

Being a Spiritual Family That Walks in God's Blessing

I. OUR PRIMARY CALLING

- A. Jesus committed to build His church, and He exhorted us to make disciples (Mt. 16:18; 28:19). Thus, the **primary calling** for each ministry is to know God and to make Him known, as we work together with others to *build the Church* and *engage in the Great Commission*.

¹⁸“I will build My church...” (Mt. 16:18)

¹⁹“Go...make disciples of all the nations...” (Mt. 28:19-20)

- B. Jesus is returning for a mature, functioning Church that is filled with glory.

*²⁷...that He might present her to Himself a **glorious church**... (Eph. 5:27)*

II. COMMITMENT TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

- A. Jesus' primary plan in this age is to build the Church which functions as a spiritual family. One of Jesus' greatest prophecies is that He will build a Church that walks in victory over Satan and that is committed to the first and second commandments. The Church is God's idea.

*¹⁸“**I will build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And I will give you the **keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you **bind** on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you **loose** on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Mt. 16:18-19)*

1. Jesus promised to release His authority through His Church to *bind* the works of the enemy and to *loose*, or release, the works of God.
 2. The phrase *gates of Hades* speaks of Satan's authority. Jesus promised that the authority of hell would not prevail against His people. Imagine a people in whom the enemy has no inroads and where each is walking free of demonic influence in their life and family.
 3. The fullness of God's promise of power is in context to His people functioning as spiritual families (local churches), in which the strongest ones pursue the weakest.
- B. The Lord desires that all of His people have a sense of belonging to a spiritual family and that they take responsibility to do their part in serving, supporting, and building up that family. Every believer is called to participate in strengthening the family of God in a local congregation as well as honoring and relating to the body of Christ in other congregations and denominations, etc.
- C. Jesus revealed the transcendent God of Israel as the Father—He thinks, feels, and acts like a father. He desires to express His heart as a father through spiritual families that care for one another. He wants each member of His family to experience and express His love to others.

*³⁵By this all will **know** that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (Jn. 13:35)*

D. When unbelievers see love consistently expressed in local churches to the weak, the needy, and the lost, they conclude that God is a Father who inspires such love. Together we have an assignment to reveal the Father to believers and to the lost. He wants each of us to play our part in expressing His heart to the area where we live.

E. The command to love one another extends beyond loving only the people who enjoy the same things that we enjoy. Spiritually strong believers are to pursue loving weaker believers who cannot enhance the natural resources, influences, or profile of the spiritually strong.

¹²This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (Jn. 15:12)

F. God ordained that each believer be a “joint of supply” that reveals His love to others.

¹⁶...the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body... (Eph. 4:16)

G. We are not to forsake gathering together. Many embrace a “churchless Christianity.” Much is lost in our spiritual life and in the life of family and children, if we forsake assembling together. God has ordained the local church as a place of our greatest blessing, joy, and safety.

²⁵...not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10:25)

III. COMMITMENT TO DISCIPLESHIP

A. Jesus’ final exhortation to His people is to make disciples of individuals and the nations. The command to “go” includes taking initiative to make disciples.

¹⁸“All authority has been given to Me...¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always [His manifest presence], even to the end of the age.” (Mt. 28:18–20)

B. A disciple is a fully devoted follower of Jesus in character, message, and activities. His disciples are those who do and say the things that He did and said. For example, He showed mercy, helped the needy, healed the sick, as He taught people what God was like and how to receive from God.

C. We are to make *disciples of Jesus* instead of making “our disciples—who follow us.”

D. There are many different approaches to making disciples and many contributing aspects to it. In other words, we only contribute “in part” to the process of helping a person become a disciple.

E. Jesus is raising up a Church that makes disciples, not just a people that socialize together. Socializing is an important element in fellowshiping. Biblical fellowship involves socializing in the spirit of discipleship. The result of spending our time together is to strengthen each other to be disciples. Believers who merely socialize together—without a commitment to discipleship—can spend time together in a way that results in weakening each other spiritually.

F. Every believer is to participate in strengthening the family of God in a local congregation, to commit to being a disciple, and to invest time and resources into helping others be disciples.

IV. FIVE SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Jesus gives most individuals and ministries specific assignments in the context of building the Church and engaging in the Great Commission. He has given us five specific assignments—to keep a *24/7 sanctuary of worship with prayer*, to call people to walk out the *first commandment* as they are empowered by seeing Jesus as their *Bridegroom God*, to train *forerunner messengers*, to serve God's purpose for *Israel*, and to strengthen the "*Praying Church*."
- B. We are to *keep a 24/7 sanctuary of worship with prayer* in the spirit of the Tabernacle of David.
¹⁵The priests...who kept charge of My sanctuary...shall come near Me to minister to Me... (Ezek. 44:15)
1. We *minister to God* by declaring His worth in an unceasing way on earth as a witness to how He is ministered to continually in heaven (Mt. 6:10).
 2. We *labor in prayer* together with the worldwide body of Christ to partner with Jesus by asking Him to release a greater measure of power to win the lost, revive the Church, and impact society.
 3. We *grow in intimacy with God* by encountering the majestic beauty of God as Father and Jesus as the Bridegroom, King, and Judge and are thus empowered to love and obey God.
 4. We *grow in understanding of the Word* by gaining insight into His will, ways, and salvation.
- C. We call people to walk out the *first commandment* as they are empowered by encountering Jesus as our *Bridegroom King*. Grace-based holiness flows from cultivating intimacy with God and seeking to obey Him by walking out the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle (Mt. 5-7).
- D. We are to raise up *forerunner messengers* who proclaim Jesus as Bridegroom, King, and Judge to prepare others spiritually for the unique dynamics of God's end-time plan.
- E. We work with others to serve *Jesus' purposes for Israel*, including a 24/7 virtual worldwide prayer network that seeks to mobilize 100 million intercessors to pray to release His salvation.
- F. We strengthen the "*Praying Church*," which includes developing resources and helping others to plant churches and "house of prayer communities" (not under IHOPKC). The Lord will use many ministries working together to establish a culture of prayer in the Church in the nations.

V. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (*i.e., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS*)

1. Have you ever participated in discipling someone? How did it go? What would you do differently?
2. Do you feel equipped to disciple someone? If not, what kind of training would you like to receive?
3. What is one point in this session that needs to be emphasized to the larger Body of Christ? Why?