; Rom.12:15

a. Privileges

Reception to an assembly brings privileges. They are privileges and not rights.

1. Acts 2:42 being in the fellowship, breaking of bread, praying
2. Acts 2:44 to gather with the saints
3. Matt.18:20 to gather around the person of Christ
- 4 Acts 2:47 to praise the Lord
5. John 4: to worship in spirit and truth
6. 1Corin.11 to remember Christ in His death
7. to share the joys of the saints
8. to act as a priest in offering praise continually

b. **Responsibilities**

Acts 2:42,45; 1Corin.16:2; Heb.10:25;
1Corin.11:28; Col.3:16; 1Peter 5:2

Reception to an assembly also brings responsibilities. These responsibilities are to God and to the other members of the assembly.

1. Acts 2:42 to continue steadfastly in the teachings we have received for the Word of God
2. to recognize the needs of others and to help
3. 1Corin.16:2 to lay aside our money for the Lord
4. Heb.10:25 to attend the meetings of the assembly
5. 1Corin.11 to examine ourselves in view of the Remembrance Meeting - there should be no unconfessed sin when we come together
6. Col.3 to admonish one another
7. to feed the flock

Letters of commendation Rom.16:1, 2

Letters are to commend a believer visiting another assembly.
they show;
kinship "our sister"
service "servant"
helper of others "succourer"

When you ask for a letter it only advises the recipient that the person is in good standing in his home assembly.

The letter of commendation does not mean the West End is necessarily in fellowship with everything that goes on in the assembly you are visiting.

Acts 18 Apollos took a letter with him
1Corin.16 Paul sent a letter commending Timothy
2Corin.8 Paul sends commendations for Titus

FELLOWSHIP

R. Wilson

Grounds of fellowship

Psalm 50:5 "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

A COVENANT WITH GOD

The sanctification of the fellowship

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

A MEETING WITH CHRIST

The principles of fellowship Acts 2:41-42

SALVATION	"Then they that gladly received his word"
BAPTISM	"were baptized"
RECEPTION	"and the same day there were added"
TESTIMONY	"unto them about three thousand souls."
FAITHFULNESS	"And they continued steadfastly"
INSTRUCTION	"in the apostles doctrine"
COMMUNION	"and fellowship,"
WORSHIP	"and in breaking of bread,
PRAYER	"and in prayer."

The responsibility of fellowship

Luke 5:10	PARTNERS - in a work - a responsibility for the unity of the assembly
1 Corin. 10:16	FRIENDSHIP - harmony in a family - a responsibility to maintain channels of communion with each other
2 Corin. 1:7	PARTAKERS - sharing in burdens - a responsibility to share in the needs and problems of the assembly
Heb. 10:33	COMPANIONS - standing together in difficulties - a responsibility to share in the efforts of the assembly

Letters of commendation

1. Paul's commendation of workers in the gospel.

Paul used letters of commendation for those traveling to another assembly and took the opportunity to include messages of instruction and encouragement.

Timothy's commendation Phil. 2:19 -23

- a love for the believers
- a love for the Lord Jesus
- a considerate companion
- a minister of the gospel
- a messenger of the apostle

Epaphroditus' commendation Phil. 2:25 -30; 4:18

- my brother fellowship, affection
 companion help, company, comfort
 fellow soldier faithfulness
- your messenger representative
 minister servant
- his illness nigh unto death
 distress over the report you heard
 recovery mercy of God
- his commendation joyful
 reputation honour him

Phebe's commendation Rom. 16:1 -2

- a succourer of many
- a help to me

Tychicus' commendation Eph. 6:21 -22, Col. 4:7 -8

- a beloved brother
- a faithful minister
- a messenger of the apostle
- a comforter of hearts
- a fellow servant of the Lord

Onesimus' commendation Col. 4:9

- a faithful brother
- a beloved brother

2. In addition Paul commends different ones as he sends them greetings at the close of his epistles. Rom. 16:5 -16
1 Corin. 16:15 -21 Col. 4:14 -18
2 Tim. 4:11, 19, Philemon

3. Why a letter of commendation?
 1. to introduce you to the assembly
 2. lets the overseers of your assembly know where you are going (why you aren't out at the meeting)
 3. tells the overseers of the assembly you are visiting, who are the responsible men in your own assembly
 4. mark of courtesy to the assembly you are visiting

4. When deciding if you should bring a letter with you
 1. Remember the letter is not addressed to you.
(The receiving assembly should decide if you need the letter)
 2. How long has it been since you last visited that assembly.
 3. Do you regularly attend the meetings in your own assembly, if not then you had better take a letter

SECTION 6

Gifts in the church

- i. Recognition by
 - self
 - others
- ii. Use of gifts
- iii. Abuse of gifts
- iv. Role of sisters in local church

*"And he (Christ) gave some apostles;
and some, prophets; and some,
evangelists; and some, pastors and
teachers; for the perfecting of the
saints, for the work of ministry, for
the edifying of the body of Christ."
Ephesians 4:11, 12*

GIFTS (CHARISMA)

by Duncan Dunsire , May 1996 rev Feb 2006

1. MEANING

Grace gifts: given by God
Grace: not by natural endowment
Gift: not by human appointment
Spiritual things: for a spiritual work or Spirituals

There are many attributes we possess naturally that are unique to some. For example some folks have the ability to play musical instruments, some have great talent in song, some have great organizational skills, some are expert at watch repairs, some at painting pictures, some at accounting, gardening etc. We have to distinguish the use of spiritual gifts and natural gifts in the service of God. Natural gifts may be inherent or developed through training. They are found in unsaved as well as saved. Spiritual gifts are unique to believers and are received as a gift from God through the Spirit.

2. PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS

a. LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

1Corin.12:3, 7 "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and (that) no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit . . . But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

b. TO PROFIT WITHAL: (Mutual profit)

1Corin. 12:7 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

Note: in ref. to 1Corin.12:3 "speaking by the Spirit" see Psalm 110; Matt.22:43; David in Spirit.

c. For the PERFECTING of the saints, for the WORK of the ministry, for the EDIFYING of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: Eph. 4:12, 13

d. THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED

1Peter 4:10, 11 "As every man hath received the gift, (even so) minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, (let him speak) as the oracles of God; if any man minister, (let him do it) as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen"

e. THAT THE CHURCH MAY BE EDIFIED

1Corin. 14:4 "he that prophesieth edifieth the church"

1Corin. 14:3 "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to

EDIFICATION, and EXHORTATION and COMFORT"

Eph 4. 11, 12, 13 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"

Gifts were given by Christ to the universal church, but function in the local testimony. There is a threefold purpose for gifts in these verses in Ephesians.

For the perfecting (strengthening) of believers.

To bring the church to maturity.

For the work of the ministry.

For the proclamation of the gospel and in maintaining testimony for Christ

For the edification (confirming and building up) of believers

3. PROVISION OF THE GIFTS

a. DISTRIBUTION BY THE SPIRIT

1Corin. 12:4 "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." (Type of gift)

b. MINISTRATION BY THE LORD

1Corin. 12:5 "And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." (Type of service)

c. POWER FROM GOD

1Corin. 12:6 "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God" (Power for results)

d. PERSONS

1Corin. 12:7 "given to every man"
 1Corin. 12:11 "dividing to every man severally as He will"
 Romans 12:3 "as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith"
 Romans 12:6 "having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us"
 Ephesians 4:6 "unto every one of us is given grace"
 1Peter 4:10 "as every man hath received the gift"

e. GIFTS ARE DISTRIBUTED BY:

GOD: Rom.12:3 "as God hath distributed to every man"
 CHRIST: Eph.4:7 "unto every one is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ"
 SPIRIT: 1Corin.12:7 "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal"

f. DIFFERENT GIFTS (20 listed)

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. apostles* | 8. tongues # | 14. ministry |
| 2. prophets* | 9. wisdom # | 15. exhortation |
| 3. teachers | 10. <u>knowledge</u> # | 16. giving |
| 4. miracles # | 11. faith # | 17. ruling |
| 5. healings # | 12. discerning spirits* | 18. mercy |
| 6. helps | 13. interpretation of | 19. evangelists |
| 7. governments | tongues | 20. teaching
pastors |

Notes: * Foundational gifts ref. Eph.2 and 1Cor.13
 # Sign gifts ref. 1Cor.14

1Cor 12:28, 29, 30 "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"

1Corin.12:8
 wisdom #
knowledge
 faith #
 healing #
 miracles #

1Corin.12:28
 apostles *
 prophets *
 teachers
 miracles #
 healings #

1Corin. 12:29
 apostles *
 prophets *
 teachers
 miracles #
 healings #

prophecy *	helps	tongues #
<u>discerning spirits</u> *	governments	interpretation #
tongues #	tongues #	
interpretation of tongues #		
Romans 12	Ephesians 4	1Peter 4
prophecy *	apostles *	Speak prophets*
ministry	prophets *	teachers
teaching	evangelists	exhorters
exhortation	teaching pastors	evangelists
giving		Minister giving
ruling		ruling
mercy		mercy
		helps

Note:

Divisions in 1Corin.12 by use of allos [243] and heteros (see underlined word) heteros [2087] - different kind.

1Cor.12:8-10 For <1063> to one <3739> <3303> is given <1325> (5743) by <1223> the Spirit <4151> the word <3056> of wisdom <4678>; <1161> to another <243> the word <3056> of knowledge <1108> by <2596> the same <846> Spirit <4151>; <1161> To another <2087> faith <4102> by <1722> the same <846> Spirit <4151>; <1161> to another <243> the gifts <5486> of healing <2386> by <1722> the same <846> Spirit <4151>; <1161> To another <243> the working <1755> of miracles <1411>; <1161> to another <243> prophecy <4394>; <1161> to another <243> discerning <1253> of spirits <4151>; <1161> to another <2087> *divers* kinds <1085> of tongues <1100>; <1161> to another <243> the interpretation <2058> of tongues <1100>:

Ministry "diakonos"

Acts 6:2-4 "**diakonos**" [1247] Servant in relation to his activity
Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve <1247> (5721) tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry <1248> of the word.

1Peter 2:16 "**doulos**" Servant in relation to his master

As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

1Pet.2.18 3610 oikethv **oiketēs** *oy-keṭ'-ace* from 3611; household servant

1Pet.2.18 Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

1Corin.4:1-2 "**huperates**" 5257 Servant in relation to his superior

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

1Corin.4.2 3623 oikonomov **oikonomos** *oy-kon-om'-os* **steward**

vs.2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

1) the manager of household or of household affairs

1a) esp. a steward, manager, superintendent (whether free-born or as was usually the case, a freed-man or a slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor has intrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age

1b) the manager of a farm or landed estate, an overseer

1c) the superintendent of the city's finances, the treasurer of a city (or of treasurers or quaestors of kings)

2) metaph. the apostles and other Christian teachers and bishops and overseers

Rom.15:16 "**leitorgos**" 3011 Servant in relation to public duties

That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Note:- Phebe in Rom.16:1 is servant of the church

ministering 2418 ierourgew **hierourgeo** *hee-er-oorg-eh'-o*

1) to minister in the manner of a priest, minister in priestly service

1a) of those who defend the sanctity of the law by undergoing a violent death

1b) of the preaching of the gospel

Healing

2Corin.12:7 Paul's thorn in the flesh

1Tim.5:23 Timothy's 'often infirmities'

Phil.3:3 Epaphroditus 'sick nigh unto death'
2Tim.4:20 Trophimus 'left at Miletum sick'

4. PATTERN AS SEEN IN THE WORK OF RULING

- a. PERSONAL EXERCISE
1Tim. 3:1 "if a man desire overseership"
- b. DIVINE APPOINTMENT
Acts 20:28 "over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers"
- c. PUBLIC RECOGNITION
1Thess.5:12 "know them that have the rule over you"
- d. DIVINE MANIFESTATION
1Peter 5:4 "ye shall receive a crown of glory"

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Moses Ex.4:11,12 "I will be thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say"

Bezaleel Ex.35:30 "the Lord hath call by name Bezaleel ... and he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship"

Aholiab Ex.35:34 "and he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aboliab"

Jeremiah Jerm.1:18 "I have made thee, a defenced city, (provision) an iron pillar, (testimony) brazen walls, (security)

NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Barnabus Acts 11:33 an exhorter
Acts 13:1 a prophet and teacher & missionary

Timothy
Phil.2:20 a shepherd (naturally care for your state)
2Tim.2:2 a teacher (commit thou to faithful men)
2Tim.4:11 evangelist (do the work of an evangelist)

5. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Glory of God	1Peter 4:11
Exercise of love	1Corin.13:2
Edification of church	1Corin.14:4
Divine appointment	1Corin.12:11
Strong inward desire	1Tim 3.1
Ability re: service	Exod 35.34
Measure of blessing	Eph 4.12 <i>For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the</i>

ministry,

for the edifying of the body of Christ:

All gifts cannot reside in one man 1Corin.12:11

Example of teacher

- a. 1Corin.12:11 exercised under guidance of Spirit of God
- b. 1Corin.14:32 self control
- c. 1Corin.14:29 others to judge
- d. 1Corin.14:30 consider others
- e. Romans 12:6 exercise with discretion
- f. Romans 12:7 exercise with diligence
- g. 1Peter 4:11 dignity and solemnity

6. PREPARATION AS RELATING TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS

NEGLECT NOT - MEDITATE - GIVE THYSELF wholly to it.

