

The Most Ignored Teaching of Jesus

Jesus told His followers that they should not exercise authority one over another among themselves...

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; (Luke 22:25-29, KJV).

Jesus told His followers that “ministry” is NOT authority over other believers...

42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

(Mark 10:42-43, KJV).

This concept is the most ignored and little studied teaching of Jesus.

Have you studied it?

Have you heard it studied in your church?

First let's examine it in detail...

35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

(Mark 10:35-45, KJV).

The apostles of Jesus had been working with Him for some time, their thought was that He was going to lead a rebellion against the Roman empire. They believed He was going to use His God-given power to free Israel from Roman rule. They thought He would set up a kingdom, a rulership and they were vying for position in the hierarchy they conceived.

(This in itself should show us that there certainly is a danger that followers of Jesus could start to believe in hierarchy and authority among themselves. If these men, who were walking and working with Jesus, could some how have missed this concept, and begun to think that He was going to be a ruler over others, certainly we can today! These things are in the Bible for a reason!)

They were, of course, very wrong. We know that Jesus came to Israel 2000 years ago, not to set up a physical kingdom in the earth, but rather to save the world from sin, to open wide the gates of heaven, and to teach and demonstrate principles of God's kingdom for His followers to live by.

He shocked them by saying that His kingdom did not operate by rulership and authority, but rather by servant hood.

Jesus Said It

Some people like to “see” our concepts of “ministerial authority” in the ministry of Jesus. They like to read into scripture the concept of pastoral authority. Jesus of course is the pastor. His followers, the sheep. They try to find places where Jesus “taught with authority over others”. Places where He assigned and appointed jobs for those “under” Him. Rebukes, scoldings--”ruling power”. They try to find Jesus’ pulpit. They read these things into Jesus’ actions--”certainly He had authority over His followers--certainly He had power”

Well, certainly Jesus did have God’s authority upon Him--but--how did He exercise that authority?

How did He use it?

To heal the sick--to cast out the devil--to feed the poor and needy.

He only taught “with authority” specifically over the pharisees and priest...

21 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

(Mark 1:21-22, KJV).

Why were the priests shocked by the fact that Jesus taught as “one that had authority”?

2 reasons....

1. According to the Old Covenant, only the priests, the Levitical tribe, had God’s authority to minister in the temple. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, He was a member of the “congregation” of Israel (the word “congregation, Biblically most often refers to the 11 non-ministry tribes of Israel) Jesus spoke with God’s power on Him. Of course this shocked them since it was outside the rules and order of their concept of assembly, and outside their concept of the order of the House of God.

[What many don’t realize is that common church function is very much based on the old Covenant. Imagine if a member of the congregation stood up and preached one Sunday morning? Certainly the pastor would be shocked! The people might like it, but the pastor would have something to say! This proves how very much the old covenant influences our supposedly new covenant church.]

2. Secondly, Jesus exercised authority specifically over the priests, since He was casting out their system of operation and ministerial function, which was correct in the old covenant, but would not be in the new covenant.

He was demonstrating new covenant ministry and **priesthood**--which is meant to be in all believers

1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy **priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1Pe 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal **priesthood**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Re 1:6 And hath made us **kings and priests** unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Re 5:10 And hast made us unto our God **kings and priests**: and we shall reign on the earth.

[Also of interest to note is that fact that Gods' first and highest will for Israel was for a priesthood in all. The governments which followed were in fact not Gods' will, but rather God compromising to the sinful will of Israel. Again it is amazing how much in the Christian church function is based upon the failed human governments of Israel]

The demonstrations of Christ's authority are clearly over sickness, sin and Satan, and specifically against the old covenant principles of a limited authoritarian ministry and human hierarchal rulership.

But the question is: did Jesus exercise authority over His followers?

Did He have authority over His disciples?

So many have attempted to read "ministerial authority" into Christ's' actions and ignored what Jesus Himself said!

Jesus clearly told His followers not to exercise authority one over another, but he also said that He did not exercise authority over His followers...

25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 **Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister**, and to give his life a ransom for many.

(Matthew 20:25-28, KJV).

42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

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Jesus said He did not exercise authority over His apostles. He said He served them.

Those are His words not a supposition!

