

How To Operate
The Christian
Church.....

Without Money

Why should this be a goal?

Because Jesus did it this way.....

19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 ¶ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

(Mathew 6:19-34)

Jesus says here (and in other places!) that there are 2 kingdoms--Gods' kingdom--and the kingdom of money (mammon). They operate by 2 seperate principles. In fact, God does not operate the kingdom of wealth and money (see Luke 4:5-8, below). The 2 kingdoms should be seperate. Both kingdoms demand service. A Christian should strive to serve God as much as possible and minimize their service to money.

More teaching on money (not often heard).....

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

10 Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. (Matthew 10:8-10)

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

(Matthew 19:21-30)

(It is interesting to note, that Jesus promises a special reward for those who “forsake houses or land”. Think of the strong traditional goal of Christians to obtain land and build a physical “house of God”.)

5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

(Luke 4: 5-8)

Here we see one of the temptations of Jesus by Satan. In these verses, Satan reveals the fact that he is the distributor of the wealth of worldly kingdoms in the world. Satan reveals that he operates through human authority and rulership. Here he tempts Jesus to “worship” (serve) him and his way of operating, which would bring worldly wealth. If Jesus was tempted in this same way by Satan, certainly he can, and has, done the same to Christians. Jesus did not fall to this temptation. Are we so sure that we have not?

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.
(Luke 12:16-21)

To be rich toward God is to NOT lay up earthly treasure.

13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

(Luke 16:13)

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. (Romans 12:8)

Maybe you did not know how much the Bible tells us NOT to be involved in money!

Something not often taught at church!

Take a look at Romans 13--"owe no man anything". This might be thought of as financial advice--"don't take on debt" certainly it is good advice--but the Biblical context is speaking about attitudes and ideas within the church.

So let's think about it.

In every church that I've ever been to, it is taught openly and frequently that us "congregation" members "owe" the church leaders money!

I "owe" the church a repetitive, weekly "offering".

Some ask for "tithe", 1/10th of income--owed to the church leaders.

Why is this in the church?

Why is the church so centered on money?

Many reasons.

Let's study some of them.....

The fact is that the operational structure of the church was originated, not from the Bible, but by an imitation of the Jewish synagogue and the old covenant temple. Somebody, somewhere, thought of the idea to substitute money for the offerings/tithe which consisted of animals and crops. In the old covenant Israel needed to consistently offer the blood of animals in order to have their sin forgiven.....

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. (Leviticus 17:11)

Even in the old covenant they were not centered on money! They were simply doing what God had told them to do, so their sin would be atoned for, “paid” for. Someone, some unknown person who lived somewhere in the dark ages came up with the bright idea to redefine the offering as money.

The fact is that the church operates from old covenant principles that the new covenant clearly redefines.

Don't believe me?

You think you go to a “new covenant”--“assembly”--“fellowship”--“church”?

We can couch what we do in new covenant terms, but the definitions , structures and functions of ministry and authority come from the old covenant sacrificial laws

See if you would agree with these defintions of the 2 covenants...

2 COVENANTS

There are two covenants, two testaments, in the Bible.

Christians seem to have so much trouble differentiating between the two.

See if you agree with this simple overview explanation:

In the old covenant there are laws that are commandments (you know--"thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not covet"--etc.)

The new covenant reiterates many of these commandments. (see Romans 13:9)

The purpose of this type law is to show us where we sin, or fall short of God's perfection....

Romans 3:23 "For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God;"

This knowledge was clearly understandable in the old covenant....

Proverbs 20:9 "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my **sin**?"

The bad news about sin.....

Romans 6:23A "For the **wages of sin is** death;....."

I deserve to die for my sin. This is the truthful conclusion that the commandment laws lead us to.

SIN = DEATH

Sin equals death.....unless.....I can be forgiven some how!

The Bible says that if innocent blood would be shed on my behalf, God would accept this offering for my sin.

This is a truth in both the old and new covenants.....

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.

Hebrews 9:13-14 For if the **blood** of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the **blood** of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

So, if someone or something innocent would die in my place, God would accept this “offering” or payment for my sin.

Now, here is where the 2 covenants are different.

I hope you know the new covenant offering-!!

I hope you know who died for your sin-!!!

