

Meeting

And all those who believed were together...
Acts 2:44a

1. Gathering to enjoy Christ's presence

Matthew 18:20

For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.

2. Primarily in the homes

Acts 2:46-47a

And day by day... from house to house, they partook of *their* food with exultation and simplicity of heart, Praising God and having grace with all the people...

3. For teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer

Acts 2:42

And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

4. In mutuality

1 Corinthians 14:26a

What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation...

5. For building up the church by the functioning of all the members

1 Corinthians 14:4b

... but he who prophesies builds up the church.

1 Corinthians 14:31

For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

Meeting

Gathering to enjoy Christ's presence

One outstanding characteristic of the church is that it meets. A Christian can never substitute meetings with "self-taught" pursuits. God has a category of grace reserved for the meetings only. If we do not meet with others, that portion of corporate grace will not be available to us.¹

How should we meet? The first principle in the Bible concerning meetings is that all meetings are conducted in the Lord's name. Matthew 18:20 says, "Gathered into My name," which can also be translated as, "Gathered under My name." What does it mean to be gathered under the Lord's name? It means to be under the Lord's authority. The Lord is the center, and everyone is drawn to Him. We do not go to a meeting to visit certain brothers or sisters, nor do we go because we are attracted by certain brothers or sisters. We go to the meeting to be gathered together with other Christians under the Lord's name. The Lord is the center. We do not meet to listen to someone's preaching but to meet the Lord. If you meet to listen to someone's preaching, I am afraid you are coming under that person's name, not under the Lord's name. Sometimes, men's names are used to attract people. This is to draw men under that person's name. But the Lord says that we have to meet under His name.²

In Matthew 18:20 the Lord said, "For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst." His presence here refers to His presence in the meeting. Only in the meeting can we have this second kind of presence. The Lord's presence with an individual and His presence in the meeting are two different things. Some only know the Lord's presence as individuals. But this knowledge is insufficient. The more compelling and powerful presence is experienced only in the meeting; we cannot experience such a presence individually. Although individually we can have the Lord's presence, this presence is never as great or as powerful as His presence in the meetings. But when we are among the brothers and sisters we can touch a presence which we could not otherwise experience as individuals. We have to learn to meet together with the brothers and sisters because it is in the meeting that we experience the Lord's special presence. This is a tremendous blessing.³

The outstanding characteristic of the church is that it meets

Primarily in the homes

The main place in which Christians should meet is in the homes. Acts tells us that the early churches met in the homes of the believers. The Epistles tell us of four different homes in which the churches met (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2). To meet in the homes is organic. If we take the way revealed in Acts, whatever we do will be organic, not organizational.

Meeting in the believers' homes is for all the members of Christ to function. In any big meeting it is hard for the believers to function. But in a small meeting with four or five, or two or three, even a small boy or girl could function. He or she could say, "The Lord Jesus loves me, and it is so good that I love Him." This is a small function, but do not despise it. The new believers will function in a small way at first, but from that point, they will continue to progress in life and in function. By the functioning of all the members, the small home meetings will grow and be built up. When a new couple brings forth a little infant, they have the faith that their family will be built up. The same applies to the home meetings. We should exercise our faith and practice the home meetings with much expectation.⁴

For teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer

There are several different types of Christian meetings recorded in the Bible. The first is the "bread breaking meeting." Acts 20:7 says, "And on the first day of the week, when we gathered together to break bread." To break bread is to eat the Lord's supper, remembering the Lord who died for us (1 Cor. 11:20, 23-25).

Another type of meeting is the prayer meeting. In Acts 4:24-31 it is recorded, "And when they heard this, they lifted up their voice with one accord to God... and as they were beseeching, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke the word of God with boldness." It says here that in those days when the disciples were under persecution, they met together to pray with one accord. That kind of prayer caused them to be filled outwardly with the Holy Spirit and to speak the word of God with boldness. The Bible also says, "Prayer was being made fervently by the

Key Verses

Matthew 18:20 For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 2:46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart.

1 Corinthians 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

Ephesians 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

church to God concerning him” (Acts 12:5); “where [the house of Mary] a considerable number were assembled together praying” (12:12). On the day when Peter was imprisoned, the church prayed fervently for him, and a considerable number were assembled together in a sister’s house, praying for him specifically. That prayer caused God to perform a great miracle, delivering Peter out of prison.

Moreover, in our small group meetings we need to practice teaching by mutual asking and mutual answering. We need to consider how to answer questions on subjects such as objective justification, reconciliation, subjective sanctification, and further growth in life. It seems that we understand the doctrines, but when it comes to the matter of teaching, we may think that it is too difficult. However, if we do not do our best to teach, the small groups will have no way to go on. In the group meetings the main thing is to perfect and equip one another by teaching. If we do not practice the mutual teaching, the group meetings will not be so useful. We need to make the group meetings very busy, with much traffic. This depends on our asking and on our answering; it depends on our teaching.⁵

In mutuality

The characteristic of a Christian meeting is, first, mutuality, and second, speaking. Speaking in mutuality is not talking about common things but speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and exhorting one another. Mutuality is not one-sided. It is not only one speaking, but everyone speaking. You speak to me and I speak to you. This is the characteristic of a Christian meeting.

God’s ordained way of meeting has a characteristic, that is, speaking to one another in mutuality (Eph. 5:19), exhorting one another (Heb. 10:25). In a proper Christian meeting each one has a psalm, a teaching, or a revelation (1 Cor. 14:26). These are all speaking. The teaching and bringing the good news of Jesus as the Christ in Acts 5:42 are also speaking. When believers gather together without speaking, the characteristic of a meeting of the believers is gone. However, when everyone cannot wait to speak, the characteristic of a meeting is manifested.⁶

For building up the church by the functioning of all the members

Ephesians 4:16 says, “All the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.” Therefore, each member should function according to his own measure. If in a church all the believers were like this—you performed your function, I fulfilled my duty, he carried out his charge, and each one operated according to his own measure and manifested his particular function—then the church there would be built up.

Everyone who is being built up in a church must learn to exercise his function. Colossians 2:19 shows us that in the Body some are joints while others are sinews. Joints are for supply, whereas sinews are for knitting together. The supplying joints and the knitting sinews are necessary for the building up of the Body. These two kinds of members are big members. Besides these, there are many small members. In the church every one of the brothers and sisters is a member of the Body. Hence, under normal circumstances, each one, whether big or small, has a function.

We should not have the wrong concept that all the areas of service in the church are the responsibilities of the pastors and preachers. We need to see that the service in the churches is the responsibil-

ity of every believer. In the New Testament age all the saved ones are priests, and they are also members one of another. Hence, in the church we all need to exercise our function according to our measure for the building up of the Body of Christ.⁷

Assignment

Consider your own participation in corporate Christian meetings. Pray for the Lord’s leading in light of the points in this lesson and your own consideration.

Prayer Assignment

Pray that the Lord would strengthen you to function in meetings within your measure for the building up of the church.

Additional Daily Verses

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Matthew 18:20	Acts 2:42	Acts 2:46	1 Corinthians 14:26	Ephesians 4:16	Colossians 2:19	Romans 12:4-5

Weekly Memorization Verses

Acts 2:46

And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart,

1 Corinthians 14:26

What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.