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Authentic House Churches: The Blueprint

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Foreword

The hour has come for the Church to return to her roots. The Spirit of the Lord is calling His people out of passivity, out of tradition that has lost its fire, and back into the living, breathing fellowship of believers who gather in simplicity, power, and truth. From homes, living rooms, and humble places, the Lord is raising altars again—places where Christ is the centre, where the Word is alive, and where the Holy Spirit moves freely among His people. From house to house, city to city, and nation to nation—the Church of Jesus Christ will rise in purity, power, and truth.

Let the house churches arise across the nations. Let families, friends, and neighbours gather in the name of Jesus with burning hearts and open Bibles. In these homes, the light of Christ will shine into the darkness, disciples will be formed, the broken will be restored, and the gospel will advance with boldness. What seems small in the eyes of the world will become mighty in the hands of God, for the Lord delights in using simple vessels to display His glory. Somewhere, somehow, there must once again be a hunger for authentic house churches to come to life. We need to return to the biblical pattern of church, which is house churches, and even better, a network of house churches. A network of house churches which celebrates Jesus, not denominational divide. A network where competition is crucified, and fellowship honoured. A network where the Body moves as one by one faith and one Spirit.

In the New Testament, there were no different churches branding different names, advocating different doctrines and ‘selling’ its brand of product. There was one church in a city, consisting of multiple house churches, established by apostles and safeguarded by elders. Places of holy fire, of unity, of shared joy, and a desire to see the

Great Commission spread across the world.

God's blueprint has always been house churches, which form a network across the world, where they support each other, pray for each other, and share God's Word in Spirit and truth. In true house churches, division falls, religion is crucified, and relationship become important. Places where God's Truth is kept sacred. Spaces where God's will is done. Spiritual lighthouses where man's ego and pride shatter, and God's visitation is revered on holy ground.

There must be a greater urgency in the earth for the establishment of house churches, for it is God's established blueprint of how to implement proper discipleship, accelerate spiritual growth, and for all believers to become activated and mobilised to fulfill the Great Commission. My honest prayer and hope is that Biblical house churches will again take its rightful pace, and that there shall be a unity not under the banner of a denomination, or a spiritual leader, or an ideology or a doctrine, but the banner of Jesus. The same Spirit who moved in the Acts of the Apostles has not diminished. He has not withdrawn. He has not grown silent. He is searching for houses. Not stages. Not empires. Not personalities. He is looking for homes where Christ is exalted. Tables where bread is broken with reverence. Living rooms where prayer rises without preteens. Communities where holiness is treasured and obedience is immediate.

The early believers did not know they were writing history. They were simply yielding to the Spirit. And because they yielded, cities were shaken. The lame walked. Prisons opened. Demons fled. Households were saved. Nations were reached. Why? Because ordinary believers believed an extraordinary gospel. The blueprint has not changed. If you will guard unity, heaven will release authority. If you will pursue purity, heaven will entrust power. If you will preach Christ boldly, the Spirit will confirm the Word. If you will pray until something moves, something will move.

It is time again for our houses to become a holy altar! Let our table become a place of covenant. Let our gatherings become training grounds for disciples who carry fire into streets, workplaces, and families. We must not despise small beginnings. The kingdom has always advanced through remnant communities that refused compromise. The next awakening will not be built on platforms. It will burn in houses. Revival will be forged in homes, and will pour forth into streets, villages, cities and nations.

And when the Lord once again finds communities devoted to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer, then He will do what He has always done. He will stretch out His hand, He will add daily, He will confirm His Word with power. Yes, there will be revival even when the dark is demonic, when persecution rises like a beast, and the world shakes and groans. A return to authentic house churches is the cure for the apostasy, the rebellion and the defiance against God's order and truth.

It has never been God's blueprint to run the church the way we do it today. I'm talking about building lavish buildings, and then holding a service once a week where congregants (not disciples) sing a couple of songs and then listen to a word. This is not participatory discipleship. This is not making disciples who are filled by the Spirit of God. This is a tradition born out of the Roman Catholic Church, which abandoned the blueprint of God to appease the pagans and barbarians under Constantine.

Our traditional churches, for all the good intentions, can never properly produce disciples as it was in the days of the Book of Acts. It is an unnatural system, out of God's order and out of God's will. No wonder it has bred apostasy, rebellion, spiritual abuse, false doctrines, and demonic manipulation. It has only allowed Mammon to be celebrated, and for false altars to be erected. If such a 'system' does work, why then does the Body of Christ appear so weak and so divided in the earth? It is because institutionalised churches have birthed 'worship' centres of

uncommon ground, unholy ground, profane fire, and idolatry. Christianity these days is more about man being celebrated, and God mocked. The church that has formed over the last 1700 years is not found in the New Testament. We have bred an unholy system, which is void of power and authority. We create only congregants, not disciples. Blueprint for leadership has become distorted and twisted, just as with the ascended gifts of the apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists and shepherds. We have created spectators who are ruled and lorded over by those seeking power and glory. We do not have an army that pierces the darkness or sets the captives free, but one that grows fat on coffee and cake. Where are the warriors going into the harvest field to bring home the lost, the broken, the neglected, the forgotten, and the bound?

Over the years I have written many books to address the failing church system, such as *Shaking the Church: The Threshing Floor*, *The Witches' Brew*, *Devious Gurus & Pied Piper Seducers Part 1 and 2*, *Spiritual Struggles over the Ages*, *Refining Discipleship*, *Faith under Fire: Vanities, Fantasies, Mutiny and Psychedelic Entrapments*, *Restoring the Altar in Times of Apostasy*, *Pitfalls and Dangers Volume 1 and 2*, and *Let My People Go: Exodus Out Of Religious Entrapment*. There are many others, but the reality is that religion has disempowered the church. We follow tradition, not God's Way. We follow celebrities, not Jesus. We are blinded by unclean spirits and the spirit of man, but not led by the Holy Spirit.

In Luke 10, where did Jesus send the 70 disciples? "5 But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. 8 Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. 9 And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'" God wants discipleship to be restored in homes,

along with His Presence which brings His peace and joy. Where His Presence dwells, there is healing, deliverance, restoration, manifested power and His freedom.

As we return to the 'Upper Room' to reconnect with the Holy Spirit, and as we erect true spiritual altars again of pure spiritual fire, we shall again return to holiness and to authentic discipleship. This can only be nurtured in its most authentic form within the Biblical habitation of house churches. This is where God's Presence dwells, moves, and heaven connects with earth. Holy ground where the Body is united, and religion dies.

We are not talking about miniature models of traditional churches. We are talking about homes where God steps in, and God's will, way and truth is supreme. Places where the Spirit moves, operates, and functions without human hindrances or control. Consecrated places of holy fire, holy prayer, and holy worship. Homes that function as 24-hour prayer closets, as a barrack to train spiritual warriors, as a war room to shake the gates of hell, and as a breeding ground for disciples to fulfil the Great Commission.

We declare that the Church will not be silenced, confined, or weakened. From house to house, the fire of the gospel will spread again.

Prayer will rise like incense, truth will be proclaimed without compromise, and the power of the Holy Spirit will awaken hearts. These homes will become beacons of hope in troubled times—places of healing, repentance, discipleship, and revival. Let every stronghold of darkness tremble.

Let fear and apathy fall. For the Lord is restoring a people who walk in faith, who love one another deeply, and who carry the authority of Christ. The house churches will stand as living testimonies that the Kingdom of God cannot be stopped.

Let the lamps be lit again. Let the Word be opened again. Let the people gather again. It is time again for walls of division to come down. It is time for disciples to be

heard and seen again. May our houses shake with prayer. May our tables overflow with testimony again. And may our communities become a habitation of glory. The blueprint stands. Now build.

LET THE HOUSE CHURCHES ARISE!

Reviving the Church, Shaking the Darkness,
Bringing Revival & Hope

LET THE LAMPS BE LIT AGAIN

LET THE WORD BE OPENED AGAIN

LET THE PEOPLE GATHER AGAIN!

THE CHURCH WILL RISE
IN PURITY, POWER & TRUTH!

Three-hundred years of house churches

For the first 300 years of Christianity, there was no church building until the inception of Catholics. Since then, religion has dictated the need to build physical buildings instead of building lives via God's ordained blueprint of discipleship. For 1700 years, church buildings have become the obsession, as so many have become preoccupied with building their own empires, but not God's kingdom.

From the time of Jesus Christ (around AD 30) to the reign of Constantine the Great (early 4th century), the structure and life of the church looked very different from what most people imagine today. The church was primarily decentralised, relational, and home-based, with gatherings mostly taking place in houses rather than dedicated church buildings.

During the time of the apostles, the church was essentially a network of house gatherings where believers gathered. The New Testament shows believers meeting mostly in homes. We find this in Acts of the Apostles 2:46, "They broke bread from house to house." In Romans 16:5, it says, "Greet the church that meets in their house." 1 Corinthians 16:19 says, "Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, with the church that meets in their house."

Typical meeting places included private homes, courtyards, workshops, upper rooms, and occasionally public spaces. For example, believers gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem. Early Christian meetings were participatory. Paul describes gatherings where believers contributed teaching, prophecy, prayer, singing, and testimonies. Leadership existed, but meetings were less formal and more communal.

After the apostles died (around AD 90–100), the church began to face persecution, false teaching, and leadership disputes. During this time, a single leading

elder in a city began to be called a bishop. One of the early writers emphasizing this was Ignatius of Antioch (early 2nd century). Even then, most believers still met in homes. Church buildings did not yet exist.

For roughly two centuries, Christianity was often illegal in the Roman Empire. Believers therefore gathered in places like houses, hidden meeting rooms, catacombs (burial tunnels), and workshops or businesses. In cities like Rome, Christians sometimes gathered in underground burial chambers. However, historians note that catacombs were mainly burial places, not the primary weekly meeting location.

Early Christians became known for caring for the poor, rescuing abandoned infants, supporting widows, and helping the sick during plagues. Writers like Tertullian recorded that pagans often said: "See how they love one another." This countercultural community attracted many people. The early church believed strongly in the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts records healings, deliverances, prophetic words, and miracles. This supernatural dimension gave credibility to the message of Jesus Christ. Many scholars today believe the simple house-church network of the first three centuries is one of the closest historical parallels to modern simple church movements.

As mentioned, by the 3rd century, some houses were modified to accommodate larger gatherings. One famous example is the Dura-Europos House Church (around AD 240). This house had a large meeting room, a baptistry, and Christian wall art. It shows the transition from private homes to adapted spaces. But even this was still essentially a converted house, not a basilica-style church.

Archaeology has also given us fascinating physical evidence that confirms what we read in the New Testament: the earliest Christians often gathered in homes. Several discoveries from the 2nd and 3rd centuries show how these house churches were arranged and how believers practised their faith before the time of Constantine the Great. These findings help historians understand what

early Christian gatherings actually looked like.

As mentioned, Dura-Europos was an ancient Roman frontier city in modern-day Syria. In the 1930s, archaeologists discovered a private home converted into a Christian meeting place dating to about AD 240, long before Christianity was legalised. Originally, it was an ordinary house. Christians later remodelled it to create room for spiritual activity. The meeting hall could hold roughly 50–70 people, which aligns with estimates for early house churches. One of the most remarkable parts of the site is the baptism room, which includes early Christian artwork. The walls depict biblical scenes such as Jesus as the Good Shepherd, the healing of the paralytic, and Jesus walking on water. These images show that early Christians already used visual storytelling to teach Scripture.

Another discovery comes from the Megiddo Church. This site dates to roughly the 3rd century and may represent one of the earliest known Christian prayer halls. Archaeologists found mosaic floors, inscriptions referring to Jesus Christ as God, and a central area that may have held a communion table. One inscription reads: “The God-loving Akeptous has offered the table to God Jesus Christ.” This is very significant because it shows early worship centered on Christ.

In cities like Rome and Ostia, archaeologists have identified homes that were likely adapted for Christian meetings. These houses often had enlarged dining rooms, open courtyards, and spaces for communal meals. This matches descriptions in the New Testament of believers breaking bread together. These discoveries confirm several important things about early Christianity. Churches were literally homes. The earliest church buildings were not temples but ordinary houses adapted for gatherings. Meetings were relatively small. Typical gatherings likely ranged from 20 to 70 believers. Baptism was central. Almost every discovered site includes a baptism area, showing how important initiation into the faith was. From both archaeology and historical writings we can

reconstruct a typical house church meeting. It likely included prayer, reading apostolic writings, teaching, singing, prophetic encouragement, sharing meals, and communion.

So these archaeological discoveries confirm that for roughly the first 250–300 years, Christianity functioned primarily as a network of house-based communities rather than a building-centred religion. Only after the legalisation of Christianity under Constantine the Great did large basilica churches begin to dominate the Christian landscape. The earliest church buildings looked much more like living rooms than cathedrals. Faith was lived out in homes, shared meals, small communities, and participatory gatherings.

Everything changed when Constantine the Great legalised Christianity through the Edict of Milan. After this, Christianity became publicly accepted, large public church buildings were constructed, and the Roman basilica architectural style was adopted. This produced larger centralised gatherings, more formal clergy structures, and more institutional organisation. The church moved from homes to public buildings.

So the period between the apostolic church and the reign of Constantine the Great represents one of the most significant structural transitions in Christian history. Before the Edict of Milan legalised Christianity, the church functioned primarily as a decentralised spiritual movement. After legalisation, it gradually developed into a public religious institution integrated with the structures of the Roman Empire.

During the pre-Constantine time, believers mostly gathered in homes and small meeting spaces. Post-Constantine it was large basilica-style church buildings were constructed across the empire. Examples include early imperial churches in cities like Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. The physical structure began shaping how church life functioned.

Regarding leadership, during pre-Constantine we find

local churches were typically led by plural elders (overseers). These leaders shepherded local communities together. In post-Constantine, a hierarchical leadership system expanded to bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs. Eventually, certain major cities held special authority. Leadership became administrative and territorial.

During the pre-Constantine time, meetings were often participatory. Post-Constantine saw gatherings become more liturgical and structured. Participation shifted toward formal sermons, clergy-led liturgy, and the congregation primarily listening.

