

Foundations of Church for “Body Life Ministry” – Part 5

Romans 12:1-21 – 10/25/2015

NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Romans 12:1-21

Therefore I urge (beg, beseech, plead with) you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies **A LIVING AND HOLY SACRIFICE**, acceptable to God, which is your **REASONABLE SPIRITUAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP**. ² And **DO NOT** be **CONFORMED** to this world, but be **TRANSFORMED** by the **RENEWING OF YOUR MIND**, so that you may **PROVE** what the will of God is, that which is **GOOD** and **ACCEPTABLE** and **PERFECT**.

³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you **NOT** to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with **SOBER JUDGMENT**, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and **INDIVIDUALLY MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER**. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, **LET US USE THEM**: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the **LORD**; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³ distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the **LORD**. (ref.: Deut. 32:35)

²⁰ Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” (ref.: Prov. 25:21-22)

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but **OVERCOME** evil with good.

In order for there to be real Body LIFE Ministry as God Designed it ...

1. **FIRST** → We must have Surrendered and Humble Disciples of Jesus Christ
2. (still **FIRST**) Disciples who are bathing their minds and hearts with God’s Word which allows God to transform them (sanctification process of the Holy Spirit) ... working hard at studying, meditating upon, memorizing, reading, & seeking to Apply God’s Holy Word, the Bible.
3. God gives Spiritual Gifts to Born Again Disciples of Jesus Christ to be used to build up, encourage, strengthen each other in our Faith in Christ ... so that we all Continue victoriously, to **NOT** Give up, to **NOT** Give In, to Focus on Trusting and Obeying God according to His Word, **Triumphantly**.
4. We are to have the Attitudes, Actions, & Relationships bathed in Caring, Love, Encouragement, Prayer, consider our local church family as just that “our family”. The Fabric of Body Life Ministry is God’s Love
5. As a local church family, we are to be loving, forgiving, and a blessing to lost sinners around us

God has designed the Body of Christ, as a Team, a local Team. Also, like a Military Company, Platoon, etc. It is a group of individuals, as a group, that work together with one another for a common goal, with a common vision, for a common purpose. Yes, just like a military platoon of troops. The Greater Military exists, of which they are a part of. Practically speaking, though, the group they are a part of is where they actually live and do things with one another, together. This is similar to the Body of Christ. It is very much like a military operation with strategy, purpose, goals, and vision to accomplish what their commanders have set up for them.

Think of it this way ... the World-Wide Body of Christ, since Pentecost (Acts 2) includes all Born Again, Disciples of Jesus Christ, globally ... both past and present (up to this time). That is the Greater, World-Wide Body of Christ. But, in a practical sense, church is local, like a platoon. It is those folks you have said that you are covenanted with, "My Home Church", My Local Church. ... We see this articulated in Galatians chapter one: "the churches of Galatia..." and we see this in the 7 churches describes in the first 3 chapters of Revelation. . . local churches. In some cases, some of those local churches were just a few miles from each other (1 or 2 miles in some cases).

Jesus said, "... I will build my church, and the gates of hades will not prevail against it ..."

What characterizes a local church family?

1. **Jesus Christ is the Head**, the Commander, the Chief Shepherd, the one we Obey

Ephesians 1:22-23

²² And He [God the Father] put all things under His [Jesus Christ's] feet, and gave Him [Jesus Christ] to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is **His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Colossians 1:18

And He [Jesus Christ] is **the head of the body, the church**, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence

Is Jesus Christ really the Head, Leader, Motivation, Reason for the existence of that local church family? Are they really living for Him, to Glorify Him?

If Jesus Christ is truly the head of a local church family, then those folks would be Surrendered, Humble, Servant-Hearted Obedience Bond-Slaves of Christ ... studying His Holy Word, and working hard to Please Him. Again, not to please Him so that they might get saved ... but because they are Saved, they want to Please Him, to Live for Him.

Does your life show that you are Living to Glorify and Please Jesus Christ?

Can an outsider look into your life and see that you live to Glorify & Please Christ?

2. **Specific Leadership** ... the local church family is accountable to one another, under the human leadership of pastoral eldership under Christ according to God's Holy Word. 1 Peter 5:1-5; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; ; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7,17

For the person, couples, families that are wandering from one to church to another, church hopping ... going this church's Bible study, going to another church's worship celebration, and going to another church's prayer group ... which church family are they a part of?