The Cute Little Inside -Out Kingdom

Jesus teaching on authority is often trivialized in this way, the “inside-out kingdom”--

“Oh yes--I’ve heard of that--the greatest is the least--the first last”

Many have tried to lump these teachings of Jesus into a “cute little heavenly package”

It goes something like this...

In heaven, when we die, some people who were big and important here on earth will not be so big and important, while other poor folks will have positions of honor.

This may be true (and is in fact a hint of God's way of operating) however this teaching is usually treated as "kids' stuff" by many--sort of a cute little idea that has no real earthly meaning for us in our lifetime. Certainly it has nothing to do with the church or how it should operate! It gives people a nice "feeling" since most of us feel like we are the underdogs and many have feelings that other people have bossed them around (maybe even in church!), but in heaven, God will see and do what is just and give the right people positions of honor.

Well these things might be true, but it has absolutely nothing to do with Jesus' teaching of authority. These ideas serve to show how little these teachings have been studied by "Biblical scholars" over the years, and, how the powerful and repetitive tradition of "ministerial authority" has influenced our Bible study.

Jesus is giving a specific functional principle for His followers to operate by.

It's not just a "feeling".

Jesus is speaking about His entire method of operating. His entire ministerial function. He set a perfect example (anyone dare to argue with that idea?) and He is saying that His example is to not exercise authority over others. His definition of "ministry" is someone who does not exercise authority over others.

He specifically states that this is a new covenant function. Notice in Luke 22:29....

"And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;"

The words translated as "appoint unto you a kingdom" are the Greek term to hand over a covenant. This is the only place in all the Bible that Jesus used this term! If we truly are new covenant believers, shouldn't we spend some time studying this principle?

Jesus operated in apostleship. He worked with others as equals. He called His followers "friends"....

Joh 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you **friends**; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

He quickly taught them to do all He did, and prayed they would do greater things...(release)...

Joh 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and **greater works** than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

At the same time, Jesus was under someone's authority...

Joh 14:10 Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak **not of myself**: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Jesus (again these are His words) when He operated in ministry, as a man in the earth, explained that His mission and His specific actions were not His own desires or thoughts. Rather, He followed an authority, a power, a rulership--the rulership of God the Father--who was not physically present, yet through prayer and the Holy Spirit gave Him a predetermined mission (the Gospel) and specific instructions to carry out this mission.

Part of the operational instruction the Father gave to Jesus was to serve (minister) to others and to work with a small group of equals.

why a small group?

Simply because it is less likely to create the need for a powerful leader. Human agreement gives rulers power. If enough people agree that someone is king, then that person has power. They really are no different than anyone else (and of course are sinners just like the rest of us!) yet human agreement gives authority to others.

The small group functioning as a group of equals, can follow the instruction of a leader who is not physically present as long as one person does not seek the preeminence (see 3John 1:9). The group can also become bound if they follow authoritarian rituals which were created by other human authority.

In the small group function, everyone can speak, everyone can express ideas, opinions, and in fact argue. Remember the context we are studying--2 members of the group express their opinions about leadership and function and Jesus quickly and simply explains His ideas. This is non-authoritarian functioning.

[just a note: the Christian church of today is very disobedient to these ideas. We are sure that Christian function consists of a ritual--one which has been ordained by a previous authority (namely the catholic church) and the authoritarian function of one "preeminent minister" as the showcase of our function!]

Some say that the apostles exercised authority over the church in the Bible (if they did they were disobedient to Jesus).

But lets' suppose this is true. How did they "exercise authority over the churches?"

By writing letters from afar.

Imagine this happening today. The truth is that part of the example that Jesus set (which the apostles were being obedient to) is to leave. To not be a "permanent ruler". Jesus example is to leave and govern from afar. This is the spirit of release He demonstrated.

Jesus gave a clear, specif (and perfect!) demonstration of non-authoritarian function. When we trivialize it into a "heavenly feeling" we only expose our lack of study in this area (as well as our lack of interest in change or disagreement with tradition). We see that it is very true that this teaching of Jesus is very ignored. Apostleship is ignored in the church, and so, a huge portion of Jesus' example is ignored from our collective function.

Jesus only received "all authority" after His resurrection...

Mt 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power** is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

After His ascension He sat at the right hand of the Father (the position of authority)...

Ro 8:34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the **right hand** of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

To become the Head and "only Potentate" of the church.....

1Ti 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only **Potentate**, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

(This one verse says point blank that Jesus is meant to be the only One who exercises authority over Christians--the only Potentate.)