During the pre-Constantine time, becoming a Christian usually involved deep personal conviction, costly commitment, and risk of persecution. Catechism and discipleship were often rigorous. Post-Constantine saw Christianity become socially accepted, nominal Christianity increased. Many joined because it was culturally advantageous, it was now safe or expected, and the church grew numerically but also faced new challenges of spiritual depth.

During pre-Constantine, expansion happened primarily through personal witness, household networks, and traveling missionaries like Paul the Apostle. The movement spread organically. Post-Constantine saw mission often become institutionally organised. The church developed official dioceses, centralised oversight, and imperial support for expansion.

It should be known that for 300 years, the church was primarily understood as a spiritual family, a community of disciples, and a pilgrim people. Its identity is centred on following Jesus Christ. Then, the church increasingly functioned as a public religious institution within society. It became visible, organised, and culturally influential. This institutional form shaped Christianity for centuries. This transition did not mean that faith disappeared or that all institutional developments were negative.

Renowned preacher Leonard Ravenhill said: "The early church was married to poverty, prisons, and persecutions."

This is a well-known quote by author and preacher highlighting that the first-century church thrived through dependence on God rather than wealth or comfort. It signifies a time of extreme sacrifice, persecution, and material lack, yet intense spiritual power and unity. Ravenhill contrasted this with the modern church, which he argued is often "married to prosperity, personality, and popularity". The early church (Acts 2 & 4) was marked by believers selling possessions and sharing everything, ensuring no one was needy. They also faced imprisonment and extreme poverty (e.g., the church in Smyrna), yet were considered spiritually "rich". This concept is often illustrated by a tale where Thomas Aquinas told Pope Innocent III that the church could no longer say "silver and gold have I none" (like Peter in Acts 3:6), and therefore could not say "rise and walk".

Granted, as the Faith became more centralised, some good things did emerge. For example, there was more theological clarity through councils, preservation of Scripture, and broader evangelisation. However, the shift also changed how the church operated compared to the earlier house-church movement. It lost touch with its core purpose, the need to function as a Body, and the importance of sticking to God's blueprint of discipleship and what it means to be the church. You can view the first three centuries as a period when the church functioned primarily as a grassroots movement, which later adapted to a new social and political environment.

It should be noted that the 'church fathers' also played a crucial role in guiding, defending, and shaping Christianity from the late 1st century through the centuries following Constantine the Great. Some will view their role as positive, others will see it as more negative. However our opinion, their influence can be understood in two phases: before Constantine (when the church was often persecuted and decentralized) and after Constantine (when Christianity became legal and increasingly institutional). The term "church fathers" refers to influential early

Christian leaders and theologians who helped interpret Scripture, defend the faith, and guide the church. Important figures include Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius of Alexandria, and Augustine of Hippo. Their writings form a large part of what is called patristic literature.

Before the legalisation of Christianity, the church fathers functioned mainly as pastors, defenders, and guardians of apostolic teaching. The early church faced numerous doctrinal challenges such as Gnosticism and other alternative interpretations of Christianity. For example, Irenaeus of Lyons wrote *Against Heresies* to defend the apostolic faith and affirm the authority of the Scriptures. These writings helped preserve orthodox doctrine.

Christian thinkers also wrote defenses of Christianity (called apologies). Writers like Tertullian explained and defended Christian beliefs to the wider Roman culture. They addressed accusations that Christians were atheists, socially dangerous, and enemies of Rome. Their works helped Christianity gain intellectual credibility.

Church fathers often emphasized continuity with the apostles. For example, Polycarp of Smyrna was believed to have been a disciple of John the Apostle. This link helped maintain the connection between early Christian teaching and the apostolic era. Some fathers encouraged more structured leadership to maintain unity. Ignatius of Antioch strongly promoted the authority of bishops to safeguard the church from division and false teaching. This emphasis gradually strengthened hierarchical leadership structures.

Once Christianity was legalised by the Edict of Milan, the church fathers played a new role in shaping the theology and organisation of a now public and growing church. Large theological debates emerged about the nature of Christ and the Trinity. They helped articulate orthodox theology through church councils. A major example is the First Council of Nicaea, where leaders like

Athanasius of Alexandria defended the belief that Christ is fully divine. These debates produced foundational creeds still used today.

Later church fathers expanded theological reflection. For instance, Augustine of Hippo profoundly shaped Western Christianity with teachings on grace, sin, salvation, and the nature of the church. His writings influenced theology for more than a thousand years. As Christianity became more integrated with the Roman world, the church required clearer administrative structures. Church fathers helped shape diocesan systems, episcopal leadership, and theological education. This helped stabilise the rapidly expanding Christian community.

The church fathers, therefore, did influence Christianity in several major ways, including preservation of doctrine (they clarified key teachings about Christ, the Trinity, and salvation). They helped with the defense of the faith (they responded to critics and competing philosophies). As mentioned, some will say the formation of church structure was negative, as their emphasis on bishops and unity contributed to the development of church hierarchy.

The church fathers were not identical in their views, and they lived in very different contexts. Some emphasised apostolic simplicity, pastoral care, martyr-like devotion. Others helped develop complex theological systems and institutional church structures. Together, they helped Christianity transition from a persecuted movement of house gatherings to a global and organised religion.

It should be noted that even after Christianity was legalised by Constantine the Great through the Edict of Milan, house churches did not suddenly disappear. In fact, historical evidence from the Church Fathers shows that house gatherings continued for several centuries, even while large basilica churches were being built. This creates a fascinating picture of two parallel expressions of church life.

After legalisation, the Roman Empire began constructing large public church buildings in cities like Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. However, most Christians still lived in neighbourhoods and homes, and smaller gatherings continued naturally. In many cities the pattern became large public gatherings in basilicas, and smaller meetings in homes for fellowship and teaching. This pattern actually resembles what many modern movements call “large gathering + house fellowship.”

Several early church fathers mention believers meeting in smaller domestic settings. John Chrysostom (4th century) encouraged believers to turn their homes into places of worship. He frequently taught that the Christian home should function as a "little church" (ecclesiola). He believed that the spiritual life developed within the family was just as crucial as communal worship in a church building. He, therefore, instructed families to turn their homes into sanctuaries through prayer, scripture reading, and maintaining a moral, godly environment. He also urged parents to lead their children and households in prayer, encouraging them to discuss the sermons heard in church with their family at home. Beyond just the physical house, Chrysostom taught that Christians should treat their own bodies as temples, with their hearts filled with the Word of God. It should be noted that while he emphasised the sanctity of the home, he did not replace the official, corporate Church, but rather saw the home as an extension of the spiritual life that begins at church.

Augustine of Hippo also often spoke about believers gathering in smaller groups for prayer, teaching, and spiritual encouragement. While he preached in basilicas, the relational life of believers still extended into homes. Even after large churches appeared, homes remained important for several reasons. Large church buildings could not accommodate every believer regularly, especially in expanding cities. Christian fellowship naturally happens more deeply in smaller environments. Homes allowed for teaching, mentoring, prayer, and accountability. This

preserved aspects of the earlier house-church culture.

Later in the 4th century, movements seeking deeper devotion formed communities that lived simple, prayer-centred lives. One famous leader was Anthony the Great. These communities valued prayer, simplicity, and spiritual discipline. In some ways, they preserved aspects of the earlier pre-institutional Christian spirituality.

In many rural areas of the Roman world, believers continued meeting in small gatherings because there were no large church buildings, Christian populations were smaller, and community life revolved around households. This meant the house church pattern remained very practical.

Over several centuries, especially from the 4th to 6th centuries, Christianity became increasingly institutional, liturgical, and centralised around bishops. Large cathedrals became the visible centre of Christian life in cities. However, the household dimension of Christian life never completely disappeared.

Across early church history, we see three layers:

- Apostolic period (AD 30–100): almost entirely house churches.
- Persecuted church (AD 100–313): mostly house churches with occasional larger gatherings.
- Imperial church (after AD 313): large public churches appear, but house gatherings continue alongside them.

The earliest centuries show that the strength of Christianity did not come from buildings but from discipleship, community, and spiritual life in households. Homes remained one of the primary environments where faith was lived out and transmitted.

House churches post-Constantine

Following the growing nationalisation of churches, there were movements toward house-church style Christianity after the time of Constantine the Great, although they were usually minority or renewal movements rather than the dominant form of Christianity. After the legalisation of Christianity through the Edict of Milan in 313 AD, the church gradually shifted from small household gatherings to large public basilicas supported by the Roman state.

Even though Christianity became increasingly institutional, with formal clergy structures and state patronage, various groups sought to return to simpler, more intimate forms of Christian fellowship resembling the New Testament house churches. This included early monastic communities (3rd–5th centuries). Some believers reacted to the growing institutional power of the church by withdrawing into intentional spiritual communities. Figures like Anthony the Great and Pachomius the Great pioneered early monastic life. Although monasteries were not exactly house churches, they emphasised small communities devoted to prayer, Scripture, and shared life, somewhat echoing the simplicity of early Christian gatherings.

Also consider the Waldensians (12th century). This is when a much clearer return to small-gathering Christianity occurred with the followers of Peter Waldo. The Waldensians began in the late 1100s. They promoted lay preaching, Scripture in the common language, and simple gatherings. Because they rejected many church structures, they were declared heretical and often met in homes or secret gatherings.

Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705) was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian who became known as the father of Pietism, a movement that sought to revive authentic Christian life within the church during a time

when many felt Christianity had become overly formal and intellectual. Spener believed that many Christians knew doctrine but lacked living faith and personal transformation. To address this, he introduced small spiritual gatherings called Collegia Pietatis (Latin for “schools or gatherings of piety”).

Around 1670 in Frankfurt, Spener began organizing these small meetings in homes. They were informal spiritual gatherings outside the regular Sunday service. Typical features included Bible reading and discussion, prayer, mutual encouragement, personal spiritual testimony, and practical application of Scripture. Unlike formal church services where a pastor preached, and the congregation listened, these meetings were participatory. Believers could share insights and ask questions. This made them somewhat similar to the participatory gatherings described by Paul the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 14.

Spener felt the church of his time had several problems, which included that Christianity had become too academic and theological. Many church members were nominal Christians with little spiritual life, and there was little personal discipleship. He proposed reform in a famous book called *Pia Desideria* (“Pious Desires”), published in 1675. At the time, the churches in Germany in the century following the Reformation were weakened by sacramentalism and confessionalism, and the clergy frequently engaged in endless theological disputes. Morality and spirituality among individual members were at a low ebb. In this work, he suggested more Bible study among ordinary believers, greater lay participation, genuine spiritual renewal, and practical Christian living, not just correct doctrine. The *collegia pietatis* were his practical solution.

A typical gathering involved a passage of Scripture being read, participants discussing the meaning, and people sharing how the passage applied to their lives. The group prayed together. Spener did not intend these

meetings to replace the church, but to renew it from within. The *collegia pietatis* became extremely influential and helped ignite the wider Pietism movement across Germany and Northern Europe. They influenced later Christian developments, including the Moravian revival under Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, the Methodist small group system developed by John Wesley, and modern house church movements (which still function more like cell groups of a larger church). Many historians see Spener's small gatherings as one of the earliest modern recoveries of New Testament-style fellowship.

Spener's meetings were, of course, controversial. Some church leaders feared they would weaken clergy authority, create independent groups, and lead to theological error. Ironically, these concerns are very similar to criticisms faced by early house churches and later revival movements. Yet the gatherings continued because many believers found them spiritually transformative. So Spener rediscovered something very simple but powerful — Christians grow best when they gather in small, interactive communities centred on Scripture and prayer.

As mentioned, the ideas of Philipp Jakob Spener eventually influenced one of the most remarkable renewal movements in church history — the Moravian movement under Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf was a German nobleman deeply shaped by the Pietist tradition that Spener had started. In 1722, he allowed a group of persecuted Christians from Moravia (modern-day Czech Republic) to settle on his land in Saxony. The new settlement became known as Herrnhut, meaning “the Lord's Watch.” What began as a small refugee community eventually sparked a global spiritual revival. In August 1727, the community experienced a powerful spiritual renewal during a communion service. This event is often called the Herrnhut Revival.

After this moment, the believers began meeting constantly for prayer and fellowship. They organised themselves into small spiritual groups, sometimes as small

as 5–12 people. These groups were called “bands” or “choirs.” These small gatherings were very similar to the earlier *collegia pietatis* introduced by Spener. One of the most astonishing developments was a continuous prayer chain that began in 1727. At Herrnhut, believers organized themselves so that someone was praying every hour of the day, and so this prayer watch continued for more than 100 years! This became known as the Moravian 100-year prayer watch.

It is often considered one of the longest continuous prayer movements in Christian history. Although the Herrnhut community was very small (about 300 people), they began sending missionaries around the world. Within a few decades, they sent missionaries to Greenland, South Africa, North America, the Caribbean, and Suriname. Their missionary zeal was so strong that some believers were willing to sell themselves into slavery just to reach enslaved people with the gospel.

The Moravians also had a profound impact on John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. During a storm at sea on a voyage to Georgia, Wesley observed Moravian believers who were calmly singing hymns while others panicked. Their deep faith and assurance deeply affected him. Later, after his famous conversion experience at a meeting on Aldersgate Street, Wesley adopted the idea of small discipleship groups, which became the Methodist class meetings. The Moravian movement shows a powerful historical pattern that spiritual renewal often spreads through small, committed communities.

So from Spener’s *collegia pietatis* to the Moravian bands to Wesley’s class meetings, the pattern is clear that small gatherings, deep prayer life, Scripture-centered fellowship, active participation, and missionary zeal creates spiritual fire power. Many of the greatest renewal movements in church history did not begin in large church buildings, but in small groups of believers meeting regularly for prayer, Scripture, and mutual encouragement.

The Moravian movement had an influence on

Christianity and global missions far greater than its small size would suggest. From a community of only a few hundred people in Herrnhut, the Moravians helped shape modern missions, prayer movements, and revival spirituality around the world. Before the 1700s, most Protestant churches did very little organized missionary work. The Moravians changed this dramatically. Within about 65 years, a community of roughly 300 people sent more than 300 missionaries around the world.

