

“Among You”

How should things be “among us”?

If we looked in the Bible, it might amaze us that Jesus Himself gave very little teaching about how things ought to be “among us”. It’s really a very simple Bible study. If you would like to do it yourself, please feel free. What we did was simply look up this phrase in our Bible software --“among you”. We zeroed in the places where Jesus spoke--the direct advice from Him.

Here is what we came up with.....

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:
(Matthew 20:25-27)

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

11 But he that is greatest **among you** shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. (Matthew 23: 8-12)

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 10:42-45)

46 Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least **among you** all, the same shall be great. (Luke 9: 46-48)

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)

Jesus did not ask a lot of us!

But He did ask one thing it seems--He did ask us to do something "among ourselves"--or perhaps we should say to NOT do something!

Can we not say that it is true that Jesus said that we should "**not exercise authority one over another among ourselves**"?

Ought we not then be **equals**--"brethren"?

To be great is to serve others--and specifically NOT to exercise authority over others.

To the best of our research this is the only thing He asked of us!

If we truly are followers of Christ, shouldn't this concept be something we consider? Something we aspire toward? Something we try our best to achieve?

Why is it that people ignore this teaching of Jesus?

Perhaps some think they are not ignoring it. Perhaps many think this a "warning" of Jesus that gives you the right to get away from a "bad pastor". This means "you don't have to stay in a "bad church"--(oh how we fit the Bible to our own ideas and rules!!)

Perhaps many believe this a “heart attitude”. “We should all be nice to one another”. Well of course we should! But there is so much more to this than a “feeling”!! To Jesus this was a function. It was a tenet of His functioning. He said that this is how He was “among” His followers.

Jesus operated through apostleship--simply a small group of equals. The leader, the One who had authority was not physically present. Jesus said He did nothing of Himself but rather followed the commands of the Father in Heaven (John 8:28). After Jesus ascended, He took His place of authority--He then became the Head of the Church. But whilst He was in the earth, He served among equals. He chose common ordinary fellows to be His followers, and prayed they would do all He did--and greater (that is not by our estimation but by His prayer--John 14:12)

The word “among” means to be an equal with others. If the Son of God Almighty can come to the earth, and take on a human cloak for a span of years, for the purpose of saving mankind from sin, and during those course of years state that He did not exercise authority over His followers, but rather to say that He was an “equal”--!! He who had every right to have rulership and absolute power! And then hand this to us as His desire of the way we things ought to be--- “among you”--!!

And then hand us this kingdom, this Gospel to accomplish.

And He simply gave us one functional concept to follow! One idea! Yes, His example is perfect in every way, and we will fall short of His perfection--but does that mean we ought to ignore this idea? Does this mean we ought to accept something far, far short of this example? The followers of Christ in the Bible fell short of this high example--but they did not give up striving toward it! Should we accept something which operates in exactly the opposite manner as our “highest type of function”?

Have we followed this concept? Do we strive toward it? Do we teach it and practice it, and carefully watch how we operate together in this regard?

I believe that Christianity has ignored this concept because of one word: tradition.

Tradition is not what you teach.

Tradition is not what you say, or feel, or even believe.

Tradition is what you DO.

Tradition is what many many people do and have done for a long period of time.

Tradition is what we see other people do.

Traditions is what generations have done.

Tradition is a place we bring our children, so that families and generations will continue in it.

In our day and age many teach the new covenant principles that lead to release, to ministry in all, and even in the direction of a non-authoritarian church. They teach that every believer has the right to be lead by God, and that we are all a priesthood, and that we are all made servants to our Lord. They teach that we should treat one another as brothers and sisters. they teach that all believers have been empowered by God to carry the Gospel and pray

for the sick and help those in need. And many sincerely believe and desire for these new covenant principles to be enacted.

But they rarely are.

Why?

Because of tradition.

Not because of what we say or teach or believe in, but rather by what we DO.

And what do we do?

WE do a church service--over and over and over again.

We give a demonstration that gives a strict place to every believer.

Within the structure, everyone is silent. There is only one "minister" and the only thing that can be said to the teaching of this person is "amen". This person controls money. This person's doctrine is unquestionable.

WE invest time, effort and money into this structure. We raise our children in it and "success" in the terms of this tradition are to bring in generations to this tradition. "Success" in this tradition is to erect a large, expensive structure which is devoted to this one person's ministry, and to have large groups of believers be silent and in a strict, and complete agreement.

This tradition teaches that very very few are "ministers". And that a "minister" has very strong authority over others --"among yourselves".

So Jesus can go ahead and says whatever He wants to --it just doesn't apply to us-- apparently. We'll just sweep it under a rug--we'll just interpret this idea into someplace else (some say Jesus is talking about heaven here--huh?)--because we all know it just doesn't "fit" into what we all know is right.

And the way we "know" what is right is by what we DO--not what we say or teach or believe in.

Well, for centuries the Christian function has propagated human authority and functioned through the misconception of "ministerial authority".

And it hasn't brought back Jesus.

And it hasn't saved the world.

What if we tried this idea?

Maybe it might work!