

THE HOUSE OF GOD

Scripture:

1 Peter 2:1-5 “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ²as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. ⁴Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Introduction:

In the Old Testament, both the Tabernacle and the Temple were referred to as the house of God. When we come to the New Testament, we find a change in the concept of the house of God. The Believers themselves are considered to be the house of God in New Testament Christianity. Jesus Christ Himself is known to be the builder of this house of God and the believers who are the house are known as “living stones” and also as the “ecclesia”.

I. The Foundation of the House of God.

- A. Jesus declared that it was His church that was being built.
Matthew 16:15-18 “He said to them, *“But who do you say that I am?”* ¹⁶Simon Peter answered and said, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* ¹⁷Jesus answered and said to him, *“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”* ¹⁸*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*
1. The foundation of the House of God is the truth that Jesus Christ is the very son of God.
 2. The House that Christ builds is to be a house that is aggressive against the enemy.
 3. The gates of hell cannot prevail against an aggressive church. Those gates are stationary. Gates do not move around.
- B. The building material Christ uses is called “living stones” and we are those stones.
1 Corinthians 3:9 “*For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.*”
1. Believers must begin to realize that our ministry is a ministry of building up the house of God.
 2. Building up the house of God will include but is not necessarily limited to:
 - a. birthing new babies (evangelism)
 - b. teaching and training in the truths of the Christian faith (discipleship)
 - c. loving and encouraging other members of the family (fellowship)
 - d. sharing the gifts of the spirit that God has placed in our lives so that the house of God will grow into maturity. (ministry)
 - e. establishing an atmosphere where the King is recognized and lifted up (worship)
- C. The entire building process is initiated by the builder of the house.
Acts 20:32 “*So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*”

II. The family of the House of God

- A. We must cooperate with God as He brings us together to be a family.
Ephesians 2:19-22 “*Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,* ²⁰*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,* ²¹*in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy*

temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

1. God has established the small group concept in order to turn strangers and foreigners into fellow saints and friends.
 2. Together we become a holy temple for a dwelling place for God.
 3. I need to begin to be involved in those activities that establish the family of God.
- B. Small groups give us a great opportunity be obedient to the main work of the living stones.

I Thessalonians 5:11 “Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”

- C. Every person is called upon to make His/her contribution to the life of the household of faith.

Ephesians 4:15-16 “but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

1. In a small group setting each person has an opportunity to make a contribution to the life of the whole.
2. It appears that God has anointed every believer with gifting that is to be shared with a spirit of love.
3. Who do you love the most? Those of your family. Those you get to know more intimately than others.
4. We see here that each part has a responsibility to the building up of every other part.

A pastor was once asked to define "Faithful Attendance at Worship," and this was his reply:

All that I ask is that we apply the same standards of faithfulness to our church activities that we would in other areas of our life. That doesn't seem too much to ask. The church, after all, is concerned about faithfulness.

Consider these examples: If your car started one out of three times, would you consider it faithful? If the paperboy skipped Monday and Thursdays, would they be missed? If you didn't show up at work two or three times a month, would your boss call you faithful? If your refrigerator quit a day now and then, would you excuse it and say, "Oh, well, it works most of the time." If your water heater greets you with cold water one or two mornings a week while you were in the shower, would it be faithful? If you miss a couple of mortgage payments in a year's time, would your mortgage holder say, "Oh, well, ten out of twelve isn't bad"? If you miss worship and attend meetings only often enough to show you're interested but not often enough to get involved, are you faithful?

III. We need one another in the house of God.

I Corinthians 12:14-19 “For in fact the body is not one member but many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? ¹⁸But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where would the body be?”

- A. Each person is uniquely called by God to live out his/her life in a unique fashion in relationship with the house of God.
- B. The Holy Spirit connects each believer to the body as a working, functioning member.
- C. Every member must live in intimacy just as every part of a natural body must be in an intimate relationship.
- D. Let's begin to do our part in the building of the house of God.

I Corinthians 14:26 *“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”*

Alone I cannot serve the Lord effectively, and he will spare no pains to teach me this. He will bring things to an end, allowing doors to close and leaving me ineffectively knocking my head against a wall until I realize that I need the help of the Body as well as of the Lord.

-- Watchman Nee

No member of a crew is praised for the rugged individuality of his rowing.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Light is the task where many share the toil.

-- Homer

A major reason capable people fail to advance is that they don't work well with their colleagues.

-- Lee Iacocca