Their willingness to go anywhere for the gospel inspired later Protestant missionary movements in the 18th and 19th centuries. Many historians say they pioneered the missionary model later used by evangelicals. After the spiritual awakening known as the Herrnhut Revival in 1727, the Moravians began an extraordinary prayer initiative known as the Moravian 100-year prayer watch. Believers organised themselves so that someone was praying every hour of every day. Many modern 24/7 prayer movements trace their inspiration back to the Moravians.

Moravian believers organised themselves into small discipleship groups for accountability, prayer, confession, and spiritual growth. These groups resembled the earlier Collegia Pietatis started by Philipp Jakob Spener. Their model influenced later structures like Methodist class meetings, modern cell groups, and house church networks. Because of fervent prayer, the Moravians helped shape the modern Christian world by launching global Protestant missions, inspiring revival movements, influencing John Wesley and Methodism, pioneering continuous prayer, and modelling small, discipleship-based communities. All of this came from a small praying community of a few hundred believers.

In recent decades, many Christians have intentionally returned to house-church structures, even though it is still on a very small scale. Examples include organic church movements, simple church networks, and underground churches (especially in places like China). Regarding China, after the restrictions on religion eased in the late

1970s and 1980s, Christianity spread rapidly in China. A major reason was the rise of unregistered house churches. These are small Christian gatherings that meet in homes, apartments, or informal spaces rather than state-approved church buildings. Many believers chose this model because they did not want to submit to government control of doctrine and leadership. Researchers say tens of millions of Christians worship in these underground house churches.

Some estimates suggest 50–100 million believers are connected to these networks, making them one of the largest Christian movements in the world. Several factors helped house churches grow. This included China allowing Christianity only in state-controlled churches connected to the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (Protestant) or the Catholic Patriotic Association. Many Christians prefer to worship independently. Remember, small gatherings in homes can multiply quickly and avoid attention. This is why house churches are so effective.

Many testimonies describe believers continuing to gather secretly even when facing imprisonment or harassment. Because of this, Christianity in China often spread through networks of small house fellowships rather than large churches. Chinese authorities have increased pressure on unregistered churches in recent years. Is there still revival today? Some reports describe huge growth since the 1980s, possibly reaching tens of millions of believers. However, some recent surveys suggest growth may have slowed since around 2010, partly due to government pressure and demographic changes. Even so, many observers still believe China has one of the largest underground Christian movements in history. What makes the Chinese church remarkable is that it is often decentralised, house-based, lay-led (not dependent on professional clergy), and spread through personal relationships and small groups. In this way, it resembles the New Testament pattern of house churches described by Paul the Apostle in the early church.



House churches produce growth

There is a revival brewing in the spiritual atmosphere. It is the end-time revival to bring in the end-time harvest. What will drive the revival is the establishment of house churches. Therefore, a return to God's blueprint of house churches.

The first 300 years of the Faith proves that house churches work and they produce proper disciples. Early Christianity, after all, spread remarkably fast from the time of Jesus Christ (1st century) to the era of Constantine the Great in the early 4th century. Historians often point out that the simple, decentralised house-church model was one of the main reasons for this explosive growth. Several powerful factors worked together. Early believers usually met in homes, not religious buildings. This meant the church could multiply quickly. A home could host 20–50 people. When the group grew, another home gathering would begin. There was no need for property, institutions, or clergy structures. This is exactly how the apostolic mission of Paul the Apostle functioned. When he planted a church in a city, it often became multiple house churches connected as one body. Because of this model, the church spread organically and rapidly.

The movement multiplied because everyone was involved, not just leaders. Ironically, persecution accelerated the spread. After the Stoning of Stephen, believers scattered across the Roman world. Acts 8:4 says: "Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." Instead of stopping Christianity, persecution turned believers into missionaries. The early church focused heavily on discipleship, following the command of Jesus Christ in Matthew 28. New believers were taught Scripture, the teachings of the apostles, holy living, spiritual gifts, and community life. This created deeply committed followers, not casual adherents.

The infrastructure of the Roman Empire actually

helped the gospel spread. Roman roads connected cities, and the Greek language was widely understood. Urban centres allowed rapid communication, and Jewish synagogues provided starting points for preaching. Missionaries like Paul the Apostle moved easily between cities such as Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome. Today, we live in a world of cyber highways, so nothing really stops the spread of the Gospel.

House churches proved effective because the gospel did not usually spread to one isolated individual at a time. Instead, it often spread through entire households and relational networks. This is why house church networks are going to become important, so that revival can be carried and sustained. It is also interesting how the Lord has spoken that the end-time revival will be generational. This means the revival will not just impact an individual, but entire households, therefore all generations connecting with the one being revived. This can include direct and indirect families, from the old to the young. God wants to restore families, marriages, and the relationship between parents and children. He is a God of relationship, and marriage and the family is His sanctified institution.

Take note, we are not talking about whole families or households saved at once because of one person's belief. There is the idea that the saving of the entire family is accomplished through the faith of the leader of the family. If, for example, the father or the head of the home declares himself to be a Christian, then he presides over a Christian household—the members of his family are Christian by default, based on the decision of their father/husband. According to the concept of household salvation, God saves the entire family unit, not just the individual expressing faith. This thinking is flawed.

A proper understanding of the Bible's teaching on household salvation must begin with knowing what the Bible teaches about salvation in general. We know that there is only one way of salvation, and that is through faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:13-14; John 6:67-68; 14:6; Acts

4:12; Ephesians 2:8). We also know that the command to believe is directed to individuals and the act of believing is a personal action. Thus, salvation can only come to an individual who personally believes in Christ. Believing in Christ is not something that a father can do for a son or daughter. The fact that one member of a family or household believes does not guarantee that the rest will also believe.

It is also true that Jesus Himself indicates that the gospel often divides families. In Matthew 10:34-36, Jesus says, “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” This is why it is exciting when God speaks of a generational revival, for while the Gospel has divided families, then surely there must be mercy for restoration as well.

It is important to note that the spread of the Gospel from homes mirrored revival. It swept up entire households, not just individuals. And it is going to happen again. What is interesting is that the structure of a Roman household proved conducive to the spread of revival fire. In the world of the Roman Empire, a “household” (Latin: familia) was much larger than a modern nuclear family. A typical household could include the husband and wife, children, extended family members, servants or slaves, apprentices, business workers, and sometimes clients connected to the household. A well-established household might include 20–50 people, and in wealthier homes, even more.

This means that when a household leader accepted the gospel, dozens of people could immediately be influenced. The New Testament repeatedly mentions entire households coming to faith together. Examples include the household of Lydia. Acts records that after she believed that she and her household were baptized.” (See Acts of the Apostles 16:15). Her home likely became a meeting place for

believers.

The story of the Philippian jailer's household being saved is one of the clearest biblical pictures of how the early church spread through households, not through buildings or institutions. The account is found in Acts 16:25–34. In the city of Philippi, the apostles Paul the Apostle and Silas were arrested after casting a spirit out of a slave girl. They were beaten with rods, thrown into the inner prison, and their feet fastened in stocks. Yet at midnight, they were praying and singing hymns to God. Then something supernatural happened.

Suddenly, a great earthquake shook the prison, all the doors opened, and all the chains came loose. The jailer woke up and saw the doors open. Under Roman law, if prisoners escaped, the jailer would be executed. Thinking the prisoners had fled, he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." (Acts of the Apostles 16:28). This moment shattered the jailer's worldview. The jailer rushed in trembling and fell before Paul and Silas and he asked the most important question in the New Testament: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts of the Apostles 16:30). Paul answered with a simple but profound statement: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved — you and your household."

The text then says in chapter 16:32: "They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house." Salvation was not automatic for the household. The entire household heard the gospel. The jailer's life changed instantly. He washed Paul and Silas' wounds, showed compassion instead of cruelty, and was baptized the same night. Then the text says: "He rejoiced with his whole household that he had believed in God." So the gospel was preached, the household believed, and they were baptized. The home became a place of joy.

Although the Bible does not say it directly, this household likely became a house church in Philippi. Later Paul writes a letter to believers in the same city in the book of Epistle to the Philippians. Many scholars believe the

Philippian jailer's household became part of that early community. This is how the early church grew: one household saved so that that home becomes a meeting place. That household then reaches other households

Remember, in the ancient world, the household was the primary social unit. So if the head of a household believed, then the home opened to the gospel. Family and servants heard the message. It became a natural gathering place which already existed. So instead of building churches, Christianity spread through homes.

This is what happens when Christianity remains alive, organic and real and not legalistic. The jailer moved in one night from guarding prisoners to washing apostles, from despair to joy, from violence to compassion, and from death to salvation. And his home became a place of salvation instead of imprisonment. It is one of the most dramatic conversions in the New Testament. It reminds us that the gospel did not spread mainly through public preaching events but through transformed households that became centers of faith. This is one reason the early church multiplied so rapidly.

By the way, the earthquake in Philippi is one of the most remarkable moments in the book of Acts of the Apostles. When we look at the historical context of Roman prisons and Roman law, the event becomes even more powerful and explains why the jailer was so terrified. In the ancient Roman world, prisons were not designed like modern jails. A typical Roman prison had an outer holding area, an inner dungeon (the most secure section), stocks locking prisoners' feet, and thick stone doors and iron bars. According to the account, Paul the Apostle and Silas were placed in the inner prison with their feet in stocks. This meant they were considered high-risk prisoners.

Under Roman law, a jailer was personally responsible for prisoners. If a prisoner escaped the jailer could be executed, and sometimes the jailer received the prisoner's punishment. We see an example of this earlier when Herod Agrippa I executed guards after Simon Peter escaped

prison (Acts 12). So when the jailer woke up and saw the doors open, he assumed everyone had escaped, which meant certain death for him. That is why he drew his sword to kill himself.

Acts chapter 16:26 says, "Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed." A normal earthquake would have caused chaos. Yet this looked more like a targeted divine intervention than a natural disaster. When the jailer discovered that no prisoners had fled, something extraordinary became clear that the earthquake freed everyone, yet the prisoners chose not to run. The men he had beaten were now saving his life. The jailer suddenly realized these men were not ordinary prisoners and their God had power over earth, chains, and prisons. Instead of revenge, they showed mercy which produced deep conviction.

The text says the jailer came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas. In Roman culture this was extraordinary. A Roman jailer represented imperial authority, and so he would never normally bow before prisoners. But the earthquake and mercy shattered his confidence in Roman power. For the first time he saw a higher authority. So he asked the question: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" We are reminded that for many in the world today they are still stuck in a prison of bondage, darkness, sin, and Spiritual captivity. But as with Paul, when God intervenes everything changes. Then the earth shakes, the chains fall, and the 'doors' open. But the greatest miracle was not the earthquake. The greatest miracle was the conversion of the jailer and his household.

This story shows something important about the early church. God often worked through households, crisis moments, demonstrations of power, and radical mercy. The jailer expected judgment, instead he received salvation. And his house likely became one of the earliest Christian meeting places in Philippi. Within only about 10

years, Philippi had a strong Christian community, which is why Paul the Apostle later wrote the joyful letter known as Epistle to the Philippians. It is very possible that the former jailer and his household were part of that church.

The story of Philippi is actually a case study in the social strategy of the early church, showing how God used very different households to spread the gospel across society. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas encounter three very different households, each representing a distinct social level in Philippi. Lydia was a seller of purple cloth, a luxury trade, making her a wealthy, influential woman in Philippi. When she believed, she and her household were baptized. Her home became a meeting place for Christians, providing a safe and well-resourced centre for gatherings. This demonstrates how affluent households could provide space, hospitality, and influence for the growth of the church.

We find how Paul casts a demon out of a slave girl. She belonged to a household that likely profited from her fortune-telling abilities. Her liberation caused her owners to be upset, resulting in Paul and Silas being beaten and jailed. Even households from low social classes or marginalized groups became sites of spiritual confrontation and transformation. This shows that the gospel reached every social layer, not just the wealthy or elite.

So we find how each head of a household—wealthy merchant, marginalized slave owner, government official—opened a home as a spiritual hub. The early church was not socially uniform. God used all levels of society. Roman households often included extended family, servants, and workers. One conversion could result in dozens of new believers at once. Lydia's home became a community centre. The jailer's home probably became a house church. Even marginalised households could impact others indirectly.

Salvation often happens in the household context. God does not just convert individuals; He transforms entire

social units. The gospel spreads relationally because believers multiply through personal connections, shared meals, and hospitality. God's strategy is inclusive because He does not favour one social class; His Kingdom grows through the entire network of human relationships.

The Philippian story shows a strategic, relational, and household-centred model of church growth. By converting household heads in different social strata, God created multiple entry points for the gospel, which naturally multiplied the early church, even before there were church buildings.

Again, those doesn't mean if one family member is saved everyone is saved. Everyone in the family needs to commit to Christ. We know that Acts 16:31 says, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The missionaries respond, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Again, this promise is given to a specific individual in a specific context; however, this one contains an additional promise that is clearly universal and spans all time periods and contexts. That promise is not one of household salvation but is entirely consistent with every other verse in the Bible that speaks of salvation. It is the promise that if you believe in the Lord Jesus "you will be saved." Also, salvation came to the jailer's household as the result of their hearing the Word of God and individually responding in faith: Paul and Silas "spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house" (Acts 16:32). The whole family heard the gospel. They were all saved, just as God had promised, but their salvation was not due to their being a part of the jailer's household; they were saved because they believed the gospel for themselves.

Some view 1 Corinthians 7:14 as immediate salvation for all in the household: "For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy." This verse seems to teach that an unbelieving spouse can be saved on the basis of his or her

spouse's faith in Christ. It also seems to say that their children will be holy before the Lord because one of their parents is saved. But that conclusion would be inconsistent with the overall teaching of Scripture. In this context the word sanctified is not referring to salvation or being made holy before God. Instead, it refers to the sanctity of the marriage relationship itself. Paul taught that Christians should not be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). The fear of some in the church was that, since they were married to unbelievers, they were living in sin—their marriage was "unholy" and their children from that union were illegitimate. Paul allays their fears: believers who are already married to an unbeliever should remain married as long as the unbeliever consents to stay married. They should not seek a divorce; their marriage relationship is sanctified (holy or set apart in God's eyes) based upon the faith of the believing spouse. Likewise, the children of their marriage are legitimate in the sight of God.