The qestion is: Are we in the same, non-authoritarian, apostolic position which Jesus demonstrated?

Take a Hard Look At The "Church Service"

What do you do when you get together?

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, **every one of you** hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.
(1 Corinthians 14:26, KJV).

Are you doing that?

Take a look at 1corinthians chapters 12-14. They describe non-authoritarian church functioning. Look carefully at the instructions (called "commandments of the Lord) in these chapters. The only way to carry them out is in a small group. Notice that all members have gifts (functions) which should be expressed.

"Every one of of you hath....a doctrine"

Is this the functioning of the common "church service"? Is the "church service" open to the leading of the Head? Or is every function and definition of ministry preordained-- by tradition?

1. Large Group

Aren't we usually "assembled together" in a large group? And, even if we are in a small group, don't we follow the same rules as a large group? Furthermore, to some degree, isn't "success" measured by the size of the group?

2. Pre-ordained

Isn't everything preordained by a few people? In most churches only one or two people "minister" and so part of what we consider to be "ministry" is decision-making authority. Are we using Jesus' definition of "ministry" when the "minister" makes all the functional decisions and is basically the only person allowed to teach/speak?

That is huge authority!

This certainly does not fit into the example of Jesus' ministry, nor that of the church in the new covenant Bible.

The plain, simple fact is that the format of a Christian "church service" is Biblically based on the old covenant.

In the old covenant, Israel had commandments which served to expose sin. Basically speaking, the commandment laws are upheld in the new covenant. But in the old covenant God gave Israel sacrificial law, laws of function which God required so that sin could be forgiven.

To make short list of sacrificial law....

1. Construct a large building--the "house of God/sanctuary"
2. Collecting of "tithes/offerings"
3. Gates of praise and worship as the entrance points to the sanctuary.
4. An altar upon which ministered the..
5. Priest/pastor (the Levitical priesthood) which had authority (yes, "ministerial authority") over the.....
6. Congregation.....The 11 tribes of Israel which did not have the right to minister in the temple, but whose job it was to work 6 days in the fields and bring in the "tithes/offering, which consisted of specific herd animals and crops that were offered to God as payment (offering means "payment) for the sin of Israel.....

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the **blood**: and I have given it to you upon the **altar** to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the **blood that** maketh an atonement for the soul.

These functions had to be done repetitively since they were imperfect...

Heb 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year **continually** make the comers thereunto perfect.

The new covenant clearly and specifically does away with all these functions (something else which is very ignored by most Christian teaching and function) and gives a different definition of ministry, function and yes, authority.

The plain fact is that the "church service" is a strict, repetitive ritualistic authoritarian tradition, based on abolished old covenant principles.

So, in order to maintain it, one must ignore what Jesus taught.

But We Teach The Bible In Our Church!

One of the traditions of “church” is that Bible teaching is NOT open ended and spontaneous. Rather, a tidbit of the Word of God is a reference point for a “sermon” which expands on the tidbit. When such a tiny amount of the Bible is read and taught at any given time, it becomes rather easy to ignore things, and at the same time stress others.

Many church leaders feel it is their domain to focus on aspects of the Bible that deal with money. When we go to church we are deluged with teachings on giving, since, if one stresses these aspects, a “successful church” will be built (in other words, more money will be collected by the church leader---”success” in the eyes of so many!)

Is The Church Service “Authoritarian”?

Rules:

The earmark of any authority is rules. Let’s name some of the rules of “church”...

1. Everyone must attend.
2. Must dress well, but, “ministers” dress especially well.
3. Must be silent
4. “Ministry” is preordained”
5. “Ministry” is done by the same people all the time.
6. Must pay “offering/tithe” (dues)
7. Do what everyone else does: stand up, sit down, kneel, form a line. the congregation must act as one, as the leader and format dictate.
8. Beginning and ending time preordained by the leadership.
9. Functions preordained and repetitive (a ritual).

Of all these rules, perhaps only one of these rules may have some new testament Biblical basis. The Bible does tell us to dress modestly, for example. However, part of the doctrine that Jesus taught, was that Jesus despised dress used as a designation of authority..

