

LET BELIEVERS EXPERIENCE THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THEIR GATHERINGS

Copyright (c) 2008 by Galen Currah, George Patterson and Edward Aw
May be reproduced freely in any form.

When mentoring new church leaders, help them find ways in which to let all the believers experience Christ in their gatherings, along with learning sound doctrine about Him. Some key texts in this regard include Matthew 18:18-20 and 1 Corinthians 14:3, 24-26. Find together with your coworkers culturally-appropriate ways to do each of the following activities, just as the first church in Jerusalem did, in Acts 2:37-47.

1. Remain devoted to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42).



The apostles continually taught all that they had seen Jesus do and that they had heard from him. He had instructed them to make disciples by baptizing and by teaching everyone everywhere to obey all that He had commanded. Such teaching whether done by speaking, singing, stories or dramas, instructs and gives hope. Teaching in a way that lets people feel Christ's presence is a gift from the Holy Spirit. When the church comes together, each one has something to contribute, and all can prophesy.

Such manifestations of the Holy Spirit prove so helpful, even delightful, that believers feel the presence of Christ. "One who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation... For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted." *1 Cor. 14:3, 31*

Hint: Make Bible teaching and discussion with application a part of most gatherings, but not the only activity.

2. Remain devoted to fellowship, giving to meet needs, and common meals.



When believers come together for worship, the real presence of Jesus is there in their midst (Matt. 18:18-20). Participation in the Body of Christ includes sharing, giving and receiving according to each one's needs. Those who give cheerfully delight in doing so, and in seeing the genuine benefit that their generosity brings to others. Jesus commanded this kind of love that gives to meet practical needs. It flows from the Holy Spirit of Jesus who indwells believers. One particularly enjoyable way to provide for all is to take some meals together.

Hint: Make giving to meet practical needs a frequent part of life in the community. Let believers prove generous.

3. Remain devoted to the breaking of bread.



Partaking of the Lord's Supper has historically been called Eucharist (which means thanksgiving) and Communion. When believers partake of the holy table with faith, they experience a deep sense of forgiveness and cleansing, as the Holy Spirit floods their hearts with the love the Father has for them. Traditions that expressly deny the supernatural presence of Christ during communion destroy its reality for many believers.

To avoid the table becoming 'routine', vary the Bible passages you read to introduce it. Sometimes use drama, a song, a testimonial or a Bible story.

Hint: Celebrate the Lord's Table often, varying the Bible texts you read. Avoid rationalistic explanations.

4. Remain devoted to prayers, praising God, and witnessing wonders and signs.



Believers of all ages and traditions have found praise a joyful experience, and answered prayers a great encouragement. Those who pray together over time normally sense within them the mind of Christ, guiding their prayers and inspiring their praise. Those who persevere in asking for supernatural help normally get it. Prayer made in the Name of Jesus secures help from God and praise rejoices them more than any other spiritual disciplines.

Private, personal prayers develop an ability to hear from God, and common, group prayers prove powerful.

Hint: Have believers pray together and one for another in small groups at most gatherings. Allow those who see their prayers answered report about it to the others.

5. Let sinners repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit, and join the church.



In gatherings that allow for all the believers to prophesy (speak to one another for strengthening, exhortation and consolation) and share their gifts, it is not unusual for unsaved guests to be converted. "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you." (1 Corinthians 14:24-25).

As these call upon the Lord in repentance, accept baptism and receive the Holy Spirit, the believers share in their joy. Churches in which many folk regularly come to faith prove highly encouraging to all and show to all that the Lord is present in their midst to save those who call on him.

Hint: Allow for all believers to prophesy, that is, to speak to strengthen, to encourage, and to edify one another. Encourage them to invite unsaved folks to experience Christ.

Resources for Church Planting and for Training Christian Leaders

We recommend O'Connor's new book, *Reproducible Pastoral Training*, to multiply churches: <<http://missionbooks.org/wcl/customer/product.php?productid=533&cat=1&page=1>>.

Free CP training software "*Come, Let Us Disciple the Nations*": <<http://www.Paul-Timothy.net>>.

Free mentoring tools and resources: <<http://www.MentorAndMultiply.com>>.

Free materials that combine pastoral training with church planting: <<http://www.Paul-Timothy.net>>.

Train & Multiply[®], pastoral training, church planting. <www.TrainAndMultiply.com>.

Order *Church Multiplication Guide* from a bookshop or via <<http://www.WCLbooks.com>>.

To subscribe or to download earlier *MentorNet* messages: <<http://www.MentorNet.ws>>.