The fact that 1 Corinthians 7:14 is not speaking of household salvation is clearly seen in the question Paul asks in 1 Corinthians 7:16: "How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?" If household salvation were true, then the wife would already be saved (on the basis of the husband's salvation); Paul would not need to refer to a future time of salvation for her.

So we need to realise that the Bible does not promise household salvation, but that does not mean that a godly father or mother does not have a profound spiritual influence on the children in that family. Or how any family member can have a profound impact on other family members. This is what I believe will happen in the end-time revival. There is grace extended to see families restored and saved as in the days of Acts. The leader of a household sets the course for the family in many ways, including spiritually, and so it may happen again. We should earnestly hope, pray, and work for the salvation of

our families. There are many times when the God of Abraham also becomes the God of Sarah, and then of Isaac, and then of Jacob. As Charles Spurgeon said, “Though grace does not run in the blood, and regeneration is not of blood nor of birth, yet doth it very frequently . . . happen that God, by means of one of a household, draws the rest to himself. He calls an individual, and then uses him to be a sort of spiritual decoy to bring the rest of the family into the gospel net.”

The household of Cornelius is another example of a household coming to Christ. Cornelius’ story in Acts 10 is a pivotal moment in the New Testament because it shows how salvation was opened to the Gentiles (non-Jews) through faith in Jesus Christ. Cornelius was a Roman centurion, described as devout, God-fearing, generous to the poor, and prayerful (Acts 10:1–2). Despite his devotion, he was still outside the covenant of Israel. He needed the gospel of Jesus to be saved. Cornelius received a vision from an angel who told him to send for Peter (Acts 10:3–6). At the same time, Peter had a vision of a sheet with clean and unclean animals, symbolising that God was making no distinction between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10:9–16).

When Cornelius’ men arrived, Peter went with them to Caesarea. Cornelius had gathered his household and close friends to hear Peter. Peter preached the gospel: that Jesus is Lord of all, was crucified, raised from the dead, and that forgiveness of sins comes through faith in Him (Acts 10:34–43). While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the message (Acts 10:44). They began speaking in tongues and praising God, just as the Jewish believers had experienced at Pentecost. This was a clear sign that God had accepted the Gentiles.

Peter then commanded that Cornelius and his household be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:47–48). Their salvation was complete: they believed, received the Spirit, and were baptized. When the gospel came to his home, everyone gathered in the house and the

Holy Spirit fell upon them.

Remember, in Acts 10, Cornelius welcomes Peter into his home and says, “We are all here” (Acts 10:33). In other words, Cornelius’ entire household was gathered to hear everything that Peter would preach. All of them heard the gospel, and all of them responded. Everyone in Cornelius’s household believed and was baptized (Acts 11:15-18). This is exactly what God had promised. The household of Cornelius was not saved because Cornelius believed but because they believed.

So once a household believed, the faith could spread naturally through relationships. The household model created organic church multiplication. The pattern often looked like this: a missionary shared the gospel, a household believed, the house became a gathering place, friends and relatives were invited, and a new community of believers formed.

When the gathering grew too large, another house could begin hosting. This allowed Christianity to spread without buildings or institutions.

The household structure created a unique spiritual environment. Believers experienced faith not only in weekly meetings but in daily life together.

The Roman household structure helped the early church grow because households were large, conversions often happened collectively, homes could host gatherings, and social networks spread the message quickly. This meant Christianity expanded through relationships and families, not institutions.

If the average house church had 30–40 people, and each church multiplied every few years, Christianity could spread across the Roman world exponentially. That helps explain why a small movement around Jesus Christ grew to millions of believers within three centuries.

Today, in the Western world, households are indeed much smaller. In some other areas, like India, China and amongst the Muslims, household structure may be more conducive to such a wildfire spread of the Gospel. The

bottom line is that God is going to use houses again, and He is again going to touch households generationally to fan the flame of revival.

The house church blueprint

In the New Testament, house churches were not a weakness of the Church; they were its strength. They were not a backup plan. They were the frontline of the Kingdom. Let us understand, when we are speaking about the need to establish house churches, it is not saying that the structured churches of today should be completely eradicated or that they are evil. It is like saying the Law as given to Moses was wicked. How can it be wicked if God gave the Law to the prophet? Just so, structured or traditional churches have played their part in bringing people to the Word and worship.

Personally, I see how we can again adopt the idea of large gatherings and house fellowship. Meaning the church buildings we have at the moment are great for corporate worship and prayer. Yet the spiritual growth which includes making disciples and living out our calling in the power of the Holy Spirit, has to happen again on ground level in homes. From homes comes the explosion of revival. In homes, people are taught true discipleship, which includes setting the captives free and how to evangelise. In such an intimate and "safe" environment, participation is encouraged, and prayer and worship in unity and in love of the Lord will erupt like a burning torch.

House churches have always been the blueprint through which church and spiritual growth are supposed to take place. Jesus showed us the blueprint for discipleship, yet we have not followed His way. Through His blueprint of house churches and discipleship, His Kingdom will grow on earth as we reach the lost. And remember, the lost is not just supposed to be reached, but also discipled. It is through the house church environment that discipleship flourishes, and spiritual growth is facilitated. It is within this environment that the Great Commission is

understood, embraced, and in unity lived out. The church should be in the business of winning souls. Training disciples to fulfil the Great Commission optimally begins on a house church level.

From Acts of the Apostles to the letters of Paul the Apostle, we see believers gathering in homes — breaking bread, praying, teaching, correcting, and sending. These gatherings produced disciples, not spectators. They were united because together they were serving the King of kings, and not the ambition of a person. House churches were so powerful because they produced participation, not observation. In a home, you cannot hide in the back row. Today, every Saturday or Sunday, people sit in a traditional church service, listen to a sermon, and sing a couple of songs, yet they never participate. They hardly learn how to move in the Spirit of God, to utilise their spiritual gifts or any other talents to the glory of the King. Have you noticed how few sermons these days focus on spiritual gifts, being filled by the Spirit of God, and following your mandate?

What we find on a Saturday or a Sunday is not discipleship. It is Word-proclamation. It is not even proper teaching. It is a motivational talk. It is emotional hype. Jesus taught as the Spirit moved, whether in a home, on the road, or in homes. True teaching flourishes where there is participation and a hunger to learn from the Spirit of the Lord. In the house churches, everyone brings something — a prayer, a testimony, a psalm, a word of encouragement (see 1 Corinthians 14:26). Disciples are formed when believers practice their faith, not just listen to it. Yet today, churches are full of spectators. We are not making disciples, we are making congregants; therefore, people following the doctrine and the constitution of a church.

True disciples follow the Kingdom. They follow the truth of the Kingdom. They follow the King of the eternal Kingdom. This is why we are admonished in Matthew 6 to first seek the Kingdom of God above all. A house church forces growth. You speak. You pray. You serve. You love. That is how disciples are made. Not just by attending a

service and then rushing home.

The disciples of Jesus learned to be like Jesus because they watched Jesus, and they were participants. In Luke 10 we read: “1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them out ahead of Him, two by two, into every city and place where He was about to go. 2 He was saying to them, “The harvest is abundant [for there are many who need to hear the good news about salvation], but the workers [those available to proclaim the message of salvation] are few. Therefore, [prayerfully] ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. 3 Go your way; listen carefully: I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4 Do not carry a money belt, a provision bag, or [extra] sandals; and do not greet anyone along the way [who would delay you]. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace [that is, a blessing of well-being and prosperity, the favor of God] to this house.’ 6 And if anyone of peace is there [someone who is sweet-spirited and hospitable], your [blessing of] peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not move from house to house. 8 Whenever you go into a city and they welcome you, eat what is set before you; 9 and heal those in it who are sick [authenticating your message], and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10 But whatever city you enter and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you [breaking all ties]; yet understand this, that the kingdom of God has come near [and you rejected it].”

The disciples during the day of Jesus were active. They participated. They were taught to bless where they were welcomed. Just so, such house churches will again explode in the world. A place where true believers gather to learn, to exhort each other, to pray, to worship, and to share God’s love in unity. A place of authentic love, and not manipulation. God is looking for healthy and holy

environments where prayer and worship are genuine. Places where His power can manifest, not to the glory of the people, but so that His name be glorified.

Discipleship is relational, not institutional. Yet these days, traditional churches is so much about structure, agendas and programmes. In the New Testament churches, younger believers walked closely with mature ones. They saw how they handled conflict. How they prayed. How they endured persecution. How they loved their families. This is how Paul could say, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." Discipleship is caught before it is taught. You cannot fake fellowship in a living room.

Indeed, in the NT house churches, meals were shared, needs were met, tears were visible, and joy was shared. The correction was personal. Unity was real. The early believers in Acts of the Apostles were devoted to (Acts 2) the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. That devotion was lived out in homes. And what happened? It says God added to the church. There was no marketing or fancy social media ads. God brought revival for the apostles who followed the blueprint. After all, community creates accountability, and accountability produces maturity.

Homes are reproducible. You do not need a building, a stage, or a budget to make disciples. You need believers filled with the Spirit and grounded in truth. Persecution scattered the Church, but scattering multiplied it. You can shut down a building. You cannot shut down a living room filled with believers. Today, churches are forced to run a business model to raise funds for a building. So congregants are forced to contribute to the building fund. Really? Leaders preach erroneous doctrines like tithing or yield to the prosperity doctrines, not only to fill their pockets, but to keep the church doors open. And then we are talking about lavish churches, with all the bells and whistles. These monuments of mortar and stone glorify not God, but man.

When house churches return to the living room, they

can function as they should function, which is to win souls and make disciples without worrying too much about stuff like a building fund. After all, the house is a home to someone! These days, traditional churches are more worried about the external look of the building called the church than the internal temples of God, which are the people formed as the holy priesthood of God.

Haggai 1: 1 In the second year of Darius the king [of Persia], on the first day of the sixth month (Aug 29, 520 b.c.), the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, 2 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: “These people say, “The time has not come that the Lord’s house (temple) should be [b]rebuilt.”” 3 Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 “Is it time for you yourselves to live in your [expensive] paneled houses while this house [of the Lord] lies in ruins?” 5 Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, “Consider your ways and thoughtfully reflect on your conduct! 6 You have planted much, but you harvest little; you eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you do not have enough to be intoxicated; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns wages earns them just to put them in a bag with holes in it [because God has withheld His blessing].” 7 Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Consider your ways and thoughtfully reflect on your conduct! 8 Go up to the hill country, bring lumber and rebuild My house (temple), that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,” says the Lord [accepting it as done for My glory]. 9 You look for much [harvest], but it comes to little; and even when you bring that home, I blow it away. Why?” says the Lord of hosts. “Because of My house, which lies in ruins while each of you runs to his own house [eager to enjoy it]. 10 Therefore, because of you [that is, your sin and disobedience] the heavens withhold the dew and the earth withholds its produce. 11 I called for a drought on the land and the hill country, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle,

and on all the labor of your hands.”

Haggai speaks to a people who were more interested in building their homes than attending to God’s House. They suffered because of their pursuit of the self. They experienced a physical and spiritual drought because their focus was not on God. Just so, house churches are not there for personal pursuit, for fame or fortune. It should exist to build God’s Kingdom. House churches in the NT flourished because, without programs and performance, Christ remained central. They were Spirit-filled and Spirit-driven. The church in homes focused on the Word, the Spirit, prayer, communion, and the mission. It was not about entertainment, or production, or hierarchy. Just Jesus.

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) is not “gather crowds.” It is “make disciples.” A house church environment trains believers to teach Scripture, pray boldly, share the Gospel, shepherd others, and suffer faithfully. It creates leaders, not consumers. The early Church grew explosively, not because it was impressive, but because it was intimate. Homes became training grounds, prayer furnaces, mission bases, and spiritual families. Disciples are formed where life is shared, truth is practised, and Christ is obeyed daily. House churches are effective because discipleship requires proximity, vulnerability, and participation. And that is exactly what a home provides.

It should be the heart of believers for God’s people to again gather and fellowship like the first followers of the Lord, as written in Acts 2. These meetings were intimate, allowing for the entire Body to come together in unity, seeking to be bonded in the Spirit and the Truth.

Home churches will provide safe refuges for those who no longer feel comfortable in modern-day “church structures”. There will be places to welcome back the broken, the forgotten, the neglected, and the church exiles. Such “church structures” have been deemed to be impersonal, uncaring, distant, cold and clickish. There is

the feeling that the focus is on the superstardom of the “clergy”, on an overemphasis on finances (thus the overbearing teachings and sermons on prosperity) and on empire building instead of kingdom building.

Within these structures of traditional churches, you find that accusations of spiritual abuse, infighting, manipulation, need for power, and greed have surfaced. In the light of potential false doctrine and dogma, believers are feeling alienated, rejected and cast out. Because of so many testimonies of people being hurt and harmed within the church setup, a different view of the church is needed. This view is about the true caring Bride encouraging, edifying and supporting each other, where needs are met and where the Lord’s truth and ways take precedence over man’s truth and ways.

Home churches are not cell group meetings, for these gatherings are still affiliated with a main denomination. True discipleship is also not really advocated or promoted. Cell groups are social gatherings, instead of being a time of fellowship where prayer, worship and Word capture the soul of the believer.

Home churches are non-denominational. Technically, they should form part of a network across cities and nations. Even where a house church functions by itself, it should never morph into a cult. It should always be about God. It should be about God’s truth, His Spirit, His Covenant and His Kingdom. Cell groups that wish to be part of the home church network must realise this is not about denomination but about God’s truth. After all, God has not called us to make disciples of a denomination or a church group, but of Him.