John 1:29 “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

THE LAMB OF GOD

Yes, every Christian ought to know that Jesus offering of His body and blood on the cross of Calvary is the new covenant offering for sin--an offering obtained by faith.

But why is Jesus called a “lamb”?

Because John the baptist was speaking to Israel, which was still operating in the old covenant. They knew what he meant when he called Jesus “the lamb of God.....”

Do you?

Most Christians do not study old covenant sacrificial law. We may have some vague idea that Israel had to sacrifice animals in the old covenant days, but we rarely ever study how it all worked.

Why should we do this?

Well let’s look at this subject, it might sound familiar to us-!

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SIN FORGIVEN--OLD COVENANT STYLE

What did Israel have to do in the old covenant (before Jesus went to the cross) to have sin forgiven?

1. They built and maintained a big building.

They assembled in this big building (often on sabbath days) and it was called the “house of God” or the “sanctuary” because the presence of God contained in the ark of the covenant was hidden behind a thick veil in the temple.

2. They made offerings.

They brought these offerings (of animals and other crops) into the house of God. How much did God ask to be offered? “Tithe”. 1/10th of the increase of certain animals and crops in specific seasons.

3. They had a format that started with praise and worship.

When you entered the big building you first came to a gate called “praise” where you were required to praise God. Next came a gate called “worship”, where worship was required. So, the format of sacrificial law demanded a repetitive meeting or assembling of Israel, in the house of God, which began with praise and worship.

4. They had a “congregational” meeting.

The word “congregation” is only found in the old covenant. The word simply means “a group”, but Biblically, it most often referred to the non-ministry tribes of Israel. It was the job of 11 of the tribes of Israel to work 6 days each week and bring the offering/tithe into the house of God.

5. The had “pastoral authority”

There was only one tribe of Israel , the Levites, who were allowed to do the ministry in the temple. They were the priests, the pastors, who had God’s authority over the congregation.

This sounds familiar?--I told you it would!

Whether we will admit it or not, these old covenant laws are the Biblical basis for many of the rules and functions and definitions we have in “Sunday church”.

Oh, we can couch these things in new covenant terms. For example we could call our meeting a “Christian assembly”--but how could it be when there are so many of these old covenant rules and functions? And don't’ we treat these concepts as if they are law? Don’t we do these things over and over and over again--as if they are a “requirement”, somehow?

Think of the money you will save by NOT utilizing these old covenant principles and goals to operate the church!

This is really the whole key to operating the church without money being so very very important. If we could only loose all these old covenant definitions and functions, we will be well on our way to the goal of truly realizing God’s full supply for His people.

For example...

The new testament” House of God” is people..

1Ti 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

1Co 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

But many people believe that they must build a building, a nice, comfortable one, with comfy seats and of course an altar and a pulpit and our favorite funky kind of music. Then we pray..”Lord, draw people in!” (The new covenant command is for us to be “sent out” with the Gospel--just one example of how the old covenant traditions make us work against God’s stated new covenant purpose!) But the truth is that what usually happens is we draw in other Christians who are already sitting in churches that have uncomfortable seats and old-fashioned music!

How To Operate The Christian Church.....Without Money

Basically speaking, you need to follow the new covenant and not follow the old covenant principles that tradition has handed us.

That is the whole answer.

But it ain’t easy!

There are many, very loud preachers running around trying to make it sound as if all the Bible talks about is money!

How to be “prosperous.”

How to be wealthy.

They stress it, they preach it to people as if it is the big goal that most Christians should seek in life.

Hmmmmmm....

Let’s see.

Why would they do that?

Well for one thing, it’s popular. After all, doesn’t the world and society preach the same message, that money is of prime importance?

But maybe there is another plan they have in mind....

Why spend so much time encouraging the people who are “under” them to make money? After all, aren’t they operating by a system by which their paycheck comes from the prosperity of those who are “under their authority”?

If the congregation (the non ministers) who are ‘under their authority’ who must pay “tithes and offerings” to their “office” of ministry in order to “build the house of God--

IF these ideas are the way the church is mean to operate, then, isn’t it true that their paycheck is determined by the prosperity of the congregation? (and of course if we could build a bigger, better “House of God” then we could lure in more folks from those old, outdated churches!)

