

LESSON 3: CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP HANDOUT

THEME VERSE: *Hebrews 10:24-25*: “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

BIBLICAL MEANING OF ‘CHURCH’:

Comes from Greek word ‘*ekklesia*’; means ‘the called out’:

- *Colossians 1:12-13* — it is a **group of people** called out from the world into the Kingdom of God
- *Hebrews 5:8-9; Acts 2:47* — it is made up of those who have **believed** on the Gospel of Jesus Christ and chosen to **follow** him in **obedience**
- *1 Corinthians 12:27* — those who believe in Jesus then become the **Body of Christ** also referred to as the Church

The church is not:

- A building
- A social organization
- A political organization

WORLD-WIDE AND LOCAL CHURCH

The Bible talks about the church in 2 ways: worldwide and local.

- *Matthew 16:18* — Jesus said, “I will build my church ...” — the **worldwide** church
- *Romans 16:16* — Paul referred to local congregations as part of the church. Believers who gather into congregations in a locality are a **local** church which is part of the world-wide church of Jesus Christ

THE CHURCH IS:

- The Body of Christ with Christ as the Head. (*Ephesians 5:23,30; Ephesians 1:22-23*)
- Household of God: (*1 Timothy 3:15; Galatians 3:26 – 27; 1 John 5:19*)
 - House of God is the church
 - We are children of God
 - God is our Father and we are His children
- Vineyard of God: (*John 15:1-8*)
 - He is the vine and we are the branches
 - The branches, (Christians) must bear fruit

BIBLICAL MEANING OF FELLOWSHIP:

Comes from the Greek word ‘*koinonia*,’ which means ‘to hold something in common’ (*1 Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 2:1*).

Biblical fellowship is:

- Rooted in the relationship between believer and Jesus Christ
- Extends to relationship with one another
- Being together and doing God’s will together

Hebrews 10:25 — Believers should be part of a local church where they meet regularly for:

- Worship
- Fellowship
- Teaching
- Prayer/ministry for themselves and others
- Service to God

- Act out what God says in His Word (*James 1:22-25*)

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

- Use a prayer guide, Bible guide, etc.
- You can have a plan to read through the Bible, but you should always let the Holy Spirit lead you on how to begin.
- Consistency and regularity in reading the Bible are of great importance.
- Pick the portion of scripture you are going to read and ask yourself the following questions:
 - To whom was this portion addressed?
 - Who is the author?
 - Why was it written to them?
 - What is the message in this portion communicating to the people in that period and for us today?
 - What event led to this message? (You will have to read some portion before the passage you are reading to find out.)
 - What is the message? (You will have to read a bit further than the present portion to understand this passage in its totality.)
 - How can I apply this word in my life and that of others?

PRAYER

Prayer is defined as talking to, communicating with, hearing and receiving from God. It is yielding to God that He might accomplish His will on earth (*1 John 5:14-15*). Since we are spiritual beings, our communication with God takes place in the spiritual realm.

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY?

- We were commanded to do so.
- Jesus Himself prayed (*Luke 5:16; Hebrews 5:7*) and continues to do so (*Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25*)
- To find out God's will (*Rom. 8:27*)
- To stand in the gap for others, especially when they cannot effectively pray for themselves (*Psalms 35:13-14; Ezekiel 22:30*)

- Prayer is fellowship and communion between God and His children (*Proverbs 15:8*)
- To overcome temptations (*Luke 22:41-46*)
- Protection in service (*Romans 15:31*)
- Prayer brings results (*James 5:16-18*)
- Prayer brings glory to God (*John 14:13*)
- Prayer is spiritual nurture for the growing soul.

TO WHOM DO WE PRAY?

- To the Father in the name of Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

- Without ceasing (all the time and everywhere) (*1Thessalonians 5:17*)
- Time alone with God (*Matthew 6:5-15*)
- Group/corporate prayer (*Acts 4:23-31*)

HOW DO WE PRAY?