God’s intention has always been for believers, like it was in the Book of Acts, to form a network of home churches, which cooperate for numerous reasons (Acts 2:46, Acts 20: 20, Romans 16:5, Philemon 2). These include:

a) The unchurched: The many Christians who have no affiliation need to be brought back to a small group who

will love and care for them (Ezekiel 34:46)

b) Flexibility: People are not tied down to a place or time, as the group will be flexible to share venues. Therefore, there are also no financial constraints on paying for a venue.

c) Unthreatening environment: A person will feel comfortable moving in the presence of the Lord and therefore, will grow without condemnation. Yet, home churches will not compromise on God's truth or holiness.

d) Caring: A person can be nurtured, mentored, helped and fostered.

e) Sharing: Emphasis away from spectators to participators, aiding spiritual growth.

f) Persecution: Home church is the only answer to times of persecution, as proven in China and Russia. One can band together in unity.

g) Celebration: Home churches are encouraged to meet together once a month for a time of thanksgiving, sharing, fellowshiping and worshipping. The feasts of Israel are designed to bring the people together to be united in love.

h) Expertise: Home churches will have access to expertise, due to the networking nature, so that revelation, knowledge, guidance and leadership can be shared. Therefore, a place where the five-fold ministry can thrive in balance and unity.

i) Leadership: Since there is no gain of wealth in home churches, true leadership and mentors will come forth, for they will be concerned for the sheep and not working for a salary. Leaders are called to make disciples, teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:20). Leadership is not for selfish, self-centred people but for those with selfless dispositions who want to care and share.

To avoid the pitfalls of "church structures", the home churches will be autonomous yet connected and interconnected to allow for sound dictation of doctrine. The emphasis should be on all believers moving in the Spirit and ministering under God's Hand, so that there is

not a superstar attitude but a sharing of gifts. This will also negate the corruption of power. As explored in this brief study, leadership is based on elders and those in the five-fold ministry. These leaders are mature, administering the spiritual laws, providing guidance, co-ordination and standing guard against all things false. They seek not to lord over the people, but serve. They seek not self-glorification, but to glorify God.

To avoid the pitfalls of corruption of wealth, house churches should not be about salaries. Paul worked to make a living. In the New Testament, you find where a need does arise within a home church or another home church, then the believers in the wisdom of the Lord can seek to provide assistance. This is where elders then help.

House church gatherings

The writings of Paul the Apostle strongly suggest that the normal setting of the early church was a small gathering where many believers could actively participate. When you read his instructions carefully, the structure only really functions well in house-sized meetings, not large assemblies.

In 1 Corinthians 14:26, Paul writes: “Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, a teaching, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation.” This instruction assumes multiple believers speaking, Interactive participation and Spirit-led contributions. In a small house church of perhaps 20–40 people, this would be very natural. People could share, pray, prophesy, or teach while others discerned. But in a large basilica gathering of hundreds, this kind of participation becomes extremely difficult. Instead, worship tends to shift toward one speaker and many listeners.

Paul also describes the church as a living body where every member functions: “For the body is not one member, but many.” (1 Corinthians 12:14). This concept works best when believers know each other personally, recognize each other's gifts, and encourage one another regularly. In a household gathering, believers could easily exercise

spiritual gifts and build one another up.

Paul repeatedly greets churches that meet in homes, showing that this was a normal practice. When Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11–13 about apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers equipping believers, the goal is “the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry.” In a house-church environment, every believer could actually minister, not just observe. This fits the goal Paul describes: the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, and growing into the fullness of Christ. The New Testament church functioned more like a spiritual family gathered in homes, where every believer contributed, rather than a large audience watching a single minister. This doesn’t mean large gatherings are wrong—but the core discipleship life of the early church happened in smaller communities.

So a typical early house church gathering in the first centuries after Jesus Christ looked very different from most modern church services. Based on the descriptions in the New Testament and early historical writings, these meetings were relational, participatory, and centred on the presence of God. Christians would assemble in the home of a host family. Examples mentioned in the New Testament include homes like those of Priscilla and Aquila, and Lydia of Thyatira. The house might accommodate 20–50 people in a large room or courtyard. People arrived gradually, greeting one another warmly and sharing news of the community.

Many gatherings included a communal meal. This practice was known as the love feast (agape meal). Believers brought food and shared it with one another, expressing the family nature of the church. This practice reflected the pattern described in Acts of the Apostles 2:46, “They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.” These meals strengthened community bonds and unity.

Worship was simple and often spontaneous. Believers might sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Music was usually unaccompanied singing, since instruments were

not common in early Christian gatherings. Worship focused on honouring Jesus Christ. Prayer played a central role. Believers prayed for the sick, persecuted Christians, missionaries, and needs within the community. Prayer could include thanksgiving, intercession, and prophetic prayer.

Scriptures were read aloud since most people did not own written copies. Readings might include passages from the Hebrew Scriptures, letters written by apostles such as Paul the Apostle, and eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life. Because manuscripts were precious, they were treated with great reverence. After the reading, leaders such as elders would offer teaching and explanation. However, the meeting was not a one-way lecture. According to 1 Corinthians 14:26, believers could contribute teachings, testimonies, insights, and prophetic messages. This made gatherings interactive and Spirit-led.

Early Christians expected the Holy Spirit to move powerfully. Spiritual gifts could include prophecy, healing, words of wisdom, and encouragement. These gifts strengthened and guided the community. The gathering often included the breaking of bread, remembering the sacrifice of Christ. Communion was not a ritual separated from life but part of the shared meal. It reminded believers of their unity in Christ.

The early church strongly emphasised caring for one another. During gatherings, believers might collect offerings, distribute help to widows, and assist struggling families. Community care was a visible expression of the love of Christ.

Sometimes, gatherings ended with a prayer for those being sent on mission. Missionaries like Paul the Apostle and Barnabas were prayed over and sent out from local communities. House churches were, therefore, both nurturing centres and mission bases.

What made these gatherings unique was not the structure but the spiritual life within them. The early church emphasised devotion to Christ, strong community,

discipleship, participation of believers, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Because meetings were small and relational, believers grew deeply connected to one another and to God. Early house church meetings were less like attending an event and more like gathering as a spiritual family in God's presence.

Sadly, we have drifted very far away from the house church model. It is no longer about serving, but about self-promotion and exaltation. Remember, in the NT, no house church was labelled. There were no denominations. Apostles and disciples didn't even have their own ministry. It was all about God. It was all about advancing His kingdom on earth. It was about making disciples to win the lost. It was never about the structure, but building up the royal priesthood of believers in love. It was never about religion, but about a relationship. It was never about man's ego, but God's glory. It was always about His truth, about holiness, and about His Presence. It has always been about the Great Commission.

Revival and house churches

Over the years, God has spoken many times of revival. Not just to me, but to so many servants of His Kingdom. It will come, but in His way, and in His timing. Not ours. God has been dealing with revival with me since 2008. We need to realise this revival will spark a worldwide birthing of spiritual life, as God calls forth His Bride to arise from the ashes of idolatry. We will see the dry wood catch fire again, and the embers of spiritual life that burned so low ignite with Shekinah glory. This revival is about the corporate Body of Christ and to bring forth a glorious awakening before the coming of Jesus.

The Lord has said this revival will be a return to holiness. Before the empowerment of fire, there will be a great travailing and weeping in repentance. Study the revival of Josiah in 2 Kings 22 and 23. Josiah experienced revival after the people confirmed their loyalty to the covenant, and after the people repented before the Lord. They also first had to take action by breaking down all the false altars.

Holiness demands an answer of godliness. False altars needs to be destroyed, unholy roots uprooted, and profane fire quenched. Jeremiah was called to uproot and also plant. Deliverance flows from where false altars are destroyed and God's altar is restored. And then the fire of God can again fall on the altar, and bring to life by His fire what is dead, dry, and barren. By His fire, dead roots can again be watered and nourished. By the move of the Spirit, the Bride shall return to the Covenant of the Lord, to His Word, to God's Way, to God's Path, and God's holiness.

1 Kings 13 says, "1 Now behold, there came a man of God from Judah to Bethel by the word (command) of the Lord, while Jeroboam was standing by the altar [which he

had built] to burn incense. 2 The man cried out against the [idolatrous] altar by the word of the Lord, "O altar, altar, thus says the Lord: 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you shall he sacrifice [the bodies of] the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'" Such a time has come again to speak to false altars, dead roots, barren land, and uncommon ground. Now is the time of Ezekiel 37 to speak to the dry bones. Now is the time to grab hold of the garment of Jesus, and to take hold of the mercy seat.

Glory to God, as we yield before God, and we yield to His Covenant and eternal truth, God will bring life where none should be possible (the dry bones of Ezekiel 37). There is resurrection power that flows from the place of surrender, for true worship is where we abide in His glory. God is looking for those who will yield before His ways and truths in these last days, so that the supernatural overshadows the natural!

I have been shown over the years the emergence of house churches, where God will 'create' consecrated places for constant prayer, worship and where disciples flourish and grow. It is about holy ground, for God moves where holiness is revered. Even in the established churches, where there is a hunger and thirst for God's Presence, the true altar will be erected, holy ground will be restored, and God's fire shall fall and burn. Such consecrated places of meeting – be it churches, homes, tents, or even low-cost dwellings - will serve as spiritual lighthouses in the end-time revival, and from them will flow worshippers in Spirit and truth, empowered in the Holy Spirit, to awaken a spiritually corrupted world back to a holy God. It is about a RETURN to the ancient of ways, to the Spirit, to the order of God and the Covenant.

For those who revere the Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob shall walk in supernatural power as mentioned in Mark 16. Indeed, the Kingdom of God is one of power. Such power shall again be manifested. There shall be a

confrontation between good and evil, between holy and ungodly, between light and dark, as was seen on Mount Carmel. Yet, God still answers by fire. The end-time remnant, marching in unity, will carry the banner of Christ, and they walk in delegated authority to pierce the darkness and shake the gates of hell! Many of these disciples will be 'birthed' out of the house church movement. And house churches is not something new. It is the established order of God.

We need to keep our eyes on Jesus and seek Him above all. As in the days of King Josiah when the great revival broke out, so the revived Bride will return to the Covenant, the Table of Presence and the sacredness of a divine God. They will be dangerous people to the kingdom of darkness, for they will be violent in spirit to the works of the devil. They shall be relentless in God's power, like the 2 witnesses in the Book of Revelation. Oh yes, this world is slipping deeper into darkness, and there are signs of chaos and violence across the globe, but amid the storm, we will see God's wind blow as His Spirit moves to awaken.

We speak of rumours of war, but watch out for the rumours of revival! Yes, dry bones and dry roots will catch fire again. Chains will break, and freedom will become more costly than silver and gold. For Jesus will for many no longer be a cursed name, but the hope of salvation. Yes, the exiles (the ridiculed, the mocked, and believers driven from the religious fold) and the captives of Egypt (the oppressed, the possessed, the enslaved, the bound, and those burning with hell fire) will drink from the river of revival, and they will go up to the mountain of the Lord to seek the true way home. Jesus is the eternal flame. And He is the flame in the dark woods in such perilous times, which will show the way home, out of darkness, out of Babylon, out of Egypt, and out of spiritual poverty. By His mercy and love, the remnant will be led home. Praise the Lord.

Aiden Wilson Tozer was an American Christian pastor, author, magazine editor, and spiritual mentor. He said

revival must not be treated as a program, a conference, or a season of emotional intensity. He spoke of it as a visitation of God that exposes the church and restores the fear of the Lord. He believed judgment begins at the house of God. The problem was not the culture first, but a compromised church. Cold prayer meetings, shallow preaching, and worldly ambition were signs that the glory had departed.

Tozer rejected manipulation. He said music, atmosphere, and persuasion could produce excitement, but not revival. Only the Holy Spirit brings awakening. He also said that prayer precedes power. Tozer insisted that sustained, humble prayer is the soil of revival. Not a public spectacle, but a hidden intercession. He tied revival to moral transformation. If people claim revival but remain unchanged in conduct, he would call it false fire. He wrote: "The church that cannot worship must be entertained. And men who cannot lead a church to worship must provide entertainment."

Personally, I do believe revival will explode into the world when house churches, especially a proper network of them, are again established. Places of consecration. Places of holiness. Places of constant prayer and authentic worship. Places where people can again meet God and know God. In such an environment, disciples are forged as they are led in the power of the Holy Spirit. Disciples who will stand in unity, fulfilling the Great Commission and advancing the Gospel. With the explosion of house churches will come the quickening of the end-time revival, and we will see the Kingdom expanding.

Authentic house churches manifest God's power. Disciples walk in it. They walk in love. They walk in the heart of God to see the lost saved. House churches are not places of spectacle, of applause or admiration. True house churches are places of sacrifices, travailing, prayer, Spirit-led worship, and where all disciples are activated and mobilised. Out of such an environment, revival will flow, and those who carry the torch of revival will go into the world to bring the light of Christ into the dark places.

Revival is coming. So are house churches. And God's blueprint for spiritual growth shall again be established.

For once the end-time harvest is collected from the fields, where then shall they go? Yes, they shall be welcomed into the house churches. Into holy environments where religion and tradition have been buried. They will be welcomed into God's presence, where they can grow, learn, and know God. May the revival spark to life, and also house churches. No longer places where the truth is butchered, but where God's truth prevails. No longer places where sin thrives, but holiness takes its rightful place. No longer places where altars of silver and gold are erected, but where God's true fire burns on the altar. May the spiritual latter rains pour and revival sweep the world.

House churches of power

The house churches in the Acts of the Apostles were not survival gatherings. They were not quiet Bible studies trying to stay unnoticed. They were explosive centres of divine activity. Homes became sanctuaries of power, and ordinary believers became carriers of extraordinary grace. It is because the believers stood united and sought not fame or fortune. They worshipped the Lord and sought to fulfil His Great Commission.

If we are to recover authentic house churches, we must recover their expectation of the miraculous. When persecution intensified, the believers did not retreat — they gathered. Acts 4 records that after being threatened, the disciples lifted their voices together in prayer. The result was not emotional comfort alone. The place where they were meeting was shaken, and they were all filled afresh with the Holy Spirit. This likely occurred in a home setting, which was the natural gathering space of the early church. The pattern is clear. United prayer and bold faith led to fresh infilling and empowered witnesses. The early house church understood that power was not generated by numbers, but by unity and surrender.