The more that preachers preach on prosperity and money, and do all they can to encourage the congregation to “get rich”, the more money they will make, and the louder they can be. The more TV stations they can own. The more buildings they can build. And then they like to sit back and say--”Look what the Lord has done!”

No. Look what your money has done.

The new covenant productivity that God asks for is souls, not structures.

It does not take money to spread the Gospel, it takes people.

Money In All The Wrong Places

But we have these old covenant traditions, which are such powerful examples in the world around us, that people are thoroughly convinced they need them, in order to be a “real church”.

One of the biggest wrong traditions we carry is a very, very wrong and limited definition of “ministry”.

The equation that so many work from is this:

MINISTRY = MONEY

This is an experiential equation that is drilled into the heads of the common believer by repetitive experience. Most Christians live out the experience on a weekly basis, by paying a minister. They do it from when they are children. A “minister” is someone who makes money, someone who has to be paid every week--forever! If we could just look at the words we are using! The word “minister” means slave or servant. Most of us have never had slaves, but let me tell you, if someone was your slave, you definitely did not pay them!

Let me relate a personal example. I have a friend, who is a good fellow, but a good, long-time, church-going fellow. We worked together for 10 years and during that time I began to serve God by giving away free tracts and Bible studies through the internet. I explained to him (endlessly!) that we did not solicit or accept donations, nor did we charge money for the tracts. They were free. But no matter how many times I explained this to him, he insisted that I must be making money somehow to be able to be “in ministry”. To make matters worse, I left the job and took an early retirement. This action, in my friends eyes, verified his suspicion that I must be raking in lot’s of cash doing my ministry! To this day, every time I see him he says to me...”How’s the tract business” with a tone of “c’mon, I know you make money doing it, because I know.....MINISTRY = MONEY”

We just do not understand what ministry is, according to the new testament Bible!

Jesus defines “ministry” as NOT authority over others.....

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)

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)

“Ministry” is NOT authority over others.

Money, in the world, is a measure of power. It ought to be clear from all the scriptures in chapter 1 of this booklet, that God does not want the authority of money in His church! Because He is meant to be the only One in authority! And, money can be a huge authority. Money can lead people. God is the only One who is supposed to lead!

Wrong traditions in church place money in the forefront, as a top priority.

Christians seem sure, that if only they could raise enough money, the Gospel could be spread.

We simply have no faith and this is because we have wrong structure and functions in the church.

The truth is that.....MINISTRY = SERVICE..... and NOT authority over other believers, and especially NOT MONEY!!

Instead, new testament ministry is a description of what we all should do when we meet together.

I'll say that again...

NEW TESTAMENT MINISTRY IS A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WE ALL SHOULD DO WHEN WE MEET TOGETHER.

And this is the key to operating the church without money.

What we should do, is spend our precious time together, servng God--servng one another--and most importantly, servng those around us who need God.

Look at the mission....

18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

Jesus' empowerment is the Holy Spirit---NOT MONEY!

He got His power from God, not from dollars and cents, or owning things!

Jesus' purpose (and our purpose!) is to carry the Gospel, the "Good News" (the free gift!) of salvation by faith in His name. A Gospel of healing and deliverance--In His name. This Gospel is to be directed to those who need it--the poor--blind--oppressed---etc.

Jesus accomplished all these things NOT by money--but by faith and love!

People often talk about the "power of love". The Christian church in it's highest function ought to be the direct living out of God's love to the world.

Love that has authority over sickness and sin and all the plans of Satan.

Love that has power to help those in need.

NOT money--love!

Let's look at another example of Jesus accomplishing things in the earth, "serving" others--without following the rules of money.....

Jesus fed 5,000 people by faith.

It's an example of where our heart needs to be...

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets. (Luke 9:12-17)

The disciples have a good Godly idea here. They want to feed the people. They see their need. But the disciples idea is first that they should send the people away so they can go buy food for themselves. Jesus then challenges them and says "Give ye them to eat". So now the disciples come up with the answer that money dictates..."we should go and buy meat for all this people". Go buy it. Maybe they were going to ask for donations, take up a collection. Do it by the rules of money. Then Jesus does something. He uses what He has. He thanks God for what He has. He divides it, and trusts God will give the increase needed. These are actions that we rarely ever do! The whole key is to use what you have.