To whom are they accountable to? Which local church family are they covenanted with to be members of? To which local church family's leadership team (pastoral eldership team) are they accountable to? All 3 different churches? **OR None?**

If somehow they lead someone to Christ, which church will that new believer be a part of? All 3? Which set of pastors (or which pastor) is that new believer supposed to submit to?

Hebrews 13:7,17: **Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.**

Who are these church floaters, church hoppers supposed to be accountable to? Which

church's leadership? According to the Word of God in Hebrews 13:7,17 and 1 Peter 5:1-5 they need to prayerfully choose a specific local church family, plant themselves there, put their hands to the plow and not look back ... sink the roots deep, pull up their sleeves and get to work helping to build up that church numerically and in quality, etc.

Romans 12:1-21 cannot work and cannot be put into real life unless each disciple of Christ is a part of ONE SPECIFIC Local Church Family. It only makes sense in that context.

Be a part of One Specific Local church family, and get to work on our Mission of Making Disciples for Christ.

3. **Context of Real People**, who used to be lost sinners, but are now Saved Saints in Christ ... but are very much not perfect in their behavior, yet.

This is why Romans 12:1-3 makes perfect sense.

Reminding us to be fully surrendered to God as living and holy sacrifices

Reminding us to be SATURATING our MINDS with God's Word, which Renews our Minds so that God's Holy Spirit Transforms us into the Image of Christ

Being Real, Sober, and Humble with one another ... **ATTITUDE is EVERYTHING ...**

Romans 12:3 → For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

In order to fulfill our Mission Successfully, the Great Commission, the Spread of the Gospel of Christ, **we must be like Triumphant, Cohesive, Team-Minded Soldiers on Mission.**

Holy Warriors for Christ (not with physical armor and weapons, but Spiritual - **2 Cor. 10:3-5**)

If we → love [one another] without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.¹⁰ Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³ distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. ... ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

So, if we all have that same kind of attitude and love for one another, instead of focused on ourselves, but on one another **BECAUSE** of the MISSION we are on ... won't we be successful? **A Platoon that is at each others' throats will NOT accomplish their mission.**

4. **STRATEGY** - Since we are ON MISSION to win the LOST to CHRIST, together ... we must have the following attitude in order to win the LOST to Christ:

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have **REGARD FOR GOOD THINGS IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.** ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. [DON'T START the FIGHT] ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. (ref.: Deut. 32:35)

²⁰ Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." (ref.: Prov. 25:21-22)

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but **OVERCOME** evil with good.

STRATEGY? Do Good to People!!!

Spread the Gospel of Christ **and** Do Good to those around us....

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." → Doing Compassionate things to those that hate us???

The Outgrowth of our LOVE for one another, because of Christ's Love to us ... should spill out to those outside of Christ. That is His goal.

The Biblical “One Anothers”:

- “Be at peace with each other.” ... Mark 9:50
- “Love one another.” ... John 13:3; 13:34-35; 15:12,17; Romans 13:8; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11,23;4:7,11
- Wash one another’s feet ... John 13:14
- We are “members one of another” ... Romans 12:5
- “Be devoted to one another.” ... Romans 12:10
- “Honor one another above yourselves.” ... Romans 12:10
- “Be of the same mind toward one another...” Romans 12:16
- “Stop passing judgment on one another.” ... Romans 14:13
- “Accept one another.” ... Romans 15:7
- “Instruct one another.” ... Romans 15:14
- “Greet one another.” ... Romans 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12, 1 Peter 5:14
- “Serve one another in love.” ... Galatians 5:13
- Do not provoke one another or envy one another ... Gal. 5:26
- “Carry each other’s burdens.” ... Galatians 6:2
- “Be patient, bearing with one another in love.” ... Ephesians 4:2; Col. 3:13
- Speak the Truth in love to one another. ... Ephesians 4:15
- Support one another and work together with one another →
(according to the proper working of each part... as each “joint” supplies) ... Eph 4:16
- “Be kind and compassionate to one another.” ... Ephesians 4:32
- “Forgive each other.” ... Ephesians 4:32
- “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” ... Ephesians 5:19
- “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” ... Ephesians 5:21
- “In humility consider others better than yourselves.” ... Philippians 2:3
- “Teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.” ... Colossians 3:16
- “Encourage/Comfort one another.” ... 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- “Build each other up.” ... 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- “Exhort one another ...” Heb. 3:13; 10:25
- “Spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” ... Hebrews 10:24
- “Share with others.” ... Hebrews 13:16
- “Do not slander one another.” ... James 4:11
- “Don’t grumble against each other.” ... James 5:9
- “Confess your sins to each other.” ... James 5:16
- “Pray for each other.” ... James 5:16
- “Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.” ... 1 Peter 5:5