1Timothy 4:14-16 **Neglect** not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. **Meditate** upon these things; **give thyself wholly to them**; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

STIR UP the gift of God which is in you

2Timothy 1:6 **STIR UP** the gift of God which is in thee.

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

DILIGENCE

Diligent work is a major part of a gift and its function. A holy diligent cultivation of a gift is necessary for the effectiveness of a spiritual gift.

TRAINING:

In the local church; Share fullness of church life and fellowship.
 Personal communion with God by prayer and meditation and study of the word of God;
 Respond positively to opportunities in spiritual ministry to develop gift.

Responsibility in the exercise of gifts

The Word of God gives us incentives and qualifications for the proper exercise of spiritual gifts.

- * Gifts are to be exercised in love 1Corin.13:2
- * Gifts are for the benefit of church 1Corin.14:4; Eph.4:12,13
- * Gifts are to fulfill a divine appointment 1Corin.12:11
- * Gift must be exercised to be of value 2Tim.1:6
- * Gift is not to be neglected 1Tim.4:14
- * Gift is a stewardship of the grace of God 1Peter 4:10
- * Gifts are for the glory of God 1Peter 4:11
- * When you exercise a gift recognize that you are God's representative (oracle) 1Peter 4:11

Pitfalls - Dangers if the gifts are not exercised

- Eph.4:14 IMMATURITY - children
- INSTABILITY - tossed to and fro
- GULLIBILITY - carried about
- 1Corin.14 Disorder
- Confusion

THE DIFFERENT GIFTS

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. apostles* | 8. tongues # | 14. ministry |
| 2. prophets* | 9. wisdom # | 15. exhortation |
| 3. teachers | 10. <u>knowledge</u> # | 16. giving |
| 4. miracles # | 11. faith # | 17. ruling |
| 5. healings # | 12. discerning spirits* | 18. mercy |
| 6. helps | 13. interpretation of tongues | 19. evangelists |
| 7. governments | | 20. teaching |
| | | pastors |

Evangelist (2099 euaggelithv euaggelistes - *yoo-ang-ghel-is-tace'*)

- 1) a bringer of good tidings, an evangelist
- 2) the name given to the NT heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles

Acts 21:8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.

Eph.4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

2Tim.4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Preacher (2783 khruX kerux kay'-roox)

a herald or messenger vested with public authority, who conveyed the official messages of kings, magistrates, princes, military commanders, or who gave a public summons or demand, and performed various other duties. In the NT God's ambassador, and the herald or proclaimer of the divine word.

Rom.10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

1Tim.2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

2Tim.1:11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

2Peter 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

Helps (484 antilhqiv antilepsis an-til'-ape-sis)

1) a laying hold of, apprehension, perception, objection of a disputant

2) in NT, to aid, help

Acts 27:17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

1Corin.12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Mercy (1653 eleew eleeo *el-eh-eh'-o*)

AV-have mercy on 14, obtain mercy 8, show mercy 2, have compassion 1, have compassion on 1, have pity on 1, have mercy 1, have mercy upon 1, receive mercy 1; 31

1) to have mercy on

2) to help one afflicted or seeking aid

3) to help the afflicted, to bring help to the wretched

4) to experience mercy

Rom.12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Giving or giveth (3330 metadidwmi metadidomi - *met-ad-id'-o-mee*) to impart

Luke 3:11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart <3330> to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

Rom.1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart <3330> unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

Rom.12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth <3330>, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Eph.4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give <3330> to him that needeth.

1Thes.2:8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted <3330> unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

SECTION 7

Leadership in the church

- i. Elderhood
 - exercise for
 - a gift? a work?
- ii. Recognition
- iii. Responsibilities to the flock
- iv. Responsibilities of the flock

*"Take heed therefore unto yourselves,
and to all the flock, over the which the
Holy Spirit hath made you overseers,
to feed the church of God, which he
hath purchased with his own blood."*

Acts 20:28

LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

by Jack Gould, May 1996

1. PURPOSE 1Tim. 3:15
The purpose of leadership in the local church is shown in 1Tim.3:15. That there might be behaviour and order in the local church.

 2. COMPOSITION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH Phil.1:1
 - a. saints - literally, holy ones
 - b. bishops - translated overseers in Acts 20:28, 1Tim.3:2, Titus 1:5
 - c. deacons - are servants or ministers

 3. NEW TESTAMENT TERMS USED
 - a. elders - indicating their SPIRITUAL MATURITY
Acts 11:30, 1Tim.5:17, Titus 1:5
 - b. bishops or overseers SPIRITUAL WORK
Acts 20:28, Phil.1:1, 1Tim.3:1
 - c. shepherds - note their SPIRITUAL SYMPATHY
1Peter 5:2
 - d. guides - notice their SPIRITUAL WISDOM
Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24
 - e. presbytery - tells of SPIRITUAL SUPPORT
it is a body of elders - plurality

1Tim.4:14 - plurality of elders
Acts 11:30 - financial support delivered to the elders
Acts 14:23 - apostles appointed elders in each local church
Acts 15:6 - Jerusalem elders came together to discuss doctrinal issues
- PLURALITY OF ELDERS (shared leadership)
- i. Plurality of elders requires:
 - a. mutual regard one for the other 1Peter 5:1-6
 - b. submission one to another
 - c. patience with each other
 - d. genuine consideration for each other's interests
 - ii. Plurality of elders may result in a possible exposure of:
 - a. selfishness
 - b. our sinful pride
 - c. our impatience with each other
 - d. lack of understanding of each other

- iii. Benefits of a plurality of elders:
 - a. sharing the burdens of the assembly 3John 9 - 11
Exod. 18:17, 18 Jethro counsils Moses to
appoint men to guide the people
 - b. balances weakness with strengths
 - c. preserves against error
 - d. preserves from undue place given to one man

OLD TESTAMENT WARNING Ezek. 34:1 - 10

God has this to say to the shepherds of Israel

- a. they fleeced the flock for their own comfort vs.3
- b. they felt no responsibility to care for the flock vs.4
- c. they fed not the flock because of their laziness vs.8
- d. they failed to guard the flock vs.8
- e. they fed themselves on the flock vs.10

4. ELDERS RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS GOD 1Tim.3:1 - 7

a. ***THEIR PERSONAL LIFE AND ITS DEMANDS*** 1Tim.3:2, 3

- * blameless - without reproach, cannot point a finger at,
sterling character in view
- * husband of one wife - literally, a one-woman man, found
faithful to marriage bond
- * vigilant - free from intoxicants, wide awake, has
ability to discern
- * sober - soberminded, discreet, mind under the control of
Christ, power of Christ shines within
- * good behaviour - power of Christ shines without,
orderly, modest, opposite to roughness
- * given to hospitality - lover of strangers, open door to
the home where all are welcomed
- * apt to teach - only raising of gift, ability to privately
/ publicly apply scriptures to need
- * not given to wine - not given to excess of wine & effects,
brawling, loudness, arrogance
- * no striker - not one characterized by smiting, a man who
does not use physical force
- * not greedy of filthy lucre - is not committed to the gain
of money
- * patient - gentle, mild, will not insist on his rights, is
not difficult to deal with
- * not a brawler - not contentious, literally means a non-
combatant, one who avoids strife

- * not covetous - not a lover of money, not allowing business pursuits to rob him of time

b. THEIR HOME LIFE AND ITS DISCIPLINE 1Tim.3:4

- * in the home the elder will "rule" literally means to stand before, see also 1 Tim.5:17. In the assembly the elder is to "take care".
- * his house vs.5 stands in contrast to God's house vs.15, house of God.
- * verb form of "take care" used only in Luke 10 - parable of the Good Samaritan. The loving care of the Samaritan to a wounded man is the character of the work of the elder.
- * the assembly takes its character from the families in the church
 - weak, unstable, dysfunctional homes produce weak, unstable, dysfunctional churches
 - strong, stable, loving, caring homes produce the same in the local church

c. SPIRITUAL LIFE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT 1Tim.3:6

- * not a novice - not one newly planted, not a new convert, reason given . lifted up in pride
- * no age limit given, some mature quickly, experience in the things of God is the requirement

d. PUBLIC LIFE AND ITS DIGNITY 1Tim.3:7

- * the novice might fall into the condemnation of the devil, that is lifted up in pride
the elder may fall into the snare of the devil, proving that the devil is the hunter of souls
- * those without the church must be able to speak highly of the man who will lead the assembly
- * therefore he must be marked by integrity, honesty, uprightness, purity

NOTE: 1 Tim.3:2 "apt to teach"
Titus 1:9 "holding fast the faithful word"

- * suggests that Timothy being in Ephesus, was working with an established assembly, therefore development of gift and ability to handle the word
- * Titus is on the island of Crete, suggests it is a young assembly, What was Titus to look for? men who were holding fast the faithful word, what they had been taught, they held

5. THE ELDERS RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE CHURCH

Acts 20:17 - 38

- a. they shepherd Acts 20:28 take heed .. to all the flock
- b. they watch Acts 20:29-31 for I know this ...
dangers within & without
- c. they lead Acts 20:28 feed the flock of God ...
green pastures, still waters
- d. they labour Acts 20:35 supporting the weak
- e. they pray Acts 20:36 he knelt down, and prayed
with them all

6. THE LOCAL CHURCHES RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE ELDERS

- a. know them 1 Thess.5:12 know them who labour
among you
- b. esteem them 1 Thess.5:13 esteem them very highly in
love
- c. obey them Heb.13:17 obey them that have the rule
over you
- d. honour them 1 Tim.5:17 elders that rule well be
counted with double honour
- e. protect them 1 Tim.5:19 against an elder receive not
an accusation

7. ERROR OF ONE - MAN RULE

- eg. setting up a pastor/teacher who is solely responsible for
all the ministry
- a. all of the gifts do not reside in one man
(see notes on gifts)
- b. this gives undue place to one man as Diotrefes
3 John 9, 10
- c. if this one man goes astray he could lead the whole
church astray, Prov.11:14
- d. produces an unbalanced ministry. Topics a man enjoys,
he speaks often on them.

8. ERROR OF EVERY - MAN RULE

- eg. each of us having a vote on all assembly matters
- a. in the church there are novices (new believers) & mature
saints, therefore regardless of their spiritual
maturity, each has an equal vote
- b. many of the saints may not carry the confidence of the
rest of the saints
- c. some believers may have a very poor report of those
without

d. some may have a very unruly home

MEN OF RESPONSIBILITY

The translators of the KJV used seven different English words to express the different aspects of the character and the field of service of the men the Lord would have guide an assembly.

- 1. An elder** This term emphasizes the dignity of the calling.
1Peter 5:1-4 “The **elders** which are among you I exhort, ... feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight , not by constraint, but willingly”
Titus 1:5-9 “ordain **elders** in every city (assembly) as I have appointed thee ... to hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince”
 - a man who has earned the respect of God’s people
 - he has gained the trust of God’s people
 - he will seek to teach the assembly according to their need
 - he will be faithful to the word of God
 - he will exhort and encourage God’s people
- 2. An overseer** This emphasizes the scope of the position.
Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you **overseers**, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
 - a man of spiritual discernment
 - he seeks to instruct the assembly according to their needs
 - he watches over the assembly that he might protect it from error and division
- 3. A bishop** This emphasizes the responsibility of the position.
1Timothy 3:1 “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a **bishop**, he desireth a good work. that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
Titus 1:5-9 “a **bishop** must be blameless, as the steward of God ... to hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince”
 - a man who must and is prepared to exercise authority
 - he is concerned about the behaviour of believers
 - he is convinced of the uniqueness of the assemblyHebrews 13:7, 17, 27
 - in the Greek - rule - bishop

- it is interesting that in the Latin manuscripts vs.7, 17 refer to the steward (charge committed) while vs.27 refers to his authority (bishop)

4. A shepherd This emphasizes the way the calling is fulfilled.

1Peter 5:1-4 “feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the **oversight** (shepherdry) ... being examples to the flock, and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”

- a man who's heart goes out to the people of God
- his heart is shown in the example he sets
- with a tender heart he leads by example

5. A minister or steward

Titus 1:5-9 “as the **steward** of God; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

1Corinthians 4:1, 2 “let a man so account of us, as the **ministers** of Christ, and **stewards** of the mysteries of God.”

- he is conscious of the trust that God has committed to him
- a steward of the things of God
- faithfulness to the trust God has committed to him governs his decisions

6. A pastor

Ephesians 4:11 “And he (Christ) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, **pastors** and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ.”