To desire to give to those in need, we need to utilize what we have.

Remember Jesus central teaching about money--"believe God will supply what you need" ("consider the lillies of the field").

Jesus' attitude toward 5 loaves and 2 fishes was "Oh, that's plenty."

Use it, divide it, God will multiply it.

Have you ever had that happen in your church?

Has the pastor in your church ever stopped the offering and said “Oh, that’s plenty--we have enough--let’s believe God for the rest.”

The key attitude is believing God has already given enough.

Use what you have and be thankful for what He has given.

It’s an attitude of not putting money first.

It’s an attitude of faith that we need in the church.

It’s an attitude which is sorely missing in our common function, and so the wrong attitude serves to define us in so many ways.

A Little History Lesson.....

One of the reasons we lack the Gospel function and goal in the church is because the vast majority of Christian churches were formed under the concept of a “Christian nation”. If we go back in time, even 50 or 100 years ago, most of Western Europe was “Christian” (at least everyone went to church--they may not have really been Christians!) Since this was the case, there was no need to have active, Gospel function, so--what shall we do? Well, build a nice place to meet, and spend all our time, effort and money on stuff that benefits us--worship and teaching. The catholic church was originated from the period of history when the Roman emperors forced Christianity on all the subjects of the empire. Rome is the origination point of the Christian nation. Rome has fallen, but the church sticks like glue to the traditions originated by Rome.

Remember those “Gentile kings” Jesus warned about? He said they work by “exercising authority one over another.” He said that we should not have that “among ourselves”.

It seems to me this is the most ignored teaching Jesus ever gave!

The New Covenant Plan

WE need to have a good understanding of how the new testament church operated....

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

42 ¶ And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (Acts 2:41-47)

There are some specific points described here. These are actions of people who had seen Jesus operate for 3 years and knew very well what He had done.

They were imitating Him.

The simple explanation of what the Church should look like is to simply imitate Jesus.

This is exactly what they were doing--collectively.

And that is another key. No one of us is Christ. But put us all together and we are supposed to be His Body (that's what "Church" means)

He is the Head...

Eph 1:22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the **head** over all *things* to the church,

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the **head**, *even* Christ:

Eph 5:23Christ is the **head** of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Col 1:18 And he is the **head** of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Col 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the **head** of all principality and power:

The only Potentate..

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

The only One who has authority.

He has given us the “communication line” of the Holy Ghost

The simple method for function is to meet together frequently (daily) in small groups.

Mt 18:20 For where **two or three** are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Where to meet?

Well, they didn't buy the upper room---right!?

The fact is that we should meet everywhere and anywhere we can.

We the people of God are the House of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

When believers meet, (in groups of 2 or 3!) Christ is there. His anointing, His authority, and all His ministry gifts are present.

27 ¶ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers (1corinthians 12:27-28A)

The priorities of function, the ways we are to serve God are (just like Jesus' priorities!).....

1. apostles
2. prophets
3. teachers

The simple method is to meet in the small group--pray in the Spirit--and ask God what He wants done to further His Gospel.

May I say this?

All of Hell is lined up against Christians meeting in these simple terms!

1 ¶ Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 ¶ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. (Acts 13 1-4)

Here is a very good example of a church meeting.

Is money involved?

No, not at all.

Where's the offering?

Where's the tithe?

Where's the pastor?

answer: nowhere

Our ideas of function are obsolete, backwards, and simply wrong.

Notice that these men are meeting as a group of equals--fasting and praying together--knowing that all can prophecy or teach..

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. (1Corinthians 14:26)

When they put themselves in this position, God speaks. The words of the Holy Ghost are the vital communication line to Christ the Head.

Remember something Jesus said....

Joh 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Joh 14:10 Believest 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.

WE as believers should do nothing of ourself in our meeting.

We must not do things to benefit ourselves (something is very wrong with the church when the major concern is to raise money to afford air conditioning in the church building!)

Jesus example is to have a Boss (the Father) who is far away, but who has sent Him on a specific mission.

You see, the mission is specifically pre-ordained--but nothing else should be!

Why?