In Acts 9, Peter the Apostle was called to a house in

Joppa where a beloved disciple named Tabitha (Dorcas) had died. He entered an upper room — not a synagogue, not a temple — and prayed. Tabitha rose from the dead. The miracle did not occur on a platform. It occurred in a home among grieving believers. The result was widespread faith in the region. Authentic house churches are not limited by location. Heaven responds to faith, not architecture.

In Acts 10, Cornelius gathered his relatives and close friends in his home to hear the Word. As Peter the Apostle preached, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard. They spoke in tongues and magnified God. No altar call. No emotional build-up. No special formula. Just hunger and obedience. The first major Gentile outpouring of the Spirit did not happen in Jerusalem's temple courts; it happened in a house.

In Acts 16, Paul the Apostle confronted a spirit of divination in a slave girl. Deliverance followed. So did persecution and imprisonment. Then came the earthquake. The jailer, trembling, asked how to be saved. That same night, he and his entire household believed and were baptised. The gospel did not stop at individuals; it invaded households. The early house church carried a vision not merely for personal salvation, but for family transformation.

Acts 12 records that while Peter was imprisoned, the church was earnestly praying in a house, the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark. An angel appeared in the prison and led Peter out. Where did he go? To the prayer meeting. The house church was not shocked that God answered. They were astonished at the speed and magnitude of the answer. Authentic house churches must recover intercession that expects heaven to intervene.

Acts repeatedly states that many signs and wonders were done among the people. The believers met daily from house to house, breaking bread and sharing life. The miraculous was not an occasional event; it was woven into community life. Healing flowed through relationships.

Deliverance flowed through obedience. Provision flowed through generosity. Boldness flowed through prayer. Power was not imported from conferences, but it was cultivated in the community. Indeed, the church gained power for the early house church did not chase manifestations. They pursued devotion to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. And the Lord confirmed His Word with power.

Mark 16 says, "14 Later, Jesus appeared to the eleven [disciples] themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He called them to account for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen [from death]. 15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 He who has believed [in Me] and has been baptized will be saved [from the penalty of God's wrath and judgment]; but he who has not believed will be condemned. 17 These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will get well."

Signs, wonders, and miracles are supposed to follow the disciples of God. It happened in the days of Acts. So why is it not happening anymore? Because we have failed to make disciples. We have failed to be united as a Church. We have failed to fulfil the Great Commission. We have failed because we have exchanged God's blueprint of a healthy and authentic church for a blueprint that has been shaped by religion and traditions. Why did we change God's blueprint of house churches? We even threw away God's blueprint of how to make disciples (as shown by Jesus for three years). And then we wonder why the church has lost its power and fire. Then we wonder why there are no signs and wonders.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2, "3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of

human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” Paul moved in the power of God. The early Church moved in power. The source of the power has not changed; the church has abandoned its position. We are now more concerned about the external, the temporary, the glitz, the glamour, the applause, and the goose-bump moments instead of seeing people saved, set free and made into disciples.

Romans 14:17 reminds us that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Modern churches have modernised Jesus and the Gospel. It has become a social gospel. The church has become a social club. It is now all about eating and drinking, and not the Kingdom. And so we have lost the fire. If modern house churches want New Testament results, they must embrace New Testament priorities. Not hype, just spiritual hunger. Not performance, but fervent prayer. Not personality, but divine presence. When Christ is exalted in simplicity and unity, the Spirit is pleased to move.

And when the Spirit moves, houses shake again. The early house churches moved in bold prayer, healing and resurrection, deliverance, Spirit outpouring, angelic activity, whole-household salvation, and daily evangelistic growth. The power of God was not confined to sacred buildings. Homes became upper rooms of fire, war rooms of prayer, and delivery rooms of revival. We have abandoned God’ ways. We have abandoned His blueprint. The miraculous in the Acts of the Apostles was not accidental. It was not random. It was not reserved for a spiritual elite. It was the natural overflow of a Spirit-aligned community.

If we want to see authentic power in modern house churches, we must intentionally cultivate the soil where miracles grow. Miracles in Acts followed the preaching of Christ. When Peter the Apostle preached about Jesus, the lame walked. When Paul the Apostle proclaimed the

gospel, demons fled. The early believers did not chase power — they proclaimed the risen Lord. Churches are no longer filled with true power, so we manufacture it. We even fake healings and deliverances. True power has left the building because we have neglected to preach Jesus and the true Gospel. As Paul said in Galatians 1, we preach a different Gospel and have become accursed. True houses will keep Jesus central, will preach Him, worship Him and obey Him. The Spirit glorifies Christ, and where Christ is exalted, power follows.

Acts 4 shows believers praying until the place was shaken. Acts 12 shows them praying until the prison doors opened. Miracles are often birthed in persistent, unified intercession. True house churches where prayer time is not an afterthought, but the engine for revival. It is a place where hunger for God deepens, and the flesh is crucified.

In the gatherings described in 1 Corinthians 14, each one brought something. Miracle culture grows where participation is normal. Authentic house churches become an environment where testimonies are regularly invited. It is an environment where words of knowledge or prophetic encouragement are shared. Oh yes, house churches need to become a place charged with God's presence, and where faith and truth are not suppressed.

Faith in Acts was rooted in truth, and so signs followed the Word. Miracles are sustained not by excitement, but by revelation. House churches need to cultivate a hunger for truth. And a hunger to teach truth and to cultivate disciples. This calls for teachings on healing, deliverance, and the authority of the believer. This calls for a united desire to share testimonies of answered prayer, because faith rises when truth is understood.

We need to understand that power and purity walk together. In Acts 5, the fear of the Lord preserved the integrity of the church. In Acts 2, unity preceded multiplication. Unforgiveness, hidden sin, and division choke spiritual authority. Power moves where unity and holiness celebrated. This is why conflict must be

addressed quickly and biblically. Authentic house churches encourage accountability among disciples and leaders. Humility and repentance, after all, should be the norm for all disciples. God is looking for holy ground and holy vessels. A clean altar attracts holy fire. God's fire brings power, healing and deliverance.

Miracles often followed bold action. Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have," but commanded a man to walk. There was risk involved. House churches must become training grounds, not observation rooms. Believers need to step out into faith and boldness. House churches need to develop a place where people can pray boldly again and share the Gospel with holy fire. A culture of miracles grows when people act on what they believe.

A culture of miracles is not manufactured. It is cultivated through Christ-centered preaching, devoted corporate prayer, active spiritual gifts, Biblical teaching, holiness and unity, bold obedience, celebrated testimony, and Spirit-dependence. When a house church embraces these foundations, it moves from being a gathering to becoming a habitation. And when God finds a habitation, He manifests His power.

House church leadership

For most, the first question that pops up with house churches is leadership. Surely, someone is supposed to take charge of proceedings? Yes, that is true, but here is where house churches are so effective when done right. Those in “charge” are also not in charge. Those ‘running’ or ‘facilitating’ house churches should be so spiritually matured in the Spirit that they will be able to completely and utterly allow God to take charge of proceedings. It sounds like disorder, but when the leading of the Spirit is followed, there is the true divine order.

We need to understand that when we read of elders and deacons in the Bible, we picture them functioning within an environment of structured and institutionalised churches as we know it today. In the NT, strong leadership was evident in house churches. The apostle Paul was one of such leaders who constantly edified and corrected the church. And a house church does not necessarily function within the environment of a physical house. It is more to do with the organics nature of such fellowship. It has to do with disciples being properly equipped according to Ephesians 4 to do the work of ministry.

Today, we sort of understand that when it comes to institutionalised churches, then you find apostles will plant the church, and the pastor will then shepherd the flock. This is how it should run, with the prophet and the teacher providing support, edification and guidance. Granted, some churches then do have elders in place to govern the church, functioning as a board of overseers.

With house churches, the structure doesn’t really change. Leadership rests with the elders and with the five fold ministries. Within house churches, you will still find

the prophet, the teacher, and the shepherd. You will still find people encouraged by the evangelist to go out and to preach the Gospel. The difference is that it is just done according to God's order, within an environment that is conducive for participation, not just being a spectator.

Indeed, under the unction of the Holy Spirit, everyone in the meetings will become a participant, not just a spectator. There will be no chaos, but God's order. Yet, most people find this concept very strange, because we have forgotten how to allow the Spirit to take control. We so desperately want to be in control that the flesh takes over. So many believers have forgotten how to pray, how to move in the gifts of the Spirit, and even to know what the Word of God says. We have become spectators. This is why we prefer someone doing all the work, and we can just observe. This is not how to grow disciples.

In institutionalised churches, there is a very rigid programme to force control and order. But this is man's order, not God's order. With house churches, there may be a word, there may be a song, there will be prayer, there will be worship, and there may be deliverance. Who knows what will happen, for it is as God leads. In the New Testament, house church leadership was plural, relational, Spirit-led, and mission-focused — not hierarchical, institutional, or personality-driven. Leadership functioned more like a spiritual family than a formal organisation.

Most New Testament churches were led by a team of elders, not a single pastor. Acts of the Apostles 14:23 says that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders (plural) in every church. Titus 1:5 says that Titus was instructed to appoint elders in every town. James 5:14 tells us to call for the elders of the church. Leadership was shared. Authority was distributed. Accountability was mutual. The house church was shepherded by a team of spiritually mature men (and in some contexts, women serving in key roles), not built around a celebrity leader.

Three Greek terms describe the same leadership function:

- Elder (presbuteros) – spiritual maturity
- Overseer (episkopos) – responsibility and oversight
- Shepherd/pastor (poimen) – care and feeding

You see this overlap clearly in 1 Peter 5:1–3 and Acts of the Apostles 20:17–28. They were not CEOs. They were shepherds among the flock. Leadership qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 focus almost entirely on character, not gifting. In a house church setting, where leaders lived among the people, character could not be hidden.

What is important is to understand that leadership in the NT was very much about character. The first priority was a person’s spiritual maturity, not formal ordination or credentials. They were faithful in prayer and study, exhibited a lifestyle of integrity and obedience, were interested in pastoral care of other members, and showed fruit in discipleship. There was also a boldness to lead in Spirit-guided initiatives. Still today, servant leadership should be stressed over titles.

Let us then understand that when it comes to leadership, it looks and functions differently in scope and magnitude if you are dealing with a singular house church or a network. Remember, biblical eldership is still supposed to function even if a house church is singular and not part of a formal network. But how it functions may look different depending on maturity and size.

In the New Testament, eldership could be local and was not necessarily dependent on a network. In the Acts of the Apostles, elders were appointed in every church (Acts 14:23). They were not appointed “in every network.” They were appointed in local gatherings. A church meeting in a house was still a church, and therefore had elders. Biblical eldership is rooted in spiritual maturity, proven character, and the ability to shepherd and teach and not in organisational structure.

In the New Testament, many believers hosted gatherings, including Philemon. So sometimes the host was an elder. Sometimes the host simply had the gift of hospitality. In the early stages, if the house church is

small, roles may overlap. The host may also be the most spiritually mature believer, and the group may not yet have recognised plural elders. Leadership may function more organically at first. Even if only one elder is present initially, the goal should be plural leadership as soon as possible. Why? Because the New Testament pattern emphasises shared oversight and mutual accountability (see Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5).

IF there is only one mature leader in the beginning, then that person functions as shepherd, teacher, guardian of doctrine, and protector of unity. This is done with humility, actively raising others into maturity. A house church is supposed to produce disciples (who can also function in the fivefold ministry if called by the Lord) and leaders (including elders or apostles). Biblical eldership is not about title. It is about responsibility. Even a single house church still needs doctrinal safeguarding, conflict resolution, spiritual covering through wise counsel, and protection from error. Those are elder functions.

While a singular house church can function biblically, wisdom suggests relational connection beyond itself. In the New Testament, Paul the Apostle revisited churches and leaders received correction and instruction. Churches were interrelated, even if not centrally controlled. Independence should not mean isolation. Even without a formal “network,” healthy house churches pursue relationship with other mature leaders, and occasional outside input with the broader Body of Christ. This guards against doctrinal drift and personality dominance.

In a singular house church, ideally recognized elders (plural) shepherd the community. This depends on the size of the church. Practically (early stage), the host or most mature believer may function as a shepherd, while intentionally developing others. Biblically, the role of elder does not disappear simply because there is no network. Shepherding must still happen.

So it should be noted that elders were not limited to one single house gathering. They, however, also

shepherded the church in a city, which often met in multiple homes. In the NT, we find the church in Ephesus, the church in Corinth, and the church in Rome. Each of these cities had multiple house gatherings — yet Scripture speaks of one church in the city, with plural elders. Today, churches are divided because of different doctrines, ideologies and even missions. In the Book of Acts, there were no such divisions, for there was unity in Word and Truth. Because of unity, God moved, and the church (consisting of the house churches) moved in God's power.

We know believers met in different houses, but Paul addresses the church in Corinth, not “the churches of Corinth” (1 Corinthians 1:2). This tells us the church was city-wide, meetings were house-based, and oversight was shared. There was unity. In Acts of the Apostles 20, Paul calls the elders of the church of Ephesus. Notice he talks about plural elders, a singular church, and one city. They were responsible for shepherding the whole flock in that city — not just one living room. Similarly, in Titus 1:5, Paul instructs Titus to appoint elders in every town. Again, that suggests city-wide oversight. Not isolated, independent house leaders.

Likely pattern in the first century when it comes to a network of house churches: City (one church identity), driven by multiple house gatherings, led by plural elders overseeing doctrinal and pastoral health with facilitators leading individual homes.

So elders functioned more like spiritual overseers, guardians of doctrine, shepherds of the broader flock, conflict resolvers, trainers of leaders, and not merely “house hosts.” This does not mean centralised control, hierarchical domination, and institutional bureaucracy. But it does mean accountability beyond one home, shared leadership, doctrinal unity, and relational interconnection.

If you're building a network of house churches, a healthy pattern would be that each house has a facilitator, several mature elders oversee multiple homes, and elders meet regularly. Doctrinal and moral issues are handled

collectively. The network sees itself as one church expressed in many homes. Not independent micro-churches with no connection. So yes, homes were the structure. Elders were the safeguard. Christ was the Head.