38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation. (Mark 12:38-40)

Most of the other rules have an old covenant basis, a fact, which Christians seem oblivious to. The authoritarian function of the "church service" is largely based on old covenant sacrificial law (laws which are very clearly done away with in the new covenant). As we mentioned earlier, the governmental basis of "church" (and so the definition of "ministry and "authority") come from failed governments of old covenant Israel.

Historically, where do these functions come from?

The Mass/Service

The historical basis for the church service is the catholic mass.

All Christians should study catholic doctrine, since it has much to tell us about the history and traditions of the church. For centuries, the mass has been considered by the catholic institution to be something which is perfect--an unchangeable, unquestionable, authoritarian ritual which is the highest representation of Godly function in the earth. The catholic mass is above scripture. It is considered to be unchallengeable by scripture.

The fact is that much of this tradition and belief regarding the format of meeting has been accepted and handed down (and enforced!) by the protestant church as well. Therefore, what happens often, is that when people meet together, in the simpler and more direct (and less authoritarian) manner of the new covenant church (home meetings, small groups) the "high standard" of the mass/service soon becomes the ultimate goal. People call a new covenant Biblically correct home meetings of Christians a "church start".

The mass/service overwhelms the new covenant church functional concept. Many believe this to be God's will and "His authority"--but the question we humbly put forth--is it rather the strength and power of human agreement?

Perspective of Leadership and Congregation

Now let's consider a more personal viewpoint. What do we actually do in "church"?

In "church" we have a pulpit and an altar, and we also have a back row (positions and definitions of function and authority built right into the physical structure of "church")

Let's first point out, we are speaking here of function, not "feeling" We are sure that in every group of believers, there is a feeling of brotherhood, love and fellowship. But this study is not how we feel about one another, rather we are trying to look honestly at how we function together. Is it equitable? Is it not about exercising authority one over another? These are high goals that Jesus has set for us. The question is this: are we truly striving toward these high goals? Or, are we settling for far less, and believing this to be "correct, right and unchangeable" rules of function?

The job of the congregation is quite simple...

Show up.

Give money.

Say amen.

The biggest job of the congregation is to "be in agreement" with what the leadership says.

There are no questions.

The format of Christian meeting is an authoritarian lecture in which no questions, rebuttals, or other viewpoints are allowed. The "ministers" on the altar decide what will be said and sung, and how long it will last. The congregants have absolutely no say in these matters and cannot effect the format which the leader has decided upon. The central function of the congregation is to appear to agree with what is taught and participate in some small manner (say "amen" at the right time--applaud--shout--be silent--be repentant--stand up--sit down--sing along --but not be heard by others--form a neat line--clap hands--raise hands--all--at the beck and call of the leader and the format.

If the pastor of a church is the only one who can speak, and his (or her) words command such strict response, this is, absolutely, an authoritarian format. None of us would accept such authority in any other arena. We give authority to governmental leaders, but at the same time are perfectly free to openly criticize their decisions. The president of the United States gives speeches, but any citizen has a right to protest the message, and the press has the right and frequent opportunity to ask any questions of this authority.

Many church denominations have installed some type of “democratic” process in the choosing of church leadership, yet at the same time, the function of the service/mass remains very strictly in the authority and control of one leader and in fact remains the same no matter who the elected leader is. It is truly the format which dictates Christian operation and function.

It's All Designed To Make One Person Look Good

Within the format and function of the service/mass the central purpose of the congregation is to support the authority of the leader. In fact that principle function of the congregation is to give the appearance that the leader has authority over them, and they completely, wholeheartedly agree with this authority.

The Biggest Sheep

So what about the leader? Is he an evil, power hungry tyrant, seeking rule and authority over the people under him?

No absolutely not!

Today (at least in most cases) church leaders are just regular guys, nice people, good people, intelligent people.

But the real truth is that the pastors are the biggest sheep.

Pastors/church leaders are simply the good people among us, who believe the most in the system of church.

They believe so much in the system that they come to the point where they believe God has placed them in the position of authority over others.

[Let's remember our 1st question...why is Jesus' teaching to “not exercise authority one over another” the most ignored teaching in Christianity? Here is the answer: anyone who becomes a church leader, in order to become a church leader, absolutely must have no knowledge or understanding of this teaching. It's a self-perpetuating system. In order to get into the pulpit, one must believe in and support the pulpit.]

What does a pastor/church leader do? What is his/her function within the format of the service?