ELDERS

(originally published by Pastor Rick Howerton*)

- A. **Each church should have multiple elders** (Acts 14:23, Acts 20:17, Titus 1:5)
- B. **The responsibilities of an elder**
1. An example to the church (1 Peter 5:1-5)
 2. Believe God for healing of people and act upon that belief (James 5:14)
 3. Shepherd the church (1 Peter 5:1-2, Acts 20:28)
 4. "able to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2) Notice... *able to*, not responsible for always teaching, on an ongoing basis.
 5. Govern the church (1 Tim. 5:17-18; Hebrews 13:7,17)
 6. Encourage people by explaining and exposing sound doctrine (Titus 1:9)
 7. Refute those who oppose sound doctrine (Titus 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:14-26)
- C. **The attitude of elders** (1 Peter 5:1-5)
1. willingly serve
 2. do not serve for shameful gain (to build yourself up)
 3. serve eagerly
 4. never act as a domineering leader (not to rule harshly or oppressively)
 5. called by God to serve... **not** serving because no one else will
- D. **Qualifications for Elders** (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9; 2 Tim. 2:14-26)
1. above reproach
 2. husband of one wife (i.e. male gender of the human species)
 3. temperate
 4. sensible
 5. hospitable
 6. apt teacher
 7. no drunkard
 8. not violent but gentle
 9. not quarrelsome
 10. no lover of money
 11. must manage their own household well
 12. mustn't be a recent convert
 13. must be well thought of by outsiders
 14. blameless
 15. *"having 'faithful' children who are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient"*
 16. not arrogant
 17. not quick tempered
 18. not greedy for gain
 19. a lover of goodness
 20. master of himself
 21. upright
 22. holy
 23. self-controlled
 24. *"must hold firm to the sure word as taught"*
 25. The Word of God must be known and held to above all other ideologies and/or philosophies (Titus 1:9; Colossians 2:8)
 26. Must be doctrinally sound (Titus 1: 9)
 27. Must be willing to rebuke, convict, and convince those who oppose the truths of the Bible in a gentle, humble and loving way. (Titus 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:14-26; 3:16-4:4)
- E. **How elders are to be regarded and treated by the church family:**
1. Elders are to be obeyed (Hebrews 13:7,17)
 2. Elders are to be submitted to (Hebrews 13:7,17)
 3. Those that rule well are deserving of "double honor" (1 Tim. 5:17-18)
 4. Younger persons are to "be subject to the elders" (1 Peter 5:5)

5. *“Preaching / Teaching elders”* deserve “double honor” (1 Tim. 5:17-18)
- F. **Elders are to be chosen after a time of fasting and prayer. God makes the decision, not man.**
(Acts 14:23)
- G. **There is to be a ceremonial experience to bless those chosen by God to be elders** (Acts 14:23)
- H. **Elders will answer to God for their oversight of the church** (Hebrews 13:7,17)
- I. **The reward... An effective elder will receive “an unfading crown of glory”**
(1 Peter 5:4)
- J. **The kind of person our church family needs to “elder”, “shepherd” or “oversee” them**
1. someone with a **calling** not a title (& not just filling in because no-one else will do it)
 2. someone who has been completely honest in the interview process
 3. someone who will make **great sacrifice** to prepare the Bride of Christ for His return
 4. someone willing to spend hours daily, for years to come, learning and growing in understanding of God’s Word
 5. someone who will fast and pray to hear from God on behalf of the church
 6. someone who is willing to live in true, unbridled, redemptive **community** with all of the other elders
 7. someone **willing to do what’s right** instead of what’s easy **no matter** what **personal loss** is demanded
 8. someone who understands and accepts the **lines of authority** as God has blessed and who will honor the roles God has outlined (i.e. staff, leadership team, pastor-teacher)
 9. someone willing to keep every elder conversation confidential, including spouses, best friends, and counselors
 10. someone willing to set aside business practices for **biblical practices**
 11. someone willing to deal with their own baggage to become all God intended them to be so others can see the redemptive process in practice
 12. someone willing to live out **all of the expectations** of membership of our church family
 13. someone willing to share a verbal witness with others on an ongoing basis
 14. someone willing to exercise church discipline in protection of individuals and our local church family (see Matt. 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-4)
 15. someone fully accepting the fact that God is pouring out “new wine” and we (*our church family*) are the “new wineskins”. The elder body cannot be a group of people subconsciously or consciously wanting to relive, retrieve, or realign our church family to be a church they once attended.

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