- a man who seeks to edify the believers with his teaching
- his desire is that believers might be mature spiritually
- the character of his teaching is the edification of believers

7. A wise man

Matthew 23:34 “Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and **wise men**, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.”

- a man who is dependent upon God
- a man of understanding and appreciation for the people
- he is acquainted with the full knowledge of the will of God in wisdom and spiritual understanding (Col.1:9)
- a man who will suffer for the Lord and the people of God

SECTION 8

Serving the flock

- i. Deacons
- ii. Is it a gift?
- iii. Is it a work?
- iv. Examples in scripture of deacons in service

*"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is **a servant** of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been **a succourer** of many, and of myself also." Romans 16:1*

SERVING in the LOCAL ASSEMBLY

by Wayne Lord

Read: Acts 6:1 - 6; and 1Timothy 3:8 - 13

Philippians 1:1 "Paul and Timotheous, the servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Phillipi, with the bishops and the deacons."

THE WORK OF A DEACON

Definition

The word deacon is in fact a transliteration of the Greek word "Diakonos", which means that we have taken the word over into the English language. Diakonos has become our word for deacon.

The word is used only on three occasions and translated DEACON in the New Testament.

But the original word is used on thirty occasions.

Twenty times it is translated MINISTER.

Seven times it is translated SERVANT

Those who are spoken of as DEACONS

The word deacon is wide in its scope. Deacons are seen in the form of men, of angels, of Satan's ministers, and of secular rulers.

Men: Acts 6 Those who were said to have served tables.

The apostles "...but we give ourselves continually to prayer and to the Ministry of the Word"

And the seven men were chosen to look after the distribution to the widows. All were fulfilling their respective deaconships.

Angels: Angels are spoken of as deacons.

A ministry of protection.

Mark 1:11 He was with the wild beasts and angels ministered unto him.

Heb.1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.

Satan: 2Corin.11:14, 15

And no marvel: For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be the ministers of righteousness whose end shall be according to their works.

Transformed externally only inwardly ravening wolves.
Matt.7:15

Secular Ruler: Romans13:4

For he is the minister of God to thee for good.

Selection of Deacons:

Two Fold - There are two aspects of deacon service.

1. THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT,

There is the spiritual side to the service of a deacon and that is entirely according to God's selection.

God's selection: a. "the self same spirit dividing to every man severally as He will."
1Corin.12:11

Gifts in relation b. "...as God hath dealt to every man
to God the measure of faith." Rom.12:3

Gifts in relation c. "When He ascended on high, he led
to the ascended captivity captive, and gave gifts
Christ unto men." Eph.4:8

So this is the spiritual and sovereign choice of God.

2. THE PRACTICAL ASPECT.

There is also the practical aspect of deacon selection. But when it comes to the local administration, the choice and distribution must be recognized and approved by the assembly, lead in these matters by the elders.

- a. "look ye out from among you seven men" Acts6:3
- b. "whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send with your liberality unto Jerusalem." 1Corin.16:3
- c. "but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with

us with this grace." 2Corin.8:19

Qualifications for deacon service:

Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8, 9, 10, 12

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Honest report | Reputable (respectable) |
| 2. Full of the Holy Spirit | Spiritual |
| 3. Marked by wisdom | Practical wisdom |
| 4. Grave | Dignified behaviour
(worthy of respect) |
| 5. Not double tongued | Truthful |
| 6. Not given to wine | Self Control |
| 7. Not greedy of money | Lust of money |
| 8. Holding .. faith in a | Sound in doctrine, sound in life
pure conscience |
| 9. Proven | Capable, continuous proving |
| 10. Blameless | Without reproach |
| 11. Husband of one wife | Must be above reproach in their
married life |
| 12. Ruling homes well | Respected by their family |

The wives of deacons 1 Timothy 3:11

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 13. Grave | Dignified |
| 14. Not slanderous | Not given to gossip |
| 15. Sober | Self control |
| 16. Faithful | Trustworthy in all things |

For the deacon;

There must be consistency between preaching and practice.
Service and spirituality should go hand in hand.

Function of a Deacon

In Philippians 1:1 the address is to all the Saints - with the Bishops - and the Deacons. So at Phillipi there were God-ordained and God-recognized Deacons.

In Acts 6 a situation had developed because of a particular need. Widows were being neglected in the daily ministrations - daily deaconship

1 Timothy 3, would suggest that not all believers in any one assembly can be regarded as Deacons.
vs.10 "and let these also first be proved"

1. Nor can we regard a young believer in assembly fellowship as a deacon in the spiritual sense, for they are still developing character and developing ability.
2. There may be those that once served but now in advancing years no longer are able to serve because of poor health.
3. Those who may have lost their spiritual and moral qualifications necessary for deacon service.

Deacon service may be for extended periods of time or for a specific purpose or time for a spiritual or temporal need.

In Acts 6

- a. THE APOSTLES to spiritual matters
(continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word)
- b. THE SEVEN OF HONEST REPORT
 - daily ministrations to the widows
 - serve tables
- c. FOR A SPECIFIC TIME
 - in Acts 8, Philip left Jerusalem and went down to Samaria

DEACONS

Acts 6:1-6; 1Timothy 3:8-13

QUALIFICATIONS of a deacon.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Honest report | Acts 6:3 |
| 2. Full of the Holy Spirit | Acts 6:3 |
| 3. Marked by wisdom | Acts 6:3 |
| 4. Grave (serious) | 1Tim.3:8 |
| 5. Not double-tongued
(truthful) | 1Tim.3:8 |
| 6. Not given to wine
(self-controlled) | 1Tim.3:8 |
| 7. Not greed of money | 1Tim.3:8 |
| 8. Holding ... faith in a
pure conscience | 1Tim.3:9 |
| 9. Proven (capable) | 1Tim.3:10 |
| 10. Blameless
(without reproach) | 1Tim.3:10 |
| 11. Not slanderous
(not given to gossip) | 1Tim.3:11 |
| 12. Sober (showing moderation) | 1Tim.3:11 |
| 13. Faithful (trustworthy) | 1Tim.3:11 |
| 14. Husband of one wife | 1Tim.3:12 |
| 15. Ruling the home well
(respected by family) | 1Tim.3:12 |

SERVICE The service of a deacon is a stewardship in the local assembly.

1. Chosen to minister to the daily needs of the assembly.
Acts 6
2. A practical ministry in the local assembly.
3. Approved by the assembly.
4. Appointed by the overseers.
5. For a specific time period. (Acts 8:5, Philip has left Jerusalem and gone down to Samaria.)

Examples:

1. Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas Acts 6:5
2. Phebe ... a servant of the church. Romans 16:1
3. Epaphroditus ... your messenger Philippians 2:25
4. Tychicus ... a faithful minister Colossians 4:7

SECTION 9

Discipline in the local church

- i. Need for
- ii. Reasons for
- iii. Different kinds of discipline

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of the God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1Timothy 3:14, 15

DISCIPLINE in the LOCAL CHURCH

by Blair Seale

Definition

Discipline is for loving correction and instruction.

Need for discipline

Psalm 93:5, 1Tim.3:14, 15, 1Corin.5:6

Discipline in a local church is required for:

- a. correction of sinful behaviour that is defiling the holiness of the House of God.
- b. instruction for the church
- c. ensuring that the House of God remains a holy dwelling place for our God by keeping sin from permeating it.

Types of Discipline & Reasons For It.

1. Excommunication / Putting Away

1 Corin.5; 1Tim.1:18-20

- Fornication - sexual immorality
- Covetousness - one who acts covetously by stealing, or dishonest gain of possessions (gambling included)
- Idolatry - bowing down to idols of the pagan world
- Railing - slander that has its purpose in the destruction of another
- Drunkenness - a person who is habitually given to strong drink
- Extortion - a person who swindles other people out of their possessions by deceit or trickery
- Blasphemy - an insult spoken against God and the faith

2. Personal Offense Matt.18:15 - 20

Personal sin against another believer

3. Restoration From A Fault Galatians 6:1,2

An unintentional sin

4. Prayer Of The Elders James 5:13 - 16

To heal sickness caused by sin.

5. Limited Fellowship 2 Thessalonians 3:6 - 15
To shame behaviour
6. Public Rebuke 1 Tim.5:17 - 22
Public sin damaging the assembly testimony
7. Silencing Contradictors and Heretics Titus 1:9-11; 3:8-11
Those opposing truth, teaching error and forcing personal opinion.
8. Mark and Avoid Those Who Cause Divisions Rom.16:17 - 20

Restoration

2 Corinthians 2:1-11; 7:3-13, Gal.6:1, Lev.14:34-53

All discipline should have restoration in view.
Discipline should produce a spirit of mourning in an assembly.
Restoration requires repentance on behalf of the fallen one.
A recovered believer must be forgiven and comforted by the assembly.

Patterns in Discipline

The persons involved

1. Galatians 6:1 "if a man be overtaken in a fault"
 - sin coming suddenly into the life of a believer through carelessness
 - no continuation in sin
2. Leviticus 4:2 "if a soul shall sin through ignorance"
 - this would include the one who doesn't know the scriptures and the one who is not aware of his transgression
3. Joshua 6:18 "keep yourselves from the accursed thing"
Joshua 7:11 "they have transgressed my covenant"
Joshua 7:21 "I saw ...I coveted ... and took"
 - this is a deliberate act of disobedience
4. Titus 3:10 "after the first and second admonition reject"
Matt.18:17 "if he neglect to hear the church"
 - continuing in the sin after being warned

The purpose of discipline

1. Psalm 93:5 "holiness becometh thine house O Lord forever"
 - to maintain God's holiness
2. Galatians 6:1 "restore such an one in the spirit of meekness"
 - to restore to communion with God
3. Romans 2:24 "for the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you"
Titus 2:5 "that the word of God be not blasphemed"
 - that the testimony of the assembly before the world be not destroyed
4. 1Timothy 5:20 "them that sin rebuke before all, that other also may fear"
1Corinthians 5:4 "when ye are gathered together"
 - as a warning to others
5. 1Corinthians 3:17 "for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"
 - because I am God's possession
6. Hebrews 12:10 "that we might be partakers of His holiness"
 - disciplined that we might share with Him in His holiness

Discipline fulfilled

1. Luke 15:21 "and the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight ..."

- a realization of the seriousness of the transgression
 - ~ first, it is against God
 - ~ secondly, it is against the rest of the assembly
- 2. Psalm 51:17 "a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise"
 - evidence of repentance

A pattern in discipline

1. Ezra 9:1 "the people ... have not separated themselves ... doing according to their abominations ... have taken of their daughters"
 - the nature of the sin is brought to the attention of the elders
 - ~ by confession on the part of the offender
 - ~ by report from another
2. Ezra 9:3-4 "sat until the evening sacrifice"
 - the elders and the people are not to act hastily
 - ~ using discretion, without partiality
 - "... enquire ... search and ask diligently" Deut. 13:14
3. Ezra 9:6-15 "we have been in great trespass this day"
 - ~ confession is to be made before God, of the sin of the assembly
4. Ezra 9:6 "our iniquities (have) are increased"
 - ~ the sin of one member is the sin of the whole assembly and affects its spirituality
 - "Israel hath sinned, they have also transgressed my covenant" Joshua 7:11
5. Ezra 10:1 "when Ezra had prayed"
 - ~ much prayer should be offered to God in a humble and contrite heart before judgment is pronounced
6. Ezra 10:3 "let it be done according to the law"
 - ~ discipline is to be done according to the word of God with great fear
7. Ezra 10:11 "make confession unto the Lord God"
 - ~ personal confession is necessary for restoration
8. Ezra 10:16,17 "examine the matter .. and ... made an end"
 - ~ all aspects of the case were dealt with carefully in accordance with the word of God (Deut. 13:14)
9. Ezra 10:14,19 "offered a ram ... for their trespass"
 - ~ restoration (the aim of discipline) to the fellowship of God was sought
10. Ezra 10:18-44 ~ names of all who had sinned was brought to the attention of the assembly
 - ~ there was no respect of persons in carrying out the

discipline

A Discipline Meeting

A discipline meeting is called when it is necessary to separate the assembly from an individual because of grievous error.

Order of the meeting:

1. Opening hymn, and a prayer
2. Announcement of the reason for the discipline.
3. Cautioning of the assembly on the need for silence on the circumstances of the discipline.
4. Closing in prayer.

Opening hymn: Believers Hymn Book # 50, 101,
197, 351

Announcement:

1Timothy 3:14-15 - behaviour in the house of God

Titus 2:13-15 - people marked by purity

1Thess. 4:1-4 - marked by sanctification

1Peter 1:15-16 - marked by holiness

1Corinthians 6:12-20 (7:1-2) - as the temple of God avoiding fornication

This meeting has been called that we might in accordance to the word of God, carry out such discipline as the scriptures require.

Psalm 93:5 "holiness becometh thine house, O Lord"

Titus 2:3 display - "behaviour as becometh holiness"

2Corith. 7:1 "let us cleans ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"

Upon confession of the sin of immorality, it is necessary according to the word of God, to put away _____ from the fellowship of the assembly.

Importance of confidentiality

1Corinth.10:12 "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"

Proverbs 27:1 "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

That which has just been spoken in confidence amongst the assembly should remain in the assembly. It is not a subject for discussion. The only person you should talk about it with is the Lord, in your private prayers.

2Sam.1:20 "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph."

tell - talk about

Gath - when gathered together

publish - write to others about it

Askelon - people afar

Philistines - those taking the place of believers

uncircumcised - unbelievers

1Sam.12:23 "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

A person may be under discipline, but you are still to pray for them

Proverbs 21:23 "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles."

James 1:26 "If any man among you seems to be religious (takes the place of being spiritual) and bridleth (does not control) not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart (deceiveth himself), this man's religion is vain. (maketh a mockery of his profession)

The strongest measure of your spirituality is your control over your tongue!

Ephesians 4:30 "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

SECTION 10

Gospel activity and the local church

- i. Reaching out from the Gospel Hall
- ii. Reaching out from the home
- iii. Reaching out to regions beyond

*"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."
1Thessalonians 1:8, 9*

Gospel Activity and the Local Church

by David Sarlo, June 1996

Reaching out - GO

Matt.28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Psalm 126:6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

Reaching out requires trust for we are naturally afraid of the unknown. 2Corin.1:8-10 and 2Corin.4:8, 9

How can we do this?

Example of the last words of the Lord to the apostles in Acts 1:8. "ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Start where you are now. The Lord will bring about expansion in His time. Notice that the above statement was not a command, but just information about what was going to happen. The command in is Matt.28:18-20.

Ways of reaching out.

Reaching out from family

1. Encourage those who are spreading the Word of God.
 - * The believers, including men, women and children at Tyre (Acts 21:5) see Paul off in the ship.
 - * The Ephesian elders accompanied Paul to the ship in Acts 20:38.
 - * The believers from Rome, came along the road to meet Paul and his companions in Acts 28:15.
2. Provide a place to stay for those who are spreading the Word
 - * Peter stayed in Joppa with Simon, a tanner. Acts 9:43
 - * Lydia besought Paul and his companions to come and stay with her, if they judged her faithful. She treated it as a privilege to have them stay at her home. Acts 16:15
 - * Paul and his companions stayed with the brethren in Ptolemais, in Acts 21:7
 - * Paul and his companions stayed with Philip and his daughters in Caesarea, in Acts 21:8

- * In Rhegium, southern Italy, Paul and his companions found brethren and were asked to stay seven days. Acts 28:14
- 3. Go to the house of those who want to hear the word of God, in order to teach them.
 - * The apostles in Jerusalem taught and preached the word in many homes. Acts 5:42
 - * Peter preached to Cornelius and others in his home at Cornelius' request. Acts 10:32 -24
 - * In Acts 13:7, Sergius Paulus, the deputy (or proconsul - former Roman senator commissioned to govern peaceful provinces) called Barnabas and Paul to him, that he might hear the word of God, privately, perhaps in his house.
- 4. Bring into your home those who want to hear the Word of God.
 - * Priscilla and Aquilla left in Ephesus by Paul, took Apollos to them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly (accurately). Acts 18:19, 26
 - * The Jewish leaders in Rome came to Paul's house to hear about "this way". Some believed. Some didn't. Acts 28:30

Reaching out from the Church

1. Praying for others
 - * Prayers of praise and request for the ability to speak boldly, in Acts 4:24-30, were answered in Acts 4:31. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."
 - * The church prayed together for Peter in prison. Yet they could not believe it when he was released. Acts 12:5, 12
 - * The Philippian believers gathered together for prayer, in Acts 16:16.
2. Unity of the church in the work
 - * Just prior to leaving Philippi, at the request of the authorities, Paul and his companions went to house of Lydia to comfort the brethren. Acts 16:40
 - * Peter arriving and Lydda, associates with the saints there. Acts 9:32
 - * Barnabas and Saul, sent by the church at Jerusalem to Antioch (in Syria), assembled with the church there for one year and taught. Acts 11:22 -26
 - * The church at Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem to deliver financial aid. Acts 11:30

Reaching out to the neighbourhood and area

- * The apostles, in the temple taught and preached Jesus. Acts 5:42
- * Paul speaks in the synagogue when asked. Acts 13:14
- * A great persecution scattered the believers throughout Judea and Samaria, so wherever they went, they preached the word. Acts 8:1, 4
- * The Thessalonians were examples to all that believed in their province (Macedonia) and the neighbouring province (Achaia) and beyond. And the word of the Lord sounded out from them over the same area. 1 Thess.1:7, 8

Reaching out to regions beyond

(This phrase is used by Paul to describe new areas beyond the areas where he had already preached the gospel.)

1. Sending out a preacher of the gospel.
 - * The individual should be fitted for the work to be done.
 - * The individual should have a good testimony in his local assembly - Acts 6:3, 10 - Stephen; Acts 16:2 - Timothy.
 - * The individual is commended (committed) to the grace of God, (because they are leaving the normal support structure of the local church) eg. Barnabas and Saul, Acts 13:1, 4 and Acts 14:26. Paul and Silas, Acts 15:39, 40
 - * The individual is sent away. Acts 13:1, 4
 - "sent" by the church
 - "sent forth" by the Holy Spirit
 - * The individual returns and reports to the church what God has done. Acts 14:27

2. Individual preparation for those going out as representatives of a church.
 - * Acts 6:3 "choose ye men full of the Holy Spirit" Philip was chosen, and later becomes an evangelist.
 - * In Acts 16:2, Paul chose Timothy, who was well reported of by the brethren in two places - Lystra and Iconium
 - * In Acts 8:4, those scattered by persecution went everywhere preaching the Word.
 - * In Acts 15:25 -27, Silas, a man who had hazarded (risked) his life for the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - * In Acts 4:36, 37, Barnabas appears to have sold all his land and given all the money from it to the apostles. Like the rich your

- ruler, except that he did give all?
- * In Acts 11:25, Barnabas gets Saul and brings him to Antioch. He is very specific, going all the way to Tarsus to get him and bring him back. They teach in Antioch for a whole year. Saul must have impressed him as a valuable man.
 - * In Acts 1:1, "Jesus began to do and teach until ...". Practice what you teach until God takes you home.
 - * Acts 6:10, 15 Stephen had wisdom and a good spirit. It seemed to result in his face being like the face of an angel.
 - * Acts 8:22, 23 Simon the sorcerer is declared to be wicked by Peter.
 - * Acts 16:25 The apostles sang praises in difficult circumstances.
3. Supporting preachers of the gospel
- * The preacher is dependent on God for his needs.
Phil.4:11-13, 19
 - * He can be supported by one or more local churches or by individuals that desire to help. Gal.6:6; Phil.4:16, 18
Paul strongly argues for support for a gospel worker in 1Corin.9:6-18, saying that there would be fewer distractions for that person if they did not have to support themselves.
 - * They can also provide for their own selves as Paul did. See Acts 20:33-35, 2Thess.3:8-10, 1Corin.9:15
 - * They can also provide support for other workers as Paul did. Acts 20:34
 - * There is a blessing for the supporting church. It produces fruit for them and is "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God". Phil.4:17, 18
4. Historical examples of reaching out to other region
- * Philip
 - ~ He preached in the city of Samaria. It just says he went after the Jerusalem believers were scattered. Acts 8:5
 - ~ He preached to the Ethiopian in his own chariot on the road to Gaza. He was sent that way by an angel. Acts 8:35
 - ~ He preached in all the cities from Azotus north to Caesarea. The Spirit of the Lord deposited him in Azotus. There is no record of why he chose to go north, possibly it is because both Gaza and Azotus are in the southern end of the country. Acts 8:40

* Peter

- ~ He goes to preach to a Gentile (Cornelius) as he is told to by the Holy Spirit. Acts 10:20, 23, 34

* Barnabas and Saul

- ~ Barnabas is sent by the church at Jerusalem to go as far as Antioch, to check out news of many Gentiles getting saved. One of his first actions is to go to Tarsus and bring back Saul to work with him. They stay for a year. Acts 11:22, 25, 26
- ~ The church at Antioch sends Barnabas and Saul back to Jerusalem to deliver financial aid for drought relief. Acts 11:30
- ~ Barnabas and Saul return from Jerusalem "when they had fulfilled their ministry" (probably meaning they had delivered the financial aid) and brought John Mark with them. Acts 12:25
- ~ Barnabas and Saul are separated by the Spirit unto a work to which they have been called. Paul's first missionary journey. Acts 13:1, 4
- ~ After being commanded by the Spirit, followed by fasting and praying, they are "sent forth", but not to a specific, known destination. It seems however, that they immediately go to Seleucia. They must have had direction either at this time or soon after.
- ~ Paul and Barnabas had been "recommended (commended) to the grace of God. Acts 14:26
 - The phrase "recommended to the grace of God", means that they were going out away from other believers, and their only support would be through God's grace.
- ~ Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, (from which they had been sent) after they had fulfilled the work given them. They gather the church together, rehearse (report) all that God had done with them and then they stay a long time with the disciples. (furlough?) Acts 14:26-28

* Paul and Silas

- ~ Barnabas and John Mark just left. Paul and Silas are recommended unto the grace of God by the brethren. Acts 15:39, 40

- ~ Paul gives a report in Jerusalem to James and the elders of what God had done with them among the Gentiles.
Acts 21:19

Other points about reaching out to regions beyond

Follow-up work

- * Acts 14:22 After preaching the gospel in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, Paul and Barnabas return through these cities confirming (strengthening) the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith (in the midst of tribulation), ordained elders in every church, prayed with fasting and finally commended them to the Lord.
- * Acts 15:36, 41 Paul wants to go and visit the brethren in every city where they had preached to see how they do. He goes with Silas.
- * Acts 15:41: 16:4, 5 Paul and the others go through the cities encouraging and strengthening.
- * Gal.2:9 James, Cephas and John gave to Paul and Barnabas "the right hand of fellowship" - suggested that this is a pledge of fellowship and agreement in the work to be done.

Baptism

- * Acts 8:12 When they believed, they were baptized. (both men and women)
- * Acts 8:36-39 Philip and the Ethiopian - details of how a baptism is done.
- * Acts 9:18 Saul is baptized as soon as his sight is restored and he has contact with the disciples.
- * Acts 10:48 Cornelius and many of his friends, relatives and members of his household are baptized.
- * Acts 16:15 Lydia and her household were baptized after she believed.
- * Acts 16:33, 34 The Philippian jailer, and his household were baptized after believing.
- * Acts 18:8 Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue believed on the Lord with all his house and many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized.

Opposition

- * Leads to opportunity which requires boldness or it leads to failure and going back.

* Acts 13:13 John Mark leaves Paul and Barnabas in Perga in Pamphylia and returns to Jerusalem.

SECTION 11

Meetings of the local church

- i. Breaking of bread
- ii. Gospel meetings
- iii. . . . others

"And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And ... they did eat,"
Matthew 26:18-21

MEETINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY

1. **Remembrance meeting**

The Remembrance Meeting is an expression of collective worship and obedience to the Lord's desire

Acts 20:7 "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread"

1 Corin. 11:23 - 26 ". . . this do in remembrance of me . . . For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

PURPOSE, 1Corin.11:26 - to show the Lord's death until He comes

INSTITUTION, Luke 22:15-20, - of the meeting

WHEN, Acts 20: - the first day of the week

2. **Gospel meeting**

This meeting is specifically arranged to tell others of the way of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 9:20 "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God"

Acts 10:34 - 44

3. **Bible reading**

This meeting is for the discussion of the word of God.

Acts 17:11 "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"

the marks of a good Bible Reading

- brethren prepared
- questions asked
- answers given

4. Prayer meeting

In the prayer meeting the believers are to lift their voices in thanksgiving and supplication to the Lord for the needs of the Lord's people.

Acts 4:23-31 "when they had prayed"

Acts 12:12 "he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, . . . where many were gathered together praying"

Acts 16:13 "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made;"

Prayer is the life's breath of the Christian

pray for: - specific things 1Tim.2:1-4

- a specific person who is unsaved
- specific needs amongst believers
- parents
- local gospel work

Come to the prayer meeting prepared to pray

5. Missionary meeting

This meeting is generally a meeting where a brother who has travelled to another country or area, may give a report on the work in that region.

Acts 14:27 "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

6. Ministry meeting

This meeting is sometimes called a teaching meeting, or an edifying meeting. Its purpose is for the explanation of the word of God for the purposes of correction, instruction and encouragement of God's people.

Acts 18:11 "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

Acts 20:7 "Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight"

7. Elders meetings

This is a meeting where those with a responsibility for the assembly, before God, will meet to discuss matters that are not profitable for the general gathering to be involved in. In these meetings discretion and confidentiality are very important. Acts 9:27 (concerning reception) "...Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto him how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus."

Acts 20:17 - 32 (cares of assembly)

8. Cottage meetings

These are usually special gospel or ministry or Bible readings held for a short time before an assembly may be established. Acts 10:34 - 44

9. Discipline meeting

These are sad meetings. Sometimes it is necessary for the good of the assembly to discipline members that have been turned aside into sinful paths.

1 Corin.5:3-5, tells us that it is a distinct meeting.

10. Sunday School

The principle of teaching children was established by God in the Old Testament, and this principle has not changed. The Lord stated in the gospels "suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not".

Deut.4:9 "teach them to thy sons, and thy son's sons"

Deut.4:10 "that they may teach their children"

Deut.6:7 "thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children"

Matt.19:14 "But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me"

God's commendation of Abraham's teachings

Genesis 18:19 "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord."

SECTION 12

Characteristics of the church

- i. Stewardships
- ii Maintaining purity
- iii. Working with one another
- iv. . . . others

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

1Corinthians 4:1, 2

Responsibilities of the Church

by Wayne Friesen, June 1996

I did not have any idea what this topic meant when it was given to me. You might say that I approached it as a blank page, with no preconceived notions, no ideas as to what the responsibilities were. If I had made any mental consent as to the church having responsibilities, I did not know what they were. I have found it is an all encompassing topic. I would look at one thing and my mind would go to another thing. I would follow that up. The result is this graphic pictorial view. I kept wanting to link this thought with this thought. The result is the charts shown here.

When I was given this assignment, I was also given a handout that had someone's writings of what the responsibilities of the church were. I thought this is good I can fall back on this. It is in my hip pocket. It is there if I need it. But, as I mentioned, I did not have any preconceived ideas as to what the responsibilities were and I wanted it to stay that way. I did not want to put any preconceived notions or prejudices in my mind. I did not read that article, but I did look through it after I was finished to see if I was on the right track.

I did not read the article because my approach was this. The church is God's. The Bible is God's word. Why don't I read the Bible? I did that. I went through the New Testament and wrote down the verses that were applicable in some way. Then I looked at them and grouped them into headings. I have given the headings and then the verses to support them.

Another approach I took was with a question. I said, if I see an organization that calls itself a church, then what characteristics should I see? Or, if I take the same question and turn it around. If I see an organization that displays these characteristics, can I safely call it a church? I looked at the question and noticed that the word responsibility was not there. I keep coming back to this word characteristic. Is there a difference between a characteristic and a responsibility? A characteristic is a distinctive trait that defines something. A responsibility is an obligation. It is something that you do. No, there is not a difference between a church's characteristics and its responsibilities.

Furthermore, I looked at the references I had written down and in a lot of

cases they were instructions given to people, to individuals. They were given to a person, but, can we extend it to the local church? If that principle holds, can we go the next step and apply it to the universal church? I came to the conclusion that yes, in many incidences we can take a statement given to a person and apply it to a church. That is why you may think some of the responsibilities on the sheet apply to individuals. I believe they also apply as well to the local church.

In thinking about this I was reminded of a phrase we have heard in two sessions already. The local church takes its character from its members. This realization was followed by the realization that this topic is really quite comprehensive and involves a lot of the ones we looked have looked at over the last two months. As we go through these responsibilities I hope to point out to you how they fit in with the topics discussed already.

These responsibilities are not in order of importance. I do not know that you can do that. They are all important in their own way and yet there is some sort of logical order to them.

I have the heading and a verse that I want to use as an overall umbrella that applies to the topic as a whole. The first responsibility I want to start off with is:

We should be guardians (stewards) of God's truth.

1John 4:1 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

WHY

1Tim. 3:15

Church is pillar/ground of truth

Heb.13:9a

Eph.4:14

Be not carried about with various/strange doctrines

Acts 20:29-31

1John 2:19,26

Deceivers will arise from within

Rev.2:14

Doctrine of Balaam

HOW

1Corin.4:1-2
Be faithful to
the Bible and
its teachings

2Thess.2:15
Stand fast - hold
the traditions
that we have
been taught

Col.2:7-8
Be rooted, built
up, established
in the truth

If you are like me you want to know the how and the why of a statement. When you are given a job at work you want to know how it fits into the overall picture. If you understand the how and the why you can adapt it so that it can fulfill the needs better. I have given a WHY, but I have also given a HOW. Quite often the Bible in the New Testament letters gives you doctrine and teaching first followed by practical examples. I have tried to show how practically we can fulfill the why.

WHY does the church need to be a steward (guardian) of God's truth?

In 1Tim.3:15, Paul has written to Timothy, "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth". The church is God's. That is a reason that is very important. But he describes it as a pillar and the ground of the truth.. Now a pillar serves two purposes. A pillar is an integral part of a building. It must support something. Something would rest upon it and it would hold it up. The pillar would rest on the ground. You need a firm foundation. Quite often, and you see it today, people will post bills and proclamations. As a pillar, we hold up and we proclaim the truth of God. **HOW** do we do this? 1 Corin.4:1, 2 "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." We need to be faithful to the Bible and its teachings.

Another WHY is in Heb.13:9 and Eph.4:14.

There is a common theme in these verses. People will try to deceive the people of God. **HOW** do we combat this? 2Thess.2:15 tells us that we need to stand fast. We need to hold the traditions that we have been taught. Then again in Acts 20:29, 31 and 1John 2:19, 26 we have reference to people who work from outside and even

from within the local church to destroy it. All you need to do is think of people who are changing Bible translations to take away the gender of God. People changing Bible translations to deny the divinity of Christ. People changing hymns to do these very same things. These are people in a church context working from within to destroy it.

HOW do we combat this? 1Corin.4:1, 2 "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Please notice that there is something consistent with 2Thess.2 and Col.2. That is teaching. One of the responsibilities we have is to teach. In Col.2 it is the traditions of men as opposed to 2Thess.2 where we have the traditions (or principles or of scripture) that we have been taught.

Now, when Jack was talking about elders, he made a comment in passing. Maybe you caught it. He said that the elders today need to be more aware today of false teaching than at anytime in history. I think that is a true statement. But I would not limit it to elders. I think it applies to all of us as well.

What do I mean by this? If a question comes up. Whether somebody is addressing us personally or in the context of a Bible study. If it deals with false doctrine we should not shy away from it. I am not advocating that we study false doctrine. If someone poses this line of thinking, we should look at it. We should address it. What does this say? Is it wrong? How is it wrong? Why is it wrong? In order to do that you need to know the truth. You need to know the truth of the word of God.

That is why I have a reference to Rev.2:14. The one thing the Lord had against this church was "thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication". You recall the story of Balaam. He was a prophet who was forbidden by God to go and curse the nation of Israel as King Balac wanted. But he went anyway. Instead of cursing the nation God had him bless the nation three times. When he was done, he said to Balac. I know how you can get these people.

What he did was to mix the people among the Israelites so that they

worshipped idols and committed fornication. It was working from within. That was the doctrine of Balaam. We need to be guardians and stewards of God's truth to guard against false doctrine.

This leads into the second responsibility. The church needs to keep itself pure.

Psalm 29:2 "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."

1Corin.3:16-17 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

The church should keep itself pure.

Psalm 29:2, 1Corin.3:16-17

WHY

To be Faithful
2Corin.11:2
Gen.24
Eph.5:30-31

To be Fruitful

HOW

As a Field
1Corin.3:9b

As a Building
1Corin.3:9c
Eph.2:21-22
1Peter2:5

In Praise
Heb.13:15-16

In Converts
1Peter2:5,10

In Practical Action
1Peter2:5,9

HOW

2Corin.6:14-7:1
1John 2:15-17
Keep separate
from the world

1Corin.5:7, 11-13
Judge sin in individuals

1Corin.6
Judge matters among its
own members

1Thess.1:8
1John2:28-29
1John3:2-3

Watch/wait for
the return of Christ

1Corin.5:5-6
Protect others
Consistent with
God's
character

Eph.3:9-11
To display wisdom
of God

WHY

Make decisions based on God's
principles
Otherwise
a. Matters are made public to
outsiders 2Sam.1:20
b. God's reputation/name
will be smirched

That is a rather intriguing phrase. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." It obviously means a lot to God. God is holy. He recognizes it when He sees it. He wants His people to display it. He says we can, "worship Him in the beauty of holiness".

We have a responsibility to keep ourselves pure.

Let us go now to the pictures of the church.

In 1 Corinth.3:16-17, we have Paul writing to the church at Corinth and describing the church as the temple of God. They are holy. We need to be holy. Why? That we might be faithful.

I would like to use the picture of the church as the bride of Christ to show this. In 2Corin.6:2, Paul uses the parallel of presenting the church as a virgin to Christ as a bride to her groom. In Eph.5:30-32, Paul draws a parallel between a marriage relationship with a man and a woman and Christ with the church. In our marriage vows we promised to be faithful to each other. The church as the bride of Christ has a responsibility to be faithful.

The church also has a responsibility to keep itself pure in order to be fruitful. How can the church be fruitful? In 1Corin.3:9, Paul says, "ye are God's cultivated field". We plant gardens and farmers sow seeds because we want to reap a harvest a few months down the road. The church is God's cultivated field. What fruit do we produce? From Heb.13:15, we can be fruitful by giving praise. Then again in Heb.13:16, and in 1Peter 2:5,9 we have practical action. We can be fruitful by doing practical things.

The church can also be fruitful as a building. We do not usually consider buildings to be fruitful. In 1Corin.3:9, Paul says, "ye are God's building". How does a church grow? It gets added to. In Eph.2:21, 22, Paul says, "in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together". How are we built together. This is where 1Peter 2:5 comes in. "Ye also as spiritual stones are built up a spiritual house." The church grows when people are added. They are living stones put into the building. This is the way we usually think of a church growing. We think of a church growing numerically in terms of numbers.

How does the church keep itself pure?

There are a number of ways. From 2Corin.6:14-7:1, you will recall that there are many contrasts. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. What fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? None obviously. God has said, come out from among them and be ye clean. Be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing. Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. And also from 1John 2:15-16, "love not the world, ... for all that is in the world ... is not of the Father". We keep ourselves pure by keeping separate from the world.

1Thess.1:9, "they turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to watch and to wait for His Son from heaven", shows us that the church keeps itself pure by watching and waiting watching for Christ's coming. From 1John 2:28, "we are to abide in Him ... that we not be ashamed at His coming". "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1John 3:3 There is an incentive to be in a right state when the Lord comes. Watching and waiting for the return of Christ is a responsibility, but it is also a way that the church can keep itself pure.

Another way in which the church keeps itself pure is in the matter of discipline. In 1Corin.5, a person was found to have done something wrong. What the church had to do was to deal with it. Paul says, "purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump ... do not ye judge them that are within ... put away from among yourselves that wicked person". vs. 7,12,13 The church has a responsibility to judge sin in individuals. Why do we need to do this? 1Corin.5:5,6 give us two reasons, "for the destruction of

the flesh that the Spirit may be saved ... a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump". We do this to protect others in the church. A sinful influence has been introduced. It is a foothold for Satan. If it is not dealt with, if it is not excised and put away it is going to grow. We do it to protect the church as a whole. More over, judging sin is consistent with God's character. If we know that there is something wrong and we do not address it we become guilty by association. By ignoring it we become just as guilty as the person who did it.

Then again, in 1Corin.6, the church is advised against taking matters to court. If you have a problem with another Christian do not go to court to get it settled. Why not? Because we operate on the principles of the kingdom of God. The principles of the kingdom of God are certainly opposite to the principles that the world operates under.

We need to judge matters among ourselves because, firstly, we base our decisions upon God's principles. But more over, failure to do so introduces matters to the world. They may not understand the principles of God. All they will know is that it is another smirch on the name of God. A verse we often read at discipline meetings is 2Sam.1:20. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon." It is none of their business. They do not need to know for it will only bring disrepute on god's name and character.

Another reason why the church need to keep itself pure is found in Eph.3:9-11. This is to display the manifold wisdom of God. We often think of this in terms of the angels because we think the angels are looking on. But I think there is a wider sphere than that. I believe that there is Satan and his agents as well. Scriptures say "principalities and powers". In other contexts those are referred to as being under the domain of Satan. The church when it is operating according to God's principles is showing the wisdom of God not only to onlookers on the earth but also to the spirit world.

This brings us to our next responsibility

Love One Another Heb.13:1, 16

WHY

1John3:11,18,23
1John4:7
2John 5-6

John 13:34-35

We are commanded to

That the world may know
that we are one

HOW

(i)
1Corin.1:10
1Corin.11:17-22
1Peter3:8-9: 5:5
Speak the
same thing

considerate
compassionate
be of same mind
have no divisions
be of the same
judgment

(ii)
1Corin.14:26,33,40
Rom.12:10

conduct affairs
with each other
with honour,
with respect, and
with orderliness

(iii)
Heb.13:1-2, 16

show hospitality

(iv)
1Tim.5:3-10,16
take care
of widows

(v)
1Thess.5:11-22
comfort
edify
respect
guide
pray
consider effects
on others

(vi)
1John2:8-11
don't be
a
stumbling block

We have a responsibility to love one another. "Let brotherly love continue. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb.13:1, 16 Why does the church need to love one another? 1John 3, 1John 4 and 2John 5,6 all say the same thing. Love one another in deed and in truth as Christ gave us commandment. How much further do we need to go. We are told to do it. It we are told to do it surely we are given the were-with-all to do it. Love is not an emotion although we often associate it with emotions. Love is an act of the

will. In order to show true love we often have to do things we really do not feel like or we do not want to do.

Why do we have to love one another?

From John 13:34, 35 we learn that we are to show love one to another that the world may know that we are one.

How can we love one another?

There are no shortages of references as to how this can be done. The chart gives us some of these references. This might seem like common sense. You might say, why are you telling me this? Do not forget that the church will not just have members coming from Christian backgrounds. The church will have people coming from unsaved backgrounds. Some people may not have had the same training in manners. We need to keep that in mind and seek to educate others by example and by kind words of instruction.

We need to consider what effect our actions will have on somebody else. If it is going to cause another person to have problems now or later on in their lives. If it is going to be detrimental in some way do not do it. These people have been bought by Christ and we do not want to damage His possessions.

This brings us to the responsibility to develop the gifts of the members of the church.

To Develop the Gifts of Its Members Eph.4:12

WHY

To build up individuals so that the local (and universal) church will be built up.

HOW

Eph.4:14
In strength

Eph.4:16
In numbers

HOW

1. Discern gifts among ourselves
 - by our abilities/likes/dislikes
 - by what others see in us

2. Be encouraging/helping others to develop the gifts that they have.
 - Moses tutored Joshua
 - Apprentice younger men with those more experienced.
 - wise teachers (mentors) to teach and help others develop their gifts
 - Titus2:4 older women to teach younger women (mentors)
 - Titus2:6-7 older men to exhort/show/teach younger men
 - Heb.10:24-25

In Eph.4:12, the idea of gifts is to build up the church. The way we develop gifts is to build up individuals so that the local church and the universal church will be built up. This is for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. You are making the person better to do a more efficient and effective work for and within the church.

How can the church be built up?

Eph.4:14 shows us that we build up the church in doctrinal strength so that it can better withstand the assaults of false doctrine. The more common way that we think of the church being built up is in numbers. The church grows as members are being added to it.
Eph.4:16

The church has a responsibility to develop the gifts of its members so that the church will build itself up both in spiritual strength and in numbers of converts.

Our next responsibility is to preach, to teach, to baptize, and to make disciples.

To Preach - Teach - Baptize - Disciple Matt.28:19-20

WHY

Matt.28:19-20
Acts 1:8
We are
commanded to

1John 2:12-14

1Peter 2:9

Various stages
of growth

Royal
priesthood

Titus 2:4-7

John 17

Prepare (for)
those who come
after us

Heb.7:25

Intercede on
behalf of
others
Col.4:12

HOW

1Corin.9
Provide for missionaries

Why do we preach, teach, baptize and make disciples?

We are commanded to do this. In 1John 2:13 we have a progression. "I write unto you fathers ... young men ... little children." We have people growing and developing. People grow and as they grow they can be more effective in preparing for those who come after them and preparing those who come after them. There are two stages show to us in Titus 2:4-7. The young women are taught of the older and the young men are taught of the older men. We prepare those that come after us so that they can continue the process.

In 1Peter 2:9, as a holy priesthood we offer up to God and as a royal priesthood we show out to the world and the people around us.

In John 17 and Heb.7, we have Christ interceding for us. I believe that we can do the same for each other. We can intercede on behalf of others, both those who are here in the church among us and also those who are not yet saved.

In Col.4:12, Epaphras interceded for the Colossian believers. That they might know what the will of God is and once they know the will of God that they might stand in it.

"Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have

been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Col.2:7 Being rooted it says. Now that is an agricultural term. That is what plants do. They put down roots so that they keep the soil around them and do not get blown down in torrents of water and in strong winds. Built up! You could say it is an architectural term because what you are doing is building a foundation. If you dig down you can go up. The further down you dig the bigger the building you can put up.

You need to be established. We can help others to become established by interceding for them in prayers and by teaching them.

How can the church preach, baptize and disciple. One way is to provide for those on the front lines on the mission field.

The next responsibility is not very pleasant.

To Suffer on Behalf of Christ

WHY

John 15:19-21 We are not of this world 2Tim. 1:8 Partner in the gospel 1Peter 4:12-14 we are partakers of Christ's sufferings	2Corin.1:4-7 To know consolation of God To show others this same consolation
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I do not know if you can call this a responsibility. It is almost a natural off shot of living the Christian life. I put it as a responsibility because we should do it properly. Christ warned us that it would happen in John 15:19-21. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." We are not of this world. It is going to happen to us. We are identified with Christ in this way.

If we suffer on behalf of Christ (2Corin.1:4-7) we will know something of the consolation of God. He is going to be there with us. Think of the men in the furnace. They had one like the Son of God with them. Christ will be with us in our difficulty. The interesting thing

is that once we know the consolation that we have experienced from God we will be able to show that same consolation to others who are in that same circumstance. What we receive we can likewise give out.

That brings me to the final point.

To Pray for Governments 1Tim.2:1

That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life

We have a responsibility to pray for governments that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life. Why? That we not have to suffer. Actually that is not very good. It is in times of persecution and suffering that we are driven closer to each other. That is when we are driven closer to the Lord. That is when we are driven closer to God. That is when we learn. That is when we grow and become established.

We have things very favourable in this country. We are exhorted to pray that things may continue. But if these things should come to an end we would find that we would be drawn closer to each other and to our Bibles.

This then completes what I had for the responsibilities of the church.

SECTION 13

Characteristics of the church

*"Unto the church of God which is at
Corinth, to them that are sanctified in
Christ Jesus, called saints, with all
that in every place call upon the name
of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's
and our's." 1Corinthians 1:2*

THE CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY IN 1 CORINTHIANS

by Louis Brandt, September 1973

Eighteen characteristics of the local church as seen in
1Corinthians.

1. Sanctified in Christ Jesus
- set apart for God
1Corin.1:2
2. A particular place
- a place where God has set his name 1Corin.1:2
- a place where Christ is Lord 1Corin.1:2
- a place where God's infinite grace is given 1Corin.1:4
3. Intelligent in the things of God.
- have been enriched by God
1Corin.1:5
4. A people with a gift from God to be used in service to Him.
1Corin.1:7
5. A people waiting and looking for the coming of the Lord.
1Corin.1:7
6. A place of fellowship with Christ.
1Corin.1:9
7. A place where the saints are gathered and joined together in
the same mind. 1Corin.1:10
8. A place where our faith stands in the power of God
1Corin.2:5
9. A place where we are labourers together.
1Corin.3:9
10. A place where we are to be faithful stewards of Christ.
1Corin.4:1,2

11. A place of discipline. 1Corin.5:4,5; 6:4,5
12. A place where problems are settled through the word of God.
1Corin.6:4,5
13. A place where we are to help one another.
- we are not a stumbling block to spiritual progress
1Corin.8:9
14. A place where the preaching of the gospel is of great
importance. 1Corin.9:16
15. A place where the interests of others are put first
1Corin.10:24
16. A place where the saints are followers of Christ.
1Corin.11:1
17. A place where the Lord's death, burial and resurrection is
remembered. 1Corin.11:24,25
18. A place where spiritual gifts are exercised.
1Corin.12:1-11

THE ASSEMBLY AS GOD'S VINEYARD

by David Petherick, June 1979

Luke 20:9-10; Mark 12:1-2
Song of Solomon 8:11-12

What is associated with the vineyard?
The assembly is associated with the vineyard. 1Corinth.3:9

1 Corinthians 1:2

ORIGIN	"church of God"
PLACE OF TESTIMONY	"at Corinth"
SEPARATION	"sanctified in Christ Jesus"
CHARACTER	"called saints"
UNITY	"with all that in every place"
AUTHORITY	"call upon the name of the Lord Jesus"
SUBJECTION	"Lord Jesus Christ"

Song of Solomon 8:11 "let out the vineyard to keepers"

Mark 12:1 "let it out to husbandmen"

- suggests responsibility
- responsibility to have a care for the assembly
- responsibility to be at the meetings
- responsibility to be exercised and prepared to take part at the prayer meeting, at the Bible reading, at the Remembrance meeting
- responsibility to pray, to worship, to minister,

Are we faithful to the trust God has entrusted to us?

Song of Solomon 8:11 "for the fruit thereof"

Mark 12:2 "that he might receive ... of the fruit"

- suggests responsibility to give some return for what God has given to us

What am I giving back to God?

Song of Solomon 8:12 "must have a thousand"

God must have the preeminence and there must be something for others

What place does God have in my life?

The Assembly compared to Mount Zion

by David Petherick

Hebrews 12:18-22

Hebrews is an epistle of contrasts. It contrasts what God gave to Israel under the law to what the Christian enjoys because of Calvary.

Heb. 12:18- 21 Mount Sinai - the place of judgment

Heb. 12:22 Mount Zion - the place of blessing

Things associated with Mount Zion, and the assemblies

1. A place to be sought after.

Jeremiah 50:5, 6 "they shall ask the way to Zion"

When we stop seeking after Zion, we become like Israel as pictured in verse 6.

2. A place to be remembered and appreciated.

Psalm 137:1 -6 a place to be remembered

Psalm 126:1 -2 a place to be preferred above our chiefest joy

When we stop appreciating the assembly we will soon suffer as Israel did.

3. A place of God's affection.

Psalm 87:2 the Lord loveth the gates of Zion

Because the Lord loveth the assembly, He takes note of everyone who is there.

4. A place where God is preeminent.

Psalm 99:1 -2

God must always have the preeminence if we are going to be fruitful for him.

5. A place where God has designed His rest.

Psalm 132:3 -5, 13 the Lord hath chosen Zion

What place does God have in my assembly?
Is He welcome?

Is His word and counsel appreciated?

Characteristics of a New Testament Church

1. A New Testament Church is a Christ centred church
- he is the centre of their gospel, their defense, their worship and their testimony
Acts 3:6 "In the name of Jesus Christ ..."
Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other ..."
Acts 4:27 "against thy Holy child Jesus"
Acts 4:33 "witness ... of the Lord Jesus"
2. A New Testament Church is a praying church
Acts 2:42 "they continued ... in prayer"
Acts 2:47 "praising God"
Acts 3:1 "Peter and John went up ... at the hour of prayer"
Acts 4:31 "when they had prayed"
3. A New Testament Church is a Spirit filled church
Acts 4:8 "then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit"
Acts 4:31 "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit"
4. A New Testament Church is a courageous church
Acts 3:12 Peter speaks boldly before the people
Acts 4:8 Peter speaks boldly before rulers
Acts 4:31 they spoke the word of God with boldness
5. A New Testament Church is an unselfish church
Acts 2:45 they shared their possessions with others
Acts 4:32 they were assembled together
6. A New Testament Church is a united people
Acts 2:44 all that believed were together
Acts 4:32 they were all assembled together
7. A New Testament Church is a people with one purpose of heart
Acts 2:46 continued daily with one accord
Acts 2:46 with gladness and singleness of heart
Acts 4:32 of one heart and of one soul

THE HOUSE OF GOD

by Alex Dryburgh

1Samuel 10:3 Going up to the house of God
1Timothy 3:14-15 In the house of God
Matthew 2:9-12 Leaving the house of God

When we gather together, we gather either for the better or fore worse.
When Corinth gathered it did more harm than good.

I could touch the house of God in a cold, carnal, careless, critical
condition.

If I do then;
I rob God,
I rob the people of God.
I rob myself.

Paul was concerned about the believers;
salvation,
state,
sanctification (1Thess.4)
separation (2Corinth.6).

In Philippians, Paul is concerned about
with their salvation (Phil.2:),
- saved from every strife and division
with their safety (Phil.3:),
- the safety of the saints
with their state
- the state of an assembly is more important
than its size

In 1 Peter the thought is
1. of growing up
2. of being built up
3. of offering up
4. of showing forth

Am I in the right state?
What brings you and I to the assembly?
What brings you and I to an assembly?

In 1Samuel 10:3, the three men are going up to God to Bethel. They are going to a person. It is a person, I gather to in an assembly. He is the attraction.

I am in the assembly for three reasons;

1. It is the place where Christ dwells. Matt.18:20
2. It is the place where the Spirit dwells. 1Corin.3
3. It is the place where God dwells. 2Corin.6

1. What brought the men in Chronicles to the cave?
It was a person.
2. What brought Ruth to the field belonging to Boaz?
It was a person.
Ruth 2:2 "And Ruth ... said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him"
3. What was it that brought the wise men to the house where the star was?
It was a person.
Heb.13:13, 14 "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

Touching the house of God

1. I should touch the house of God with a right mind

Mark 5:15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

- the man was clothed - the truth of Romans
- the man was seated - the truth of Ephesians
- the man was in his right mind - the truth of Colossians

i. **A humble mind**

Romans 12:3 "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think;"

Phil.2:5 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

ii. **A holy mind**

The mind has more to do with the formation of your character

than any other part of your body. As we think in our heart so are we.

Phil.4:8 "... whatsoever things are true ..."

iii. **A heavenly mind**

Col.3:1,2 "... seek those things which are above, ...
set your affection on things above,"

iv. **A sober mind**

(sober ~ steadfast, single minded, sound)

1 Peter 1:13 "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober,"

- loose thinking leads to loose speaking
- loose thinking leads to loose living
- sober thinking leads to sober speaking
- sober thinking leads to sober living

2. I should touch the house of God with cleanness of hands

To be anything for God you must be pure and clean.

The world looks for clever people. God looks for clean people.

Three men who wore a linen ephod.

- a. The prophet ~ he spoke for God
If I am going to speak for God I must be clean.
- b. David the king ~ he ruled for God
To rule for God, I must be clean.
- c. The priest ~ he worshipped God
To worship God, I must be clean.

How can I be clean in such a corrupt world as this?

- a. By a careful reading of the Word of God.
Psalm.119:9 "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."
The Bible: This book will keep me from sinning,
and sinning will keep me from this book.
- b. By keeping in mind that there is a divine person in my body.
- c. By keeping in mind that at any moment Christ could come.

3. I should touch the house of God with conviction

Many touch the house of God because of custom or convenience.

What is the difference between opinions and convictions?

Opinion is something that an individual will argue about.

Conviction is something a person will die for.

Conviction is the truth that we hold, or better yet. The truth that holds you and I.

We must be people of backbone.

4. I should touch the house of God with exercise of heart

God never blesses head knowledge. But, He does bless exercise of heart.

1Sam.10:3 " and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine."

There were three men, in 1Sam.10:3, carrying something, but not all the same thing. Why? They are going up to God to Bethel.

Matt.2:1 "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,"

These wise men came seeking and searching.

The first question in the Old Testament is 'Where art thou?'.
God is seeking men.

The first question in the New Testament is: 'Where is He?'
Men are seeking God.

We read of the wise men that they:

- a. were seeking and searching
- b. were being guided
- c. were rejoicing
- d. were worshipping
- e. were presenting - gold, frankincense and myrrh
- f. were going back another way

This was true geographically, morally and spiritually.

We should go back another way from the house of God if it is a spirit guided ministry.

5. I should touch the house of God with a right spirit

Philemon needed a forgiving spirit to receive Onesimus.
Nothing hinders spiritual growth more, and nothing will divide
an assembly quicker, and nothing makes us more like the
world than an EMBITTERED SPIRIT.

Cain's sin against Abel,
Saul's sin against David, and
the elder son's sin against the prodigal son, was the result of
AN EMBITTERED SPIRIT.

In Col.1:14 I am forgiven by Christ.
In Col.2:13 I am forgiven by God.
In Col.3:13 I am to forgive others.

6. I should touch the house of God with a reverential fear

Sadly, the fear of God is very often lacking in our midst as the
people of God.

1 Chronicles 16:25 For great is the LORD, and greatly to be
praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.

Psalms 89:7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of
the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are
about him.

Why?

God is to be praised for what He has done.
God is to be feared for who He is.

Never forget who God is:

God is the master, we are the servants.
God is the Father, we are the children.
God is the vine, we are the branches.
God is the king, we are the subjects.

"Keep thy foot when thou comest to the house of God."
Ecclesiastes 5:1

SECTION 14

Doctrines of the church

- i. Baptism
- ii Headship
- iii. Priesthood of believers
- iv. The rapture
- v. The judgment seat of Christ
- vi. . . . others

*"God ye therefore, and teach all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father, and
of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching
them to observe all things whatsoever I have
commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway,
even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

Matthew 28:19, 20

BAPTISM

Meaning of baptism

Rom.6:3-11

Rom.6:4 "buried with him by baptism, raised to walk in newness of life"

- dead to sin

- alive unto God

also Col.2:11-13

- dead to sins and fleshly lusts

- alive with Christ

- it marks the Christian as separated unto Christ from the world and his professed dependence upon God

Who is baptized?

Acts 2:41 "they that gladly received his word were baptized"

Acts 8:12 "when they believed .. the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized"

Acts 8:37 "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest ... he ... said I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"

Authority for baptism

Matt.28:19 "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Method of baptism

Mark 1:9,10 "... Jesus came ... and was baptized of John in Jordan and straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descended upon him."

Acts 8:38,39 "... and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when

they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip"

The results of baptism

1Peter 3:21 baptism is the answer of a good conscience
- a conscience void of offense

1Peter 4:1a by your baptism view yourself as having
suffered (died) with Christ
"arm yourself with the same mind"

1Peter 4:1b sin should not reign (be the rule) in your life
"cease from sin"

1Peter 4:2a there has been a change in your life
- no longer do you pursue the old desires of the flesh

1Peter 4:2b your desire (purpose in life) is to fulfill
God's will
- your life is now marked by godly living

Baptism is . . .

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Burial with Christ | Col.2:12 |
| 2. Answer of a good conscience | 1Peter 3:21b |
| 3. Putting on Christ | Gal.3:27 |
| 4. Testimony to the world | Acts 2:41, 22:16 |
| 5. Incentive to godly living | Rom.6:3-5 |
| 6. Salvation in a figure | 1Peter 3:21a |
| 7. Memorial of a finished work | Joshua 4:5,7 |

BAPTISM

Baptism: - identification with Christ Rom.6:8
- a decisive commitment to personal piety Rom.6:11

The gospels - baptism in its precepts

The Acts - baptism in practice

The epistles- the doctrine (teachings) of baptism

Baptism is associated with discipleship. It is a testimony of discipleship

A. John's baptism

- i. a baptism of repentance
Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 8:24; Acts 19:4
- a testimony of repentance having taken place and sins remitted
- ii. demanded proof of repentance before baptism takes place
Matt.3:8; Luke 3:8
- a changed life
- iii. baptism takes place upon confession of sins
Matt.3:6
- a changed speech
- iv. required belief in the one who should come ... that is on Christ Jesus
John 1:29-36; Acts 19:4

B. Christian baptism

1. Testimony to others that your sins have been remitted
Acts 2:38
2. Symbolizes the believer having died with Christ (going into the water) and having risen again in Christ (coming up out of the water) to a newness of life.
- being alive to God
- being alive in Christ
- sin no longer has the rule in our lives
Rom.6:3,4; Col.2:12
3. Risen with Christ
Col.3:1
- symbolized by baptism

- "seek" - our aim in life is to be like Christ

4. 1Peter 3:21
salvation in a figure
"the soul that sinneth it shall die"
Christ the sinless one died for me the sinner, by baptism
I identify myself with his death for me at the cross
recognizing that he bore the judgment for me.

answer of a good conscience toward God
My sins are forgiven, my life is changed, in Christ I
stand before God in righteousness.
5. Acts 2:41; Acts 22:16
a public testimony
- a public confession of sins forgiven and salvation
having taken place

C. Ordinance of baptism

1. The Lord commanded it
Matt.28:19
2. The evangelist is responsible to teach it
3. A disciple is encouraged to be baptized
Acts 9:18
4. A believer requests it
Acts 8:36
5. Baptism is a mark of:
 - obedience
 - loyalty
 - renunciation
 - love
 - dedication

D. Baptism is identification

1. With Christ
Rom.6:3,4
2. With other believers
Acts 2:41

Judgment of Believers

I. Judgment of Christians today

1. Self - judgment

1Corin.11:28-32 "But let a man examine himself, ... for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

2. Judging the ministry or teachings of others

1Corin.14:29 "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge."

3. Judging the doctrine of false teachers

1John 4:1 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

4. Judging the actions of others

1Thess.5:21 "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

5. Judging the morality of others

1Corin.5:3 "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed,"

II. The Judgment Seat of Christ

1. Spiritual value of our work
-eternal worth of our work is judged
1Corin.3:13 "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."
2. Our motives and purposes of heart will be judged
1Corin.4:5 "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."
3. Those things done in secret will be judged
1Corin.4:5 "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."
Matt.6:4 "That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."
4. Relationships between Christians will be judged
Rom.14:10-12 "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in a brother's way."
Matt.25:40 "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."
5. The ministry of overseers will be judged
Heb.13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."
6. Our conversation will be judged
Matt.12:36 "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

HEADSHIP

The covered head:

Men meet with uncovered heads, because the head of every man is Christ, and He must never be covered. Women meet with covered heads, for the head of every woman is the man and he must be put out of sight. The vision of the saints must be filled with Christ alone. All fleshly intrusions mar the Spirit's aim of unveiling Christ to meet every heart. The double covering of the sisters should be jealously guarded because of the angels. Shorn hair is strictly forbidden to Christian women by the word of God. It is an insult to the Spirit of God.

In the gatherings of the local assembly:

The sisters represent mankind before God. The brethren represent Christ before God. As a representative of mankind, the sisters are silent, because man can say nothing in the presence of God. Rom.3:19 "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." As a representative of mankind, sisters cover the glory of man (shown in her long hair) because man has nothing in which to glory in the presence of a holy God. Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." As a representative of Christ the brethren rise to give the sacrifices of praise and intercession before a holy God.

"head of every woman is the man"

- In view here is believers in the church, not unbelievers.
- Family relationships are not the order, but each stands individually before God.

The covered head of the woman.

- indicates that man has no natural glory worth displaying

Headship

- entails willing submission
- recognition of authority of Christ
- obedience to the word of God
- acknowledgment of the responsibility of man

WOMEN IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

by Dan Shutt

The Dignity of Womanhood in the Bible:

1. The present age and its view of women
Issues of feminism and equal rights: the total misunderstanding of the Biblical role of women
2. In the Old Testament
Eve - "the mother of all living" Gen.3:20
- "from man ... for man" 1Corin.11:8-9
The woman of good character - "Her price is far above rubies" Prov.31:10
Ruth and Naomi - epitomizing redemption and testimony
Heroes of faith including Sarah, Moses' mother, Rahab, and other unnamed women Heb.11
3. In the Gospels
The incarnation of Jesus Christ
Mary - "Blessed art thou among women" Luke 1:28,42
Elizabeth, and her Spirit-led blessing" Luke 1:39
Anna, and her anticipation of the Messiah Luke 2:38
The ministry of women during the life of the Lord Luke 8:2-3
The women at the cross John 19:25
The women at the tomb Mark 16:9
4. In the Acts
Gathered in rejection with the apostles Acts 1:13-14
Participants in the Day of Pentecost and the blessings that followed Acts 2:18; 5:14
Persecuted for their faith Acts 8:3
Significant in early testimony
- Dorcus Acts 9
- Mary Acts 12:12
The first individual saved in Europe
- Lydia Acts 16:14-15
Priscilla and Aquilla
- gospel work in Corinth Acts 18:1-4
- assembly testimony in Ephesus 1Corin.16:19
- personal work with Apollos Acts 18:24-26
5. In the Epistles
Phoebe and the sisters in Rome Rom.16
Euodia and Syntyche Phil.4:2-3
Lois and Eunice 2Tim.1:5; 3:14-15

Three Divine Spheres:

1. Ordained by **Creation** (and affected by the Fall)
 - A bride for the man (suitability and completeness)
 - Love, loyalty, submission to life-long spouse Gen.2:24
 - Christ and the Church anticipated Eph.5:22
 - An order established (headship and subjection)
 - Second in creation: first in transgression
1Tim.2:13,14
 - Conflict and sorrow anticipated due to sin Gen.3:16
 - Administrator of the home
 - Vital role in child-rearing 1Tim.1:5; 3:14-15
 - Home-centred living Prov.31:10; Titus 2:5
 - Appearance and dress
 - Gender distinction that retains femininity Deut.22:5
 - Modesty Gen.3:7,21; 1Tim.2:9
 - Avoiding attention and excess 1Tim.2:9; 1Pet.3:3
2. Entered through **Redemption** (the body of Christ)
 - An equality among believers (position)
 - no distinction between the sexes Gal.3:28
 - equal sharing in the priesthood of believers 1Pet.2:5,9
 - gifts imparted for unique service 1Corin.12:11
 - disciples and worshippers of Christ
Matt.28:19; John 4:23-24
 - concerned with the needs of fellow-saints
1Corin.12:25-26
 - gospel workers within their sphere of influence
John 4:28, 39; Phil.4:2-3
3. Obligations of **Testimony** (the local Church)

The Role of the Woman in the Local Church

1. The negative injunctions
 - No usurpation of authority or leadership 1Tim.2:11-12
 - submission does not imply inferiority;
cp. rank in military
 - elderhood in a local church limited to males
1Tim.3; Titus 1
 - No teaching in mixed groups 1Tim.2:11-12
 - see also Rev.2:20 for contrast
 - this applies to teaching males; Sunday School work
does not violate this principle
 - Silence with regard to individual expression in assembly
gatherings 1Corin.14:34-35, 1Tim.2:11
 - no audible prayer, no solo singing, no individual "amens"

No uncovered heads during assembly meetings

1Corin.11:2-16

- does not apply to weddings, funerals, picnics, etc.
- Hall does not correspond to the tabernacle/temple

No ostentation or self-centered display 1Tim.2:9; 1Pet.3:3

- neither leading or defying style
- wrong to use wealth to distinguish between believers

2. The positive activities

The home as the basis for assembly effectiveness

- see principle in Prov.31:23; 1Tim.3:5

They are to be - "busy at home" Titus 2:5

- "home-managers" 1Tim.5:14

- Loving and submitting to her husband Eph.5:22;
1Tim.5:9; Titus 3:5; 1Pet.3:1, 5-6

- Sharing in the spiritual tone of the home 2John 10

Bible discussion 1Corin.14:35

Prayer with her husband 1Pet.3:7

- Bearing and raising children for the Lord

1Tim.2:15; 5:10,14

- Service for the saints 1Tim.2:10; 5:10

"showing hospitality"

"washing the feet of the saints"

"helping those in trouble"

"devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds"

- Care of aged relatives 1Tim.5:16

- Teaching and training younger women Titus 2:3-5

- Effective prayer

Godly character displayed publicly in their

- obedient to scriptures regarding proper role

- "good deeds" 1Tim.2:10

- "deaconess" (servant) Rom.16:1

- "worthy of respect .. temperate and trustworthy"

1Tim.3:11

- "self-control and purity" Titus 2:5

- "unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit" 1Pet.3:4

Assembly behaviour affects others

- "Because of the angels" 1Corin.11:10

- Conflict between sisters damages testimony

Phil.2:1-5; 4:2

- Gossip and criticism is the Devil's work

1Tim.5:13; Rev.12:10

SECTION 15

Miscellaneous

*"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen: but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."
2Corinthians 4:17, 18*

Assembly Pattern

You asked for a definition of what I understand is the meaning of "the pattern" regarding an assembly.

I would think that, as a building has a blueprint for its construction, the assembly has a blueprint for its structure. A building, of course, is physical, but the assembly is a spiritual entity; therefore its pattern deals with its spiritual characteristics.

The first mention of an assembly in the New Testament (Matthew 18:15-20) gives the nucleus of the pattern (it is a divinely initiated gathering to His Name, acts on His behalf, is where He dwells "in the midst").

The first mention of an assembly historically (Acts 2:41, 42) give us an expansion of the pattern, letting us know who composed the assembly (baptized believers who were added to the number), what characterized them (steadfast continuance and submission to the Apostles' doctrine), and what were their principle activities (gatherings in which there was teaching, the Breaking of Bread, prayer).

The first epistle addressed to a church of God (1 Corinthians) gives us a further expansion of the pattern. It is not mere coincidence that Paul calls a failing assembly back to the pattern given in Acts 2, as a study of the epistle indicates. In addition, this epistle gives further details about how an assembly functions in carrying out this pattern.

These suggestions point to the progression of teaching, introduced in the Gospels, illustrated in Acts, and explained in the Epistles.

The pattern, then, indicates what a church of God is, who forms a part of it, and how it functions.

Dave Oliver, Bryn Mawr Assembly, Bryn Mawr, PA

I really appreciated your thoughts about the pattern. I thought that perhaps the key phrase was-- "the assembly is a spiritual entity; therefore its pattern deals with its spiritual characteristics." If I could propose, then, a concise definition, it might go something like this.

"The Divine pattern for a local church consists of the sum of the New Testament's explicit statements about its spiritual characteristics. These characteristics include its Lord, its leadership, its membership, its worship, and its service."

For my part, brethren, I believe that the pattern is a complete, binding, non-negotiable body of truth, revealed in a non-complex, self-explanatory way throughout the NT. By contrast, principles are discerned and appreciated in different measure by different believers, and their degree of comprehension and adherence to them is an issue of devotion, rather than compulsion. In this light, much of the historical narrative in the Acts and even in the Epistles, are not technically part of the "pattern"; they contain principles that GUIDE us, but do not BIND us, in the same way that the pattern does. For example, we do not have to hold our prayer meetings in a sister named "Mary's" home (Acts 12), but an assembly prayer meeting -- wherever it is held -- IS a part of the pattern of Acts 2.

Personally, I am afraid that the word "pattern" is too often thrown about willy-nilly to defend our preferences, and that a more precise usage will be very helpful to young believers. It cannot be used as a broad brush to defend material practices (time of meetings, color of Bibles, type of building, etc.), but must be used in the more restricted sense of "spiritual characteristics."

Dan Shutt, Stark Road GH, Livonia, MI USA

I have been reading in 1 Kings, and noticing the exquisite physical detail with which Solomon built the Temple, according to the pattern God gave to him. As well, any of us who have studied or been in ministry meetings on the Tabernacle, have been impressed with similar physical detail.

From weights and measures, specific woods, metals, in-lays, coverings, dimensions, measurements, dyes/colors, materials, spatial relationships, specifics included and excluded, clothing, behavior, etc.; almost the entire makeup of the pattern for these two structures was physical.

However, when looking at the NT assembly, there are relatively few physical specifics. I can find the long covered hair of the sister, the short uncovered hair of the brother, the loaf and the cup, the water used in baptism, the modest apparel of sisters (and most likely brothers as well), and possibly, a physical table.

What is the significance of this? I was wondering why there was so much emphasis on the "physicalness" of the OT pattern, and only a few things physically mentioned in the NT, as far as the pattern there.

Lindsay Parks, Indiana, Pa.

Part of the answer might be that the Old Covenant was a "physical" representation of unseen spiritual realities. The New Covenant has brought us into the good of those realities.

I am thinking of the tabernacle system in particular. It was a physical representation of spiritual realities (Heb.9:23 & 24). The Old Covenant was tied down to particular localities. We worship in "spirit and in truth."

Tim McAndry

Another reason is that the OT had basically one place of gathering for the whole earth. In the NT there are literally thousands of gatherings all over the world - different cultures, climates, populations etc - what is suitable about the physical plant of one assembly, say, on Baffin Island, may not apply to the conditions obtaining at, say, Chavuma, on the farthest reaches of the Zambezi River.

The spiritual side of these reasons has been covered. God "does not dwell in temples made with hands" any longer. The nearest thing I can find for a principle or pattern for a place of gathering is that many NT believers met in houses.

Richard McCammon, Winnipeg

First, I think that the OT saints walked primarily by sight, not faith. Before I am drawn and quartered for this, let me emphasize that they were saved by faith in an unseen Lord and His word, but I think that much of their subsequent worship and service was material and tangible. They followed the cloudy pillar, they worshipped at a beautiful sanctuary, they watched the gory death of fatted rams, etc, etc.. I'm not going to expand on this, because I think we all understand the OT system.

We, on the other hand, walk primarily by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7). Christ said, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. Paul wrote, "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. 4:18).

These statements, as I read them, seem to imply a contrast; the new dispensation is essentially different from the old in this regard. This is most clearly seen in the local church, the pinnacle of God's administration in this dispensation.

There are very, very few visual, physical things that are exclusively NT local church truth. Let me update your list a bit

1. Covered heads (of sisters)
2. Bread and wine (I don't think a table is required)
3. The collection (the nature of the receptacle is irrelevant)
4. The physical separation between those "in fellowship" and those who are "without"

Interestingly, none of these are intrinsically significant; it is the spiritual symbolism "when ye are gathered together" that makes them vital. In other words, I cannot legislate the style of headcovering, the type or flavor of bread, the amount of the collection, or the distance or mode of the separation. They are symbolic in general, not in detail. But since they are symbolic of spiritual truths, I have no difficulty seeing them as essential components of the "spiritual pattern" that we have been discussing.

I did leave some things off the list--

1. Water baptism is not a local church truth, per se, though it is required prior to entering the fellowship. In other words, all TRUE believers, are to be baptized, regardless of their subsequent fitness for (or access to) assembly fellowship. For example, I do not know if there was a local assembly in Ethiopia, but it is irrelevant; the eunuch needed to be baptized to be obedient to the Lord. Baptism is "upon their confession of faith" (at least that's the formula we usually repeat), whereas fellowship is contingent upon a willingness to "continue steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine."
Lest I confuse anyone, let me say that I DO believe that baptized believers in a local church are part of the pattern given in scripture. I just don't think that baptism is EXCLUSIVELY for the local church. The doctrine of baptism is linked primarily with salvation and personal testimony ("newness of life"), not collective issues.

2. The short hair of men (and the long hair of women) are creation

truths, not church truths. Paul seems to indicate this in 1 Cor. 11:14. I believe they are, whether folks know it or not, general obligations in society at large. (I'd love to hear how others see this). Of course, like all things spiritual, our culture has largely rejected this.

3. Modesty is a Christian truth, but certainly not exclusive to a local company. I think it would be dangerous to take 1 Tim 2 or 1 Peter 3, and say that it only applies to church gatherings. We ought ALWAYS to pray, to be modest, to observe the correct relationship between the sexes. This is incumbent on all believers, at all times, regardless of their affiliation. I'm not sure if this totally answers your question, or sheds light on your consideration, but I find the subject (and your questions) fascinating. I'm sure that others will want to comment on this, but I hope we can all keep this on a profitable plane that will be a blessing to others, not an excuse for a lot of bickering.

Dan Shutt Stark Road GH, Livonia, MI, USA

As you point out, the pattern Moses and David received was from the Lord. We know Moses' pattern was taken from something existing in heaven. It was a physical representation of something spiritual, as Hebrews 8 and 9 makes clear. We have now been brought into the realization of those heavenly and spiritual things. While we enjoy access privately into heaven itself, that is publicly displayed in the assembly, since it is "pillar and ground of the truth."

While, as you mentioned, there are physical symbols of NT truth, the pattern is primarily spiritual.

Dave Oliver, Bryn Mawr Assembly, Bryn Mawr, PA

BENEFITS OF AN ASSEMBLY

The following list appeared on the Gospel Hall form in January 2001. The compilers of the list include; Lindsay Parks Indiana, Pa., Donald Armstrong, Belfast N.I. Dan Shutt, Livonia, MI. Bill Knapp, Forest Grove, Oregon, Michael Steele, Albuquerque, NM.

When all the lists are made, and all the benefits toted up, there is one preeminent thing about a local assembly -- Christ said "there am I." To know His presence, to "see Him" (Jn 20:20), is the ultimate blessing for a child of God in this age. If there were no other benefits, this one is supremely compelling!

1. Gather to the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.
2. Show forth His death until He comes again, by the Lord's Supper.
3. Preach the gospel as clearly as it can possibly be preached.
4. Teach the entire Word of God.
5. Unite in corporate prayer.
6. Provide for the needs of needy believers, in many different ways.
7. Have monetary/practical fellowship in the Lord's work.
8. Commend some of their number to full-time dedicated service.
9. Maintain the purity of the company, as God requires.
10. Display Headship, to God's glory.
11. Teach headship to angels.
12. Teach other believers "without", the truths of gathering to the Lord's Name.
13. Practice baptism of believers, by immersion.
14. Carry out discipline, whenever necessary. (see 9)
15. Practice restoration in love, whenever possible.
16. Allow for the development of gifts in younger believers.
17. Faithfully practice the priesthood of all believers.
18. Practice and display separation.
19. Instruct the young in the Word of God.
20. Wait for the coming of the Lord.
21. Show the love of Christ to a loveless world of sinners
22. Demonstrate to sinners the REAL joy of knowing Christ as Lord
23. Use every opportunity to demonstrate to sinners what true Christianity is.
24. Show the world that there is happiness and fellowship in Christ.

25. Demonstrate to the world that there still is a place on earth where Godly order and behaviour is maintained.

One thing is so different amongst us than any other place of gathering that I can think of. You might have to call it "Unity" (on the fundamentals anyway) I don't think that there is another body of supposed believers on the face of this earth where a man or a woman could send a son or a daughter anywhere across the globe to a family of other like minded believers and know that their child would be safe, and free from many of the things that lead to problems. Although some of those things..... VCR, Movies, TV, Dancing, Sports Music (so called) and other things such as politics, just to name a few.

If I still had young children I could feel safe sending them to another family of like minded believers that I had never met. Indeed many times at a conference we trust our family's to the care of God's people across the globe.

I don't know of too many other gathering of Christians that practice the Biblical use of "Letters of Commendation"

There are two main attributes of the assemblies which contribute to me gathering there. I have the weekly privilege of (as one friend put it) "having a meal with my Lord!" and remembering all that He is, and all that He's done for me. The scriptural basis for mandating it happens every week is slim, but regardless, I am free to remember Him weekly, so how could I not want to?

The second is how we practice the priesthood of all believers. Worship, teaching, prayer, etc, are not led by a person of higher position (pastor, worship leader, etc) but by the Spirit working through anyone open to Him.

Not only can I gather with my brothers and sisters to share in the Lord's Supper, but I have the freedom to pour out my heart to God, and He to me, directly or through whoever He chooses to use. I know of no other place where this is possible, which is why I'm in the assembly.