The leaders' function, just like that of the congregation, is clearly defined by the format. We have no doubt, that every pastor/priest/church leader prays and asks God for a message for the congregation. A message that will benefit them, help them, bless them, prosper them, or perhaps lead them to repentance. We are sure that every church leader desires for God to have His say through them and help others through their teaching.

What is wrong with this?

No one ever asks God **IF** He wants a message preached!

No one ever asks **IF** God wants some else to minister.

No one every asks God **IF** He might want us to work in small groups, to witness the Gospel to feed the poor or pray for the sick.

No one ever asks God **IF** the function of Sunday service is His will, His desire, His plan.

The "given" for the church leader is that he or she is "in authority over" the congregation, and has the strict and narrow job of delivering the lecture--the "sermon", the unquestionable, unrebutted, speech that the format demands.

A "worship leader" goes through much the same process. Certainly they pray and ask God as to which songs should be sung and in which order (although many churches follow the strict pattern of "praise and worship" which is based on the gate of praise and the court of worship which were the entrance points to the Jewish temple). But like the pastor, the worship leader never asks **IF** God desires songs of praise this day, or **IF** they are the ones who should choose the songs or **IF** they are meant to be the leader on this particular day. The given for the worship leader is that he or she has authority over the congregation, "power" to be the one who chooses and performs the praise and worship.

Everything in fact, is pre-ordained through human authority. It is NOT the Spirit-lead meeting the new covenant describes. We love to say that God is "in charge" but how can He be, when the rules of the format dictate every action?

But It's From God-!

Most people seem to believe that since the leader of the church prays to God and follows His leadership, then the church function must be correct. But as we have pointed out, no one ever questions the format itself, or the authority given the leader in that format.

A study of Christian history makes it clear that authoritarian Christian leadership in the past, is responsible for wars, inquisitions, thievery. All the worse possible sin that is known to man has been done by "Christian authority". What underlies these wicked "Christian" leaders was exactly the same belief--"it's from God"--"God" has ordained the leaders and therefore, their teaching and leading are unquestionable. If one studies christian cults, some of which have brought about devastating results, the underlying belief that allows such sick actions is the traditional belief and function of human authority in the church.

[Has the church only done wrong in it's 2,000 year history? Of course not! But when one looks carefully at the great good that has been accomplished by Christians, almost inevitably it is an individual, outside of the church function, who listens to God and follows the example of Christ to help and inspire others in this direction. It is always someone truly doing ministry, truly serving God and loving others, that allows God to accomplish what He desires, which is to save and heal and deliver.]

Again we return to the original statement...

25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

(Matthew 20:25-26, KJV).

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28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

(Luke 22:25-29, KJV).

Jesus very clearly specified that among ourselves we should not exercise authority one over another. Christians have seen fit to ignore this teaching for centuries, apparently since it does not agree with the format of the service/mass--which apparently is, in both the catholic and protestant church, "above scripture". If we looked at history we would see that the mass/service was invented in a very dark age, and enforced on Christians as law for centuries.

So what are the results?

There are many. One of the most important results is that we have a very wrong definition of Christians ministry. The gifts of ministry, Biblically, according to the new covenant, are anointings, gifts which God has given to everyone. The purpose of these gifts is to "edify the church", which means to "build up or add to". In other words, ministry, when it is done, is meant to get people saved, to bring people into Gods' kingdom. To edify the church--His church. The new covenant gives all the church a priesthood--all a ministry.

Stop and put that together.

It is "ministry" that builds God's church.

Therefore, the more "ministry" that is done (the more people who function as aposltes, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) the more people will get saved and enter Gods' kingdom.

The church in the Bible had a result...

Ac 2:47b.....And the Lord added to the church **daily** such as should be saved.

They were "edifying the Body" every day. They did this by meeting daily, in small groups (of equals!) who prayed utilizing all the gifts of the Holy Sprit to communicate with the Head (Christ) and receive and immediately follow His instructions to further the Gospel mission.

This is what they did.

It fits the new covenant definitions of ministry and authority.

It was in fact, what they saw Jesus do.

Were they doing it perfectly?

No, absolutely not--but--it is clear from scriptural example that they were open to change and instruction and correction in their format of meeting (that is what much of the apostles letters were about)

Are we open to change in our format of meeting?

Are we open to change in our definition and function of ministry?

If we are not, then we are not truly open to the leading of God.

Christ is NOT the Head of the church.

Someone else is.