Local elders led daily life, but apostles and traveling ministers strengthened doctrine and mission. Paul the Apostle planted and revisited churches. Barnabas strengthened believers, while Timothy and Titus were delegated to establish order. House churches were locally led but globally connected. Leadership facilitated, they didn't dominate. 1 Corinthians 14:26 describes gatherings where each one had a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, and an interpretation. Leaders ensured order, sound doctrine, and spiritual health, but the body ministered. This is the order of Ephesians 4.

In the New Testament house church context, the terms "elder" (presbuteros) and "bishop/overseer" (episkopos) are not describing two separate offices in the way later church tradition sometimes treated them. Instead, they are two names for the same function, emphasizing different aspects of leadership.

So what about bishop or an overseer (episkopos)? The Greek word episkopos literally means "overseer" or "watcher." The emphasis is on responsibility, vigilance, and governance. 1 Timothy 3:1–7 for example speaks of how an overseer must manage the household well and lead with integrity. In Acts 20:28, Paul tells the elders of Ephesus to "keep watch over the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers."

The bishop/overseer ensures doctrine, unity, protection from false teaching, and general oversight. In a house church, this is relational rather than administrative — watching over the spiritual health of members. In the NT, the elder focused on maturity and pastoral care. The bishop/overseer emphasized vigilance and accountability. Acts 20:17–28 and Titus 1:5–9 show the same group of people referred to with both terms. There is no evidence of a hierarchical distinction in house churches. In New

Testament house churches, there is no separate office of bishop apart from elders. Every elder carries both shepherding and oversight responsibility. The distinction is semantic and functional, not hierarchical.

The leadership of elders dates back to the days of Moses. In the second year of the Israelites' journey, the people began to crave meat and grumbled to Moses, saying that they wished they were back in Egypt, where they had been able to enjoy a variety of good foods (Numbers 11:4–5). The last time the Israelites had complained about the lack of food, God had provided a miraculous source in the form of manna. This bread from heaven was sweet to the taste and looked like coriander seeds, and it sustained the Israelites day in and day out for quite some time (see Exodus 16). But the people were tired of manna, so they fell back to their usual reaction—complaint.

Needless to say, God was angry with the Israelites for their lack of faith and their ungratefulness for how He had provided for them thus far. But Moses, in his turn, was angry with the Lord for the burden He had placed on Moses. He had the heavy responsibility of caring for the people and was weary of their complaining (Numbers 11:10–15). So God told Moses that He would provide so much meat that the people would become sick of it, too; and, as an act of mercy, God instructed Moses to appoint 70 elders who would help Moses bear some of the load of leadership (verses 16–23).

All the elders were instructed to gather at the tent of meeting (the tabernacle) to receive the power of God's Spirit (Numbers 11:16). Interesting, two elders, Eldad and Medad, stayed behind in the camp. It is unclear whether Eldad and Medad were disobedient or whether they had permission to remain behind; in either case, when the Spirit of God came upon the elders, Eldad and Medad received power, too. Each elder was given the ability to prophesy for a time, and that included Eldad and Medad. The two men immediately began to prophesy within the camp, apart from the other elders (verse 26).

Up to that time, only Moses had been able to speak on God's behalf. Therefore, some of the people were confused and concerned that Eldad and Medad were prophesying among them. A runner came to inform Moses of this occurrence, and Joshua, Moses' right-hand man, requested that Moses stop Eldad and Medad (Numbers 11:27–28). But Moses reassured Joshua with the words, "I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" (verse 29). After that, Moses and the elders returned to the camp (verse 30), and God sent quail to the people that night (verse 31).

Moses' words to Joshua, "I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" show that Moses' priority was the glory of God, not manmade formality. His words were also a wish that came true with the dawning of the church age. On the Day of Pentecost, God's Holy Spirit was poured out on believers (Acts 2), and since that time every born-again believer in Christ has the Spirit indwelling him and is, in fact, a prophet, in the sense that he is a bearer of God's Word to the world.

God empowered elders in the days of Moses, and He continues to empower them today. Again, elders are not a supreme law unto themselves. From the 70 elders emerged the Jewish Sanhedrin, the supreme legislative and judicial council in ancient Israel, serving as the highest court of Jewish law (Halakha) and a governing body. Composed of 71 sages, including a president (Nasi) and vice president, it handled religious and civil matters from the Temple in Jerusalem. The formal institution, known as the "Great Sanhedrin" (derived from the Greek synedrion, meaning "sitting together"), emerged around 200 B.C. during the Hasmonean period. The Great Sanhedrin ceased to function after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D., though it continued in various forms until being disbanded in 358 A.D.

It is also interesting, as a side note, how once the elders were appointed to assist Moses, yet as we move

forward to the days of Jesus, we find how the Jewish Sanhedrin (the high priest and council of elders) formally condemned the Saviour for blasphemy, finding him worthy of death. The council concluded He was guilty after Jesus affirmed his identity as the Messiah. However, they lacked the authority to carry out a capital sentence, resulting in his handover to Roman authorities. While the Gospels depict the Sanhedrin condemning Jesus on religious grounds, the ultimate execution was carried out by the Romans. It shows us what can happen if elders become corrupted by power, religion, or pride. They then no longer serve the Son of Man (Jesus), but their own needs. This is why elders must remain humble and have the heart of a servant.

Warning to leadership

There is a responsibility on leaders as there is on those in the five-fold ministry to walk in step with God and to safeguard His truth, His path and His Kingdom on earth. Scripture gives very sober warnings about leaders (shepherds/overseers) who abuse authority, distort truth, or drift into heresy and apostasy. The warnings run from the Old Testament prophets to the apostles of the New Testament. In the Old Testament, leaders of God's people were often called shepherds. When they abused power, God confronted them directly.

In Ezekiel 9, we read how those who were charge over the city of Jerusalem (angelic beings) were ordered by God to bring death because of abominations and rebellion. We read, "5 To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. 6 Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the [h]temple. 7 Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city." This may seem harsh and cruel, but God is a holy God. What we need to see is how judgement

began with the elders before the temple.

Ezekiel 34 is a hard word against irresponsible shepherds. “ And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. 4 The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and [a]cruelty you have ruled them. 5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. 6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.”

In Ezekiel 34, God rebukes Israel’s leaders: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves!” Their sins included feeding themselves instead of the flock, failing to strengthen the weak, not healing the sick, and ruling harshly and brutally. God’s judgment was that He would remove them and that He Himself would shepherd His people. This is a direct warning against leadership that becomes self-serving and controlling. Jeremiah 23:1–2 says, “Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep.” Here the issue is false prophecy, speaking visions from their own minds, and leading people astray. This connects abuse of authority with doctrinal corruption. Ezekiel 3:17–19 speaks of a watchman who fails to warn the wicked. God holds the watchman accountable. Neglect of responsibility is as serious as active corruption.

When Jesus tells Peter to “feed My sheep” in John 21, He is commissioning Peter into spiritual leadership, emphasising care, guidance, and responsibility for the community of believers. It signifies restoration after

Peter's denial and sets the model for Christian leadership as shepherding—nurturing, protecting, and guiding with love rather than domination. After His resurrection, Jesus meets the disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21). He addresses Peter three times, mirroring Peter's three denials, thereby restoring him publicly.

Jesus uses variations such as “Feed My lambs,” “Tend My sheep,” and “Feed My sheep”, which highlight different aspects of leadership: nurturing, guiding, and protecting. Restoration and Responsibility: Jesus not only forgives Peter but entrusts him with leadership, showing that failure does not disqualify someone from serving if they are restored. The metaphor of shepherding emphasises humility. Leaders are not owners of the flock but caretakers of Christ's people. Feeding sheep symbolises teaching, spiritual nourishment, and ensuring the community grows in faith.

Leadership is relational, not positional. A shepherd knows his sheep; leaders must know and care for their people. Authority is exercised through service. After all, feeding sheep is about giving, not taking. Restoration empowers leadership, since Peter's example shows that leaders can rise from failure to faithful service. Teaching and guidance are central, so leaders must provide truth and direction, protecting against harmful influences. Leaders, if it be within an institutionalised church or house church, who act like owners rather than shepherds risk exploiting the flock. Failing to “feed” (teach and guide) leaves communities vulnerable to confusion or false teaching. In essence, Jesus' words to Peter define Christian leadership as shepherding, therefore, restoring the broken, nurturing the faithful, and guiding with sacrificial love. It is a call to responsibility, humility, and service, not power or prestige.

Judgment is a recurring theme throughout the Bible (see Psalm 82:8). God's plan includes a final judgment on the wicked and all who reject the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment for their sins (Matthew 10:15; Romans 2:2;

Hebrews 9:27; 10:26–27). A cursory reading of 1 Peter 4:17 seems to suggest that Christians may face God’s judgment, too: “For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

The context of 1 Peter 4:17 explains more about the judgment that begins at the household of God. In this chapter Peter is exhorting the church—the house of God—which was facing persecution, to persevere. The believers were also struggling to separate from the former worldly sins that had once enslaved them (verses 1–4). Peter reminds them that the wicked will face God’s judgment (verse 5) but that believers in Christ must hold themselves to a higher standard than they once did. The “fiery trials” that they were facing were to help refine them like gold (verse 12).

God allows difficulties and suffering in the lives of His people to purify them. When we are persecuted for the cause of Christ, we share in His sufferings (1 Peter 4:13–14). And when we share His suffering, we know Him a little better (Philippians 3:10). Paul echoes this theme in Romans 8:17: “Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” Part of God’s judgment upon sin is physical suffering. When His own children experience such suffering, it is not for our harm but to make us more like Jesus. “Judgment” for the children of God can be considered discipline (Hebrews 12:4–11). It is designed to purge the sin from our lives and teach us obedience.

A loving father does not discipline the kids down the street, because they are not his. A father disciplines his own children. Likewise, the discipline of our heavenly Father begins at His own household, with His own children, the church. He is reserving for the wicked an ultimate, final judgment that His children will never experience (Romans 8:1). Scripture makes a distinction between God’s purifying discipline of the church and His

ultimate condemnation of the wicked: “When we are judged . . . by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:32).

The judgment that begins at the household of God also includes church discipline. Church discipline is not for unbelievers but for believers: “What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?” (1 Corinthians 5:12). Believers are commanded to take responsibility for other followers of Christ who may be slipping or headed toward sin (James 5:20). 1 Corinthians 5:11–13 commands us to avoid fellowship with anyone claiming to be a brother or sister in Christ but who insists on maintaining a sinful lifestyle. Jesus lays out the process for church discipline in Matthew 18:15–17. Someone who has been confronted multiple times and warned that the choices he is making are in opposition to God needs to repent. If he refuses to listen to the church, we are to turn away from him in the hope that this drastic action will bring about repentance (see 2 Corinthians 2:7 and Galatians 6:1). As believers, we are to pursue holiness and encourage each other to pursue it, too (1 Peter 1:15–16). We are to judge ourselves as God’s household (1 Corinthians 11:31). In this way, judgment begins in the house of God.

Indeed, we must all guard against walking down the path of rebellion and apostasy. Also consider when writing about church discipline, the apostles spoke within a context of a house church culture. Within such a culture, it is much easier for deception and demonic manipulations to spread. It is easier at times for the devil to infiltrate. This is why with house churches, every believer, not just the elder or the prophet or the apostle, must guard against deceptions, demonic seductions, heresies and idolatry which can spread like wildfire.

Discerning early warning signs of apostasy in a simple / house church setting requires spiritual sensitivity, scriptural grounding, and relational courage. Apostasy

rarely begins as open denial of Christ. It usually begins as drift, meaning subtle shifts in authority, doctrine, or devotion. Scripture gives us patterns to watch for. Acts of the Apostles 20:30 says that men will arise to draw disciples after themselves. We have seen in the traditional churches how people attach themselves to a leader instead of Christ. Where spiritual abuse is evident, then there is unquestioned authority and correction being resisted or silenced. In a small gathering, personality influence can grow quickly. When loyalty to a leader replaces loyalty to Christ, drift has begun.

In 2 Timothy 4:3–4, it says that they will not endure sound doctrine. Truth can never under any circumstance be compromised. Early signs of apostasy is when uncomfortable truths are avoided, when sin is redefined to keep peace, and when teachings emphasizes blessing without obedience. Be careful of “new revelation” that bypasses Scripture. Apostasy rarely begins with blatant heresy — it starts with selective emphasis.

House churches should guard against control disguised as spiritual authority. 1 Peter 5:3 says, “Not lording it over those entrusted to you.” Be careful of those who practise manipulation through fear, or who use guilt-based obedience. Spiritual abuse is also marked by overemphasis on submission without mutual accountability.

House churches are vulnerable because they are relational and informal, and there are fewer structural safeguards. Trust is high, leaders are close and influential, and correction can feel personal. This makes discernment and plurality vital.

Practical safeguards for house churches:

- Keep Scripture central — not experiences.
 - Maintain plurality of mature voices.
 - Encourage open Bible dialogue.
 - Stay relationally connected to the wider Body.
 - Cultivate prayerful watchfulness.
 - Address small drifts early — gently but firmly.
- Apostasy is rarely sudden rebellion. It is usually

gradual re-centering — away from Christ and toward self, comfort, control, or novelty. Drift happens slowly, so discernment must be steady. God's desire is that His people learn to walk in holiness and fellowship with Him (Romans 8:29). As any loving parent would do, God will bring unpleasant consequences upon His children for rebellion. He expects the ones He has redeemed by the blood of His Son to set the example for the rest of the world. If the church is not in pursuit of holiness, the world sees no need to change its allegiance. So judgment begins in the household of God, with His own children, as He teaches us to live like Jesus.

The New Testament becomes even more direct, because false leadership would arise from within the church itself. In Acts of the Apostles 20:28–30, we find Paul telling the Ephesian elders that from among their own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things. This is sobering because the danger is internal. Some elders themselves would distort truth, therefore, drawing disciples after themselves. Abuse often begins with self-exaltation.

1 Peter 5:2–3 speaks of how elders must not shepherd for dishonest gain, and lord it over those entrusted to them. Instead they must be examples, serve willingly, and to remember the Chief Shepherd is watching. This counters authoritarianism.