Because God is meant to guide us, not to fulfill our own needs, but rather to fulfill His needs, and His heart is toward the unsaved--the lost--those are the folks who are supposed to be receiving our ministry, and His healing, deliverance and salvation!

The Biblical Christian meeting was not preordained at all. It was spontaneous--yet purposeful in its love, commonness, and Gospel direction.

Somewhere in ancient times, the functions of the church were reinvented. A preordained set of functions and ministerial definitions, done repetitively--and the Gospel mission nowhere to be found!

Oh, but we love to try to read our idea of "church" into the Bible! One of the buzzwords we use today is the "upper room experience". How we selectively read the Word of God! The "upper room" was not all the experience of these believers. Yes, they assembled together and received the Holy Spirit, but--there was an immediate and spontaneous, God-lead Gospel result...."3,000 baptized in one day" This result was obtained, not by inviting people into the church building, but by all ministering the Gospel

5 ¶ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. (Acts 2:5-11)

The controversial "miracle of the tongues" was simply God's provision to those who were there that day who did not know the Gospel. God gave the believers languages to witness the Gospel to those who needed to hear it. (God's provision--for ministry--not money!)

Some might say that I am being naive to think that we could operate the church without money. Take a look at these people. They didn't take up an offering or ask for tithe. Instead they did just what God wanted them to do. They stepped out in faith, right into the crowds of unsaved people who were right around them, and God supplied them with exactly what they needed to get people saved (in this case, the right languages to witness).

Question: If we put money first, how can we receive Gods' supply?

Look again at the example in Acts 13....

1 ¶ Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 ¶ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. (Acts 13 1-4)

“Prophets and teachers” who “send” someone (the Greek word for “send” is “apostello”

The prophetic gift releasing the apostolic gift.

Sounds impressive and important (and it is!) but it is the simple function of believers working together as equals. It is the utilization of the ministry gifts found in “every one of us”, since God is “in all and through all of us” (please read Ephesians chapter 4). It’s something we could do anywhere, any time. All we need are willing people, humble hearts, and trust in God. I see churches filled with people who have exactly these attributes. But I have never seen this happen since we are so sure that these people are “sheep”, a “congregation” of non-ministers, under the authority of one “minister” who is supposed to do all, and have all, and be all, the ministry.

This is exactly how the church should operate. Ministry in all--God in charge--the Gospel as the purpose (did Paul and Barnabas go forth with the Gospel? You bet they did!). Who is going to supply what they need? GOD!

This is exactly how the church should operate.

Frequently (God works every day, and so does Satan--we should too!)

Daily-----all the time---as often as we can.

What are the rules?.....

1. No one in authority but God.

Warning! A small meeting is not the guarantee of this! Non-authority must be taught--strived toward and prayed for. It was a mistake the apostles and the church made (see Matthew 20: 25-26--Mark 10:42-45--Luke 22:25-29--also 3John).

The simple fact is that human authority can subvert God's will (this is basically the story of all the Bible from Adam and Eve to Revelation!)

Think personally. Have you, after you were a Christian, disobeyed God? Of course you have (I know I have!). We are all imperfect sinners, saved by grace. This is meant to be the operational platform by which we work and certainly not a preordained--"perfect" ceremony and ritual!

2. Sinners saved by grace.

The Christian meeting is a group of sinners. A group of imperfect people who will make mistakes. Read the Bible. All the churches were making mistakes (interesting to note that none of them were corrected by the advice: "meet every Sunday, have praise and worship, and let the pastor have authority over you")

Making mistakes is important. If you don't ever make mistakes, it means you are not growing, or trying, or learning. Try ideas and fail--it's okay, Biblically. Get closer to God and He will help you get things going right. This is in fact a good description of a correct Christian life, unfortunately, we are no where near this freedom collectively. We are supposed to strive to be a Body, a group, that is like Christ. This certainly means we will have to make mistakes and corrections all the time. Pray and repent. We will follow wrong paths, but some times we will get it right. How will we know? Because when we get it right, someone will get saved, someone will get healed, someone will get delivered, someone will get fed or clothed or helped.

And if we really get it right, we will quickly enable them to join us!

So, make mistakes, forgive and....

3. Love one another and love your neighbor

Sounds like familiar advice! But we often take this advice “personally” when, in the Biblical context, Jesus was teaching people how to be apostles. Love of others is meant to be the driving force for the ministry of all believers. Christians usually have a big, God-given love for one another (as long as we are in the same church!) but--the ”love your neighbor” stuff can be a bit hard to find. Many churches are “hide-us-a-way-from-the-wicked-wicked-world” clubs. We should not criticize the people in the world who we are supposed to be helping! We need to have genuine respect and love for the unsaved--to pray for them--but beyond that--to invite them in to Gods’ kingdom (and not invite them into our ‘show”) The Biblical Christian meeting frequently had unsaved visitors...

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.
(1Corinthians 14:23-26)

What this are of scripture is saying is that we should make our meeting fit the needs of those who are “unlearned or unbelievers”. Speak to them, in words they will understand (“all prophecy”). Certainly not put on a show and expect them to conform. How many times have I seen unbelievers invited into a church meeting, and leave as unbelievers! Why? Simply because no one talked to them in terms they could understand! No one actually talked to them about the Gospel! There is a huge tradition in church, that we need to be silent, and only the pastor can talk and minister. This tradition is so huge, that even when a “congregation member” tries to witness it often falls on deaf ears.

We need to actively teach and strive toward the example given here. The Bible says that IF “all prophecy” the unbeliever will get saved! What a promise! But we need to live up to it!

4. Rules and Format

Well there are some simple, common sense rules for meeting...

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. (1Corinthians 14:26)

This verse summarizes the “ordinances” and “commandments of the Lord” contained in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 -14. Take a look at these chapters and study them. The Corinthian church had gotten away from the right way to meet, so the apostle Paul was reminding them of how to do things.

These rules tell us quite plainly that anyone can speak--but (common sense!) do it one at a time--not all at once.

Anyone can minister or teach, but 2 or 3 at a meeting (in other words--it doesn't have to be a long--endless, boring meeting) “Okay, 2 or 3 have done their teaching and prophecy today, let's quit for now, and ask God when He wants us to meet again.”

Simple, common sense rules of consideration--NOT a ritual!

5. Don't be pre-ordained

Some “Bible Scholars” have concluded that in the new testament there is no clear “government”. That's because they are looking for human government. The new testament makes it very clear, Jesus is the Head.

He is the only One who is meant to have authority over the church.

The problem we have is that the King is away.....

Mark 13:34 *For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.*

So we are all meant to be His servants. We all are meant to have authority (power)--but we are not supposed to use this power over one another.

WE are supposed to be equals.

WE are not supposed to govern one another.

Still, we need to hear from the King, from our Leader.

That is what prayer is all about--and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

If we could just put ourselves in that position--to be in a workable small group--a group of equals that truly recognizes, encourages and respects the gifts in all of us, and has a desire to truly hear from God and a desire to fulfill His commands.

The only way to do this is to NOT have a pre-ordained plan--we are supposed to meet in order to GET the plan!.

To the scholar it seems like no government, no real plan. It's just not the old covenant plan we expect. Its' NOT the old covenant definitions that tradition has handed us.

6. DO the ministry gifts.

Since we have found out that ministry does not equal authority over others, and ministry does not equal money--then, what is ministry?

The new covenant ministry gifts are a description of how Christians should operate.

The new covenant ministry gifts should be used, instructed and released in everyone.

In the Bible it worked this way....

Prophets receiving the instructions from the Head--instructions to further the Gospel.

What are the most important instructions we should seek after?

Not how much money we should spend!

No, Biblically, the prophets released the apostles.

Sounds big and important (and it is!) but it really means to do this:

PRAY AND ASK GOD WHERE AND WHEN AND HOW AND WHOM SHOULD WITNESS THE GOSPEL.

Oh yes,

The third and very least ministry function is that of teaching/pastoring.

Simple stuff too. That is what "pastor/teacher" is supposed to be. Simple, small in-house ministries. People teaching and releasing one another--one-on-one--in the House of God.

The real truth is that the church should be easy to operate.

It doesn't take anything but people, willing people.

People who are willing to believe that God can run things, that Christ could truly be the Head.

People who truly believe that God can minister through them, AND that God can minister through ALL OF US.

Not money.

People.

