

## **The Healthiest Christians will Have a Relationship with God and with One Another**

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### **"The Healthiest Christians will Have a Relationship with God and with One Another"**

I am often asked if Christians should attend conferences, revivals, or renewals when they break out to be a part of the present moves of God. The answer is "yes" and "no." If you wanted to be a part of what God did on the Day of Pentecost, you had to be in Jerusalem at the right time. The Lord had told over 500 to go to Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Father, but only 120 were still there on the Day of Pentecost and were a part of the Holy Spirit coming on that first day. The movement soon spread abroad, but it was actually years before it even left Jerusalem. Those who had not waited likely missed the Lord for a long time.

When those who preached the Gospel were spread abroad, it is likely that those who had seen the resurrected Christ, but had not tarried in Jerusalem like He told them to do, later received the blessing. However, they probably all had remorse about having not waited in Jerusalem and been a part of the basic formation of the Church. There is something wonderful about being in a fresh move of God that in some ways can be one of the most wonderful experiences we can have. It is a great tragedy to have had the opportunity to be in one and missed it.

### **Be Aware of His Messengers and Their Messages**

As discussed, the Lord lamented over the judgment that would come to Jerusalem because they did not know the time of their visitation. To miss a visitation of the Lord is a tragedy and often brings a judgment because it is one of the worst affronts to God, revealing how out of touch with Him we are. What a tragedy it would have been to have Jesus preaching in our village but to have been so busy with our own stuff that we did not even go out to see Him! When He lamented over Jerusalem He also said, "From now on you will not see Me until you say 'blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'" (see [Matthew 23:39](#)). This meant from that time if we were to see Him, we would have to see Him in those He sent to us. Therefore, it behoves us even more to be aware of His messengers and their message when they come.

I have met many who say their personal relationship with the Lord is so great that they do not want to leave it to go to church or to conferences. I'm glad this most basic part of Christian life is so good for them, but they are inevitably weak and lacking in major areas of their lives because they leave out the other important elements of fellowship. **There is a dynamic of experiencing God with others**

**that is also essential for a healthy spiritual life.** It also reveals a basic pride when we say we do not need others in the Body of Christ.

I have met some who said they only read the Bible because they do not want to hear from men but from God. Well, it was men that the Bible was written through, and it is still men who carry His present message. It is right to be more devoted to the Bible than other books or preachers, but we need the teachers He has sent to us too, or, as He said, we will not see Him.

### **Levels of Relationships**

Our personal relationship with the Lord should always be better than our corporate relationship with Him. However, our corporate relationship with God is crucial too.

**The healthiest Christians will have a relationship with God on three levels: personal, the local church, and a relationship with the whole Body of Christ.**

These three levels of relationship are reflected in the tabernacle. The Holy of Holies, where the ark of God and the manifest presence of the Lord was, speaks of our most personal relationship with God. Only the high priest could enter there, which he had to do alone, just as the highest form of worship is our personal, intimate relationship with Him. However, to get there you had to go through the other levels of relationship. In the Holy Place, there was a group who entered to perform the divine service, but it was still a smaller, fairly intimate group. In the Outer Court all could enter, which represents our relationship to the whole Body of Christ, and through the whole body to Him.

We also see these three levels of worship that the nation of Israel was commanded to have. They had their personal responsibility and relationship to Jehovah, then their local gatherings within their tribes and villages, which grew into the Synagogue system, and then they were all commanded to go to Jerusalem three times a year to worship Jehovah and feast together with all of the tribes of Israel. If they did not gather with the local members of their own tribe, they would lose the vision and purpose of their own tribe. Likewise, if they did not gather with all of Israel in Jerusalem, as commanded, they would lose their vision for being a part of the whole nation. However, these could never supplant their personal responsibility and relationship to God on a daily basis.

**Likewise, the strongest, healthiest Christians have all three of these levels of relationship in their lives.** We must have that very personal relationship with God where we enter before Him alone. This is the highest and best but is incomplete, and if we only have this we will be incomplete too. It is noteworthy that the Lord said it was not good for man to be alone when man had God as his companion. God purposely created man to need Him but to also need other people. That is also why the Apostle John wrote that we cannot really love God if we do not

love His people too (see I John 4:20). **The two go together, and those who truly have an intimate relationship with God will also inevitably have a close relationship with His people.** You cannot be properly joined to the Head without also being properly joined to the rest of the body.

## Christian Groups

We must have a strong local church relationship with a group that we are truly knit together with in our service to the Lord. Then we should have regular times of gathering with those from across the spectrum of the Body of Christ for worship and to maintain our common vision as members of the greater body. When the Lord compared people to sheep, it was because the metaphor relates to the nature of people in many ways. Just as a flock of sheep that only inbreeds and does not crossbreed with other flocks becomes weaker with each succeeding generation, so will Christians. Denominations, movements, and local churches that are isolated from other Christians will become increasingly weak Christians.

Pastors or shepherds who try to prevent their people from relating to other Christian groups are at best very bad shepherds and can even be false shepherds. With the promulgation of Christian television, the Internet, and conferences where the great things that God is doing is noised abroad, to prevent a group from interchange with other Christians requires a high level of control and the use of fear, which inevitably will cause the ultimate disintegration or perversions of the group. For this reason, the churches and movements that are growing the fastest are always those that are free and promote interchange with the rest of the Church.

Let us always keep in mind that it is "a strand of three cords that is not easily broken" (see Ecclesiastes 4:12), and resolve to be strong in all three levels of our relationship to God. Those who do this will most likely be in the right place at the right time and will be a part of the great things God is doing.

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