In 1 Timothy 4:1 we read that in later times some will depart from the faith. 2 Timothy 4:3–4 says people (and leaders) will accumulate teachers to suit their passions, turn away from truth, and turn aside to myths. This warns of gradual drift — not always open rebellion, but subtle compromise. 2 Peter 2:1–3 says they will secretly introduce destructive heresies, exploit believers with fabricated stories, and are motivated by greed. Across both Testaments, warning signs include self-promotion, financial exploitation, controlling behaviour, harsh domination, doctrinal distortion, moral compromise, refusal to submit to correction, drawing loyalty to

themselves instead of Christ.

The New Testament provides safeguards which is the plurality of elders (shared oversight), public accountability, testing prophecy, sound doctrine as standard, character qualifications (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1), and the supremacy of Christ as Chief Shepherd. In both Old and New Testaments God judges abusive shepherds and Christ removes lampstands when necessary (Revelation 2–3). Leaders are held to stricter accountability (James 3:1). Leadership in house churches or any church structure carries holy weight. Authority is never ownership. It is stewardship under Christ.

Apostles and the house churches

If following NT patterns, house gatherings were led by facilitators, the city oversight was carried by elders, and trans-local equipping and alignment were carried by apostolic ministry. An apostle (apostolos) is not the same as an elder/bishop. Paul the Apostle was an apostle. Peter the Apostle was an apostle. Barnabas functioned apostolically.

Apostles planted churches, travelled regionally, laid foundations, appointed elders, and strengthened multiple communities. They were translocal (beyond one church). Elders/bishops shepherded a specific local church (singular house church or a network), guarded doctrine locally, cared for souls, and maintained unity. They were local leaders.

The role of the apostle in the New Testament was, therefore, foundational, trans-local (he interconnectedness of different places, people, and processes across geographical, regional, or national boundaries) and catalytic — not simply “another church leader.” The word apostle (apostolos) literally means “one who is sent.” In the New Testament, apostles were commissioned by Christ, sent to establish new works, carriers of foundational doctrine, and fathers to emerging churches.

In house church settings, apostles:

- Entered unreached regions
- Preached Christ
- Made disciples
- Gathered believers into homes
- Appointed elders
- Moved on, while maintaining relational oversight

We see this pattern clearly in Acts of the Apostles 14:23. Elders were appointed after churches were established. So apostles start it, strengthen it, structure it, and release it. According to Ephesians 2:20, the church is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets. Foundations are laid once. Apostles were not usually the long-term weekly overseers of one house gathering. Instead, they established doctrinal clarity, ensured alignment to Christ, and corrected drift. They would normally carry spiritual authority across regions. Paul planted in Corinth, yet elders oversaw locally. Paul wrote letters to correct issues. So ideally, house churches should be started by apostles. But this is not always the case when someone outside the apostolic feels led to start a house church.

When house churches faced problems (division, immorality, false teaching), apostles stepped in through visits, letters or delegates (Timothy, Titus). For example, Timothy was sent to Ephesus, and Titus was left in Crete to appoint elders. This shows apostolic authority functioned beyond a single home. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:15: “You have many instructors, but not many fathers.” Apostles often functioned as spiritual fathers — not controllers, but life-imparting builders. They modelled suffering, modelled humility, modelled mission, and modelled perseverance.

With house church environments, apostles carried a vision for expansion, broke new ground, and helped to raise up leaders. They would also ensure churches didn't become inward-focused. Without apostolic grace, house churches can become isolated, become personality-driven, drift doctrinal, and lose mission. With healthy apostolic input, churches multiply, leaders mature, doctrine stabilises, and mission (Matthew 28) expands.

Apostles were not hierarchical monarchs, weekly service managers, denominational CEOs, or owners of churches. Many are wary of the apostolic movement

happening in the church these days, because of spiritual abuse and manipulation. No person in the service of God is supreme or elite in role or function. Apostles must be servant-founders, builders, and guardians of the gospel. Yet many think of themselves as demi-gods and of a superior class. A healthy apostolic role today would look like:

- Starting new works
- Training leaders
- Preserving doctrinal integrity
- Encouraging multiplication
- Strengthening unity across homes
- Not controlling daily operations.

So in New Testament house churches, the apostle laid the foundation, elders provided ongoing oversight, and house leaders facilitated gatherings. The apostle was the architect. The elders were the guardians. The house leaders were the shepherds of the living room. And Christ remained the Head. None of these functions is seen to be superior to the others. At the end of the day, all disciples are called to be servants of God and servants to the Body of Christ.

It should be the heart of the apostle today to also see house churches come alive in their proper form, and for a network to form. This will bring greater unity to the church and greater strength.

House church elders and the five-fold ministry

Elders and the fivefold ministry are related, but they are not identical categories. The fivefold comes from Ephesians 4:11: “He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.” These are grace-gifts given by Christ to equip the saints (Ephesians 4:12). This passage describes functions (equipping gifts), not governing offices. Eldership is an office of oversight and governance within a local church (city-wide in the NT pattern, or a singular home). They are character-qualified, recognised and appointed.

Some elders likely functioned in fivefold gifts, but not all fivefold ministers were elders. In Acts of the Apostles 20:28, elders are told to shepherd the flock (pastor function), and guard doctrine (teacher function). So every elder must shepherd and teach, but that does not automatically mean every elder carries a trans-local fivefold grace. An elder teaches locally, while a fivefold teacher may teach across churches.

Apostles (like Paul) appointed elders (Acts 14:23). This apostolic ministry is not the same as eldership. Apostles are typically trans-local, church-planting, and foundational. Elders are local and ongoing overseers. In the New Testament, prophets and evangelists are mentioned, but they are not described as the standard governing office of local churches. For example, Philip is called an evangelist (Acts 21:8), and prophets operated in Antioch (Acts 13), so they may or may not have been elders.

Think of it like this that the fivefold equips according

to grace functions, and eldership governs with an oversight role. They overlap, but they are not interchangeable. Most likely, you found an elder who functions as pastor-teacher (common and likely the norm), an apostolic or prophetic leader who is not a local elder (trans-local ministry), or a fivefold minister who also serves as an elder (depending on calling and recognition).

It is of utmost importance that within the church (corporate) the five-fold ministry must function optimally, in balance, and in unity. The goal of the five-fold is not hierarchy, for they are not appointed to govern. The goal is to equip. One day, I was made to ponder why we have five toes on each foot. Five is important, for the common ancestor of all mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians also has five (many groups have lost digits, but five is still the basic number). The answer is “balance”. And then the Lord spoke and said, just as we need five toes for our balance when it comes to walking, so we need the five ascended gifts of Jesus unto the Body of Christ for BALANCE. After all, can you imagine walking around and everyone falling into one another because no one can balance on two feet, let alone one foot? Theoretically, this would be quite comical, but realistically, it would be dangerous. The feet, specifically the five toes, aid in the support and balance of the body. We cannot function without proper balance.

And so the Lord again impressed it on me that when it comes to the Kingdom of God, everything is about balance. Look at verse 15 of Ephesians 4. Being tossed back and forth speaks of a lack of balance. It speaks of being directionless and stumbling. So yes, we need balance in house churches when it comes to be equipped properly. The passage makes it very clear those in these gifts need to edify the body of Christ |(which means serving), “13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Paul explains the purpose of leadership and growth in

the church. Coming into the unity of the faith does not mean organisational unity or everyone belonging to one institution. It refers to spiritual unity in what believers truly believe about Christ. The early church had many house gatherings, but Paul's vision was that they would all share one faith centered on Jesus, not divided by false teachings or human traditions. The word "knowledge" here (Greek *epignosis*) means deep, experiential knowledge, not just intellectual information. Paul is describing believers growing in personal revelation and relationship with Jesus Christ, knowing His character, His truth, and His life.

When we read "to a perfect man", it means mature or complete, not sinless. Paul is speaking about spiritual maturity. Interestingly, he uses the singular "a perfect man", suggesting that the church collectively becomes one mature body rather than many immature fragments. Yes we need balance so that the Church may grow "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ". This is the highest goal Paul describes. The church is meant to grow into the fullness of Christ's life and character. In other words, the Body of Christ should increasingly reflect Christ's love, Christ's truth, Christ's authority, Christ's holiness, Christ's power through the Spirit. The idea is that Jesus is the standard, and the church grows until it reflects His nature more fully.

Jesus, as God and man, also had to grow into His fullness on earth, just like the church. Luke 2 says, "52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." This comes at the end of the story where the young Jesus (about 12 years old) was found in the temple discussing the Scriptures with the teachers. It summarizes how Jesus developed during His early years before His public ministry. This describes four areas of growth in the life of Jesus.

"Wisdom" refers to understanding, discernment, and knowledge of God's truth. Although Jesus is the Son of God, He lived a real human life and learned and grew intellectually and spiritually. He studied the Scriptures,

asked questions in the temple, and developed deep understanding of God's will. This shows that His humanity was genuine—He did not simply appear on earth fully developed as a man in knowledge.

“Stature” refers to physical growth. Jesus grew up like any other child—His body matured, He became stronger, and He developed into adulthood. This reminds us that God truly entered human life through the incarnation.

Favor with God refers to pleasing the Father. Jesus lived in obedience, humility, and devotion. As He matured, His life continually reflected alignment with the will of God. Even though He was sinless, His human life involved active obedience and spiritual growth. Favor with men speaks of how Jesus also grew in respect and acceptance among people. He lived within His community in Nazareth, learning relationships, work, and social life. People recognized His character, integrity, and wisdom.

Jesus Christ developed in a balanced way in four dimensions: intellectual / spiritual – wisdom; physical – stature; spiritual relationship – favour with God; social / relational – favor with people. This reflects a complete pattern of human growth. While Jesus was fully divine, He experienced real human development. His life shows how a human being can grow in harmony with God.

Many teachers see a parallel between Luke 2:52 (Jesus growing into maturity) and Ephesians 4:13 (the church growing into the fullness of Christ). Just as Jesus matured into the fullness of His earthly mission, the Body of Christ is called to grow into His fullness and character. Ephesians 4 shows a process of spiritual growth. Christ gives ministry gifts to the church (Ephesians 4:11). These leaders then equip believers for ministry (Ephesians 4:12), and believers then grow together into unity and maturity (Ephesians 4:13) so that they are no longer spiritually immature or easily deceived (Ephesians 4:14). The whole body grows as every member contributes (Ephesians 4:15–16). So Ephesians 4:13 describes the ultimate destiny of the church: a unified, mature Body that reflects the full

character and life of Christ.

Many theologians point out that this verse suggests the church is still in a growth process. The ministries Christ gave remain necessary until the body reaches this maturity and unity. This is why the five-fold ministry needs to operate in unity, humility and in balance. And they need to do so primarily within the house structure, so that true disciples may be raised to bring in the end-time harvest. We can, therefore, say the following:

- The Apostle lays the foundation. Core emphasis is on foundation, alignment, mission, and government. As mentioned, apostles pioneer new works, lay doctrinal foundations, establish leadership, guard spiritual DNA, and think regionally and generationally. Without apostles, churches drift, lose mission, or become inward-focused.

- The Prophet is the spiritual aligner. Core emphasis is revelation, purity, and direction. Prophets call the Church back to holiness, reveal what the Spirit is saying, expose compromise, and strengthen courage. In Acts, prophetic ministry shaped direction (e.g., the church at Antioch sending Paul and Barnabas). Without prophets, churches become mechanical, dry, or compromised.

- The Evangelist is the harvester. Core emphasis is Gospel proclamation and soul-winning. Evangelists carry unusual grace for salvation, stir bold witness in believers, and keep the Church outward-focused. We see this in Philip the Evangelist, who preached Christ and saw entire regions impacted. Without evangelists, churches become ingrown and comfortable.

- The Pastor (Shepherd) is the caregiver. Core emphasis is nurture, protection, and community health. Pastors care for souls, heal wounds, protect from harm, and build relational unity. Their heart reflects Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd. Without pastors Churches become harsh, performance-driven, or spiritually unsafe.

- The Teacher is the builder of understanding. Core emphasis is doctrine, clarity, and stability. Teachers explain Scripture clearly, build theological depth, guard

against deception, and train believers in truth. Without teachers, churches become shallow, unstable, and vulnerable to error.

Each role corrects the excess of the others. Apostles push forward. Pastors slow down and care. Prophets confront, yet teachers explain. Evangelists reach outward. No one gift is supreme. Christ alone is supreme.

When balanced:

- Apostolic vision is grounded in sound doctrine.
- Prophetic fire is shepherded with love.
- Evangelistic passion is stabilized by teaching.
- Pastoral care is strengthened by mission.

Ephesians 4 makes it clear that the five-fold ministry exists not to do all the ministry, but to equip the saints to do it. That means apostles equip believers to build and pioneer, prophets equip believers to hear God, evangelists equip believers to share their faith, pastors equip believers to care for one another, teachers equip believers to understand Scripture. The result? A Body where everyone ministers, everyone grows, and everyone contributes. The goal is maturity, “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Christ gave the five-fold ministry in Ephesians 4:11 not to create competition, but completion. When one grace dominates, or another is absent, imbalance emerges. An imbalance always produces weakness in the Body.

When apostolic grace is missing, you find the church becomes inward-focused. There is no multiplication. Vision shrinks to survival, and leadership avoids hard alignment decisions. Without an apostolic foundation, mission fades. In contrast, Paul the Apostle constantly strengthened churches, corrected errors, and pushed them toward maturity and expansion.

When prophetic grace is missing, then gatherings feel mechanical, sin goes unaddressed, there is little sensitivity to the Spirit, and fear of confrontation replaces courage. Without a prophetic voice, compromise slowly enters. In Acts, prophetic ministry helped guide the church’s

direction and preserved spiritual clarity.

When evangelistic grace is missing, you find no new believers, conversations revolve around internal issues, and the lost are rarely prayed for. The church becomes a spiritual social circle. Contrast this with Philip the Evangelist, who carried gospel urgency wherever he went.

When pastoral grace is missing, people feel unseen or uncared for. Leaders then emphasise performance over people. Burnout increases and brokenness is ignored. Without shepherding, sheep scatter. Our model is Jesus Christ, who wept, restored, and sought the one.

When teaