

## THE MODERN CHURCH

*Our modern times are putting great pressures on the providers of goods, services and religion. People want results without putting in the corresponding effort. Most are living a free and easy lifestyle while at the same time expecting the benefits of carefully measured physical and mental disciplines. Large numbers are looking for instant results... they try to lose weight through every gimmicky pill or potion, while continuing to consume more calories than they burn... they want loving families while at the same time they are too busy or selfish to build them.. they want assets and goods, but won't budget and save to make it possible... they want to be blessed Christians, but won't address the basics of true spiritual growth.*

*Numerous churches are responding to contemporary values by offering more style than substance... congregations are being offered 'feel good' ministry rather than 'do good' ministry. Huge bands, modern and emotive music, charismatic preaching, discipline avoidance and materialism, are overtaking the power of God in a society almost unwilling to follow God's written word. For many, their Christianity is paper thin through minimum input, while the modern preacher fills the void with shallow but highly emotive substitutes. However, there are no substitutes for essential practices... despite pressure to modernise Christian worship.*

*Once a person is filled with the Holy Spirit (anointed), there are three basic disciplines that cannot be avoided. They are Prayer (communication with God, both with tongues and with the natural understanding), reading the word of God (learning and understanding) and sharing our lives with others (fellowship and evangelism).*

**1. Prayer...** every relationship depends on frequent quality, communication.

**JOH 4:24** God [is] a Spirit: and they that **worship him must** (\*1163, an absolute essential) **worship** [him] in spirit and in truth. *Spiritual prayer is to pray in tongues... it is an essential part of our worship.* **1COR 14:14** For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my **spirit prayeth**, Paul defines spiritual prayer.

*Praying in tongues is essential because it addresses issues which are impossible for us to do.*

**ROM 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also **helpeth** (*assists*) our infirmities (*weaknesses and faults*): for we know not what we should pray for as we **ought** (\*1163, as is essential): but the Spirit itself maketh **intercession** (*speaks on our behalf*) for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. *Beyond our understanding.*

**27** And he that **searcheth** the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh **intercession** for the saints according to the will of God. *Paul states clearly that we don't know how to pray in a suitable manner in our common language, because we are not consciously aware of all needs. We all know how to petition God in our natural language, but Paul tells us that we definitely need the intercession of the Spirit as well.*

*A source of strength and power.*

**JUDE 1:20** But ye, beloved, **building up yourselves** on your most holy faith, **praying** in the Holy Ghost, *Praying in tongues gives us strength, adds qualities, develops spiritual fruits.*

**2. Reading & Study** are equally vital for all.

**1TIM 4:16** 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. *Learning & understanding things about God is life saving.*

*Correct decisions and options can only come through a working knowledge of your topic.*

**2TIM 2:15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. *To know the difference between truth and error can only come through study and commitment... these are the issues of life. Some fear that they are too old or incapable of study... this is no problem for God...* **JOH 16:13** Howbeit when he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all **truth...**

**COL 3:16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you **richly** (*abundantly*) in all wisdom; **teaching** and **admonishing** (*instructing & warning*) one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. *Instruction should be received in the same way that a psalm is sung or a joyful song is rejoiced with... God's directions should be music to our ears.*

**3. Fellowship...** builds faith, breathes life into God's family and leads the unsaved to Christ.

**ROM 10:17** So then **faith** cometh by **hearing**, and **hearing** by the **word** of God. *The emphasis is on hearing God's word... hearing builds faith... nothing happens until faith happens. The strength of your faith determines every step you will or won't take.*

*God relies on dedicated and faithful people to build his church... the church is both a family and a team.*

**HEB 10:24** And let us **consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works**: *This is a law which requires fellowship.*

**25** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. *God has already foreseen the modern church... he knows the modern style of religion... it is selfish and unrewarding, empty and unfruitful... be part of an faithful fellowship and its people, especially at the end of the age.*

*God needs his gospel to be promoted to all men... we have been given the power to overcome all problems.*

**ROM 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. *This is the ultimate fellowship... bringing children into the family.*

*The principles outlined above are essential... it is imperative that we all learn to worship in Spirit & Truth.*

## **House Group goals for the year.**

### **The voice gifts**

**1COR 11: 7** So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

*The general encouragement was that the church would be seeking growth through the use of the gifts of the Spirit. Paul wanted every individual to grow and thrive, so that the best possible life could be achieved.*

**1COR 13:1** Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

*Paul insisted that the edification of the voice gifts was an essential part of the church meeting. It is an important growth factor for the development of the church and individual alike. It also is a time of blessing for visitors.*

**1COR 13:9** For we know in part, and we **prophesy in part.**

*Prophecy and interpretation operate through faith... the motivation behind these gifts is to edify the church... not only the speaker. Prophecy is a God inspired voice gift that contains a combination of truths already known to the speaker and direct revelation through the spirit. The gift is intended to be edifying to the whole church and should bring encouragement and blessing to all.*

*It is not a time to bring forward personal views, nor personal correction themes. The best way to use the gift is to wait for the Lord to bring words to mind. Preconceived ideas and favourite topics are not the intention of the gifts. If you already have a topic in mind, then it would be in God's interest not to use the gift as it is already tainted by personal views. If a gift is going to be correctional... let it come from someone else; this will establish the truth of God's will.*

*The house group is a perfect training ground for the development of the voice gifts. It should remain a theme for the whole year.*

### **Followup**

*Godly service to God's people...*

*We use a common term for all the various aspects of support... it is called follow up. There are numerous scriptures which highlight the principles of hospitality and nurturing. The simplest and most informative is found in the parable of the sheep and goats.*

**MAT 25:31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

**32** And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

**33** And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

**34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

**35** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

**36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

**37** Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

**38** When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

**39** Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

**40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, 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. *These people understood followup... it saved their lives.*

**41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

**42** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

**43** I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

**44** Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

**45** Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

**46** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. *These didn't understand followup... it cost them their lives.*

*God wants a united body... the results are better for him, as more souls get saved and more stay saved.*

**1COR 12: 25** That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.