- The Lord enjoys listening to us as we pray.
- He also loves to talk back to us. This is what maintains our fellowship with Him

CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

- Abiding in God (*John 15:7*): in other words, be totally yielded to God and His word. Ask specifically and with good motives (*Nehemiah.2:1-9; James 4:2-3*)
- Believing (faith): (*Matthew 17:20; 21:22; James 1:5-6; Hebrews 11:1-6*) Faith comes from God by His grace and Word (*Romans 10:17*)
- Persistence in expectation (*Romans 5:5; Psalm 37:3-5; Luke 11:1-13; Isaiah 62:6-7*)

FACETS OF PRAYER

- Waiting on the Lord
- Petitions
- Spiritual warfare
- Thanksgiving
- Praise and worship
- Confession and repentance

DAILY DEVOTIONS QUIET-TIMES

- This is the tender and reverent *listening* at the feet of wisdom or true and acceptable idleness. It is an idleness that results in renewed activity.
- It is best to have your quiet time in the morning, to wash your thinking and begin the day with Christ. You can choose any hour of your convenience, but make sure you have time with God daily.
- The quiet-time produces a quiet heart which becomes a quiet confidence and quiet power.
- Only as our tap root goes deep down into God and draws sustenance from Him do we truly live.

ESTABLISHING A DEVOTION AND QUIET-TIME

- Choose a place (*Mark 1:35*). It should be quiet enough without distractions for you to have quality quiet time.
- Choose a definite time of day to do this daily (*Daniel 6:10*)
- Discipline yourself (endeavor to maintain the quiet time).
- Guard it. Take it to be of paramount importance.

HOW TO CONDUCT QUIET TIME

- Read the Bible – ask the Holy Spirit to guide you through the process.
- Praise and worship—enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise (*Psalms 100*).
- Prayers—talk to God and expect Him to talk to you.
- Have a note book to note down impressions/ insights the Lord brings to you.

HINDRANCES TO A DEVOTIONAL LIFE

- Disorderly lives
- Pressure of work
- Sin
- Laziness and procrastination

HEARING GOD SPEAK

Types of voices we may hear:

- The voice of our consciences

- The devil's voice
- God's voice
- Voice of the world

HOW TO TUNE IN TO GOD'S VOICE:

- Deal with sin and every attitude of sin (*Romans 12:1-2*)
- Desire and be ready to hear from Him all the time (*Psalms 63:1-7; Ephesians 5:17*)
He desires to speak to you (*Amos 3:7; John 10:27*)
- Abide in His presence (*Psalms 91:1-4; John 15:7*): learning to listen is not a one day experience. It is a journey we walk with God. Cultivate friendship with God. Abraham was God's friend and so He revealed to him future events (*Genesis 18:17; Isaiah 41:8*)
- Ask him to speak/reveal to you what you don't know (*Deuteronomy 29:29; 1 Samuel 3:10; Daniel 2:22; Jeremiah 33:3; Luke 24:30-32; Ephesians 1:1-18*)
- Use your measure of faith to believe that the Lord has spoken to you. Act on His word (*Romans 12:3; James 2:18-19*)
- Get a quiet place and purpose to hear Him (*Psalms 27:14; 46:10*) Moses went to the mountain. Jesus used to withdraw to lonely places to commune with God (*Luke 5:16*)
- Don't subject the Lord to a method. He speaks in many ways (*1 Kings 19:11-13; Job 33:14-15*)
- Purpose to obey Him when He speaks (*Psalms 95:8-11*)

WAYS GOD SPEAKS:

- His Word (*2 Timothy 3:16*)
- Circumstances (*Isaiah 30:20-21*)
- Vision and dreams (*Genesis 37; Job 33:14-15; Joel 2:28-29; Matthew 2:12-13*)
- Other believers (*Isaiah 50:4*)
- Through anything e.g. Balaam's donkey (*Numbers 22:24-31*) He can use Christian literature, radios, TV's sermons, etc.
- An audible voice (*Exodus 19:20-21; 1 Samuel 3; Luke 3:22*)
- The Holy Spirit guiding us into all truth (*John 16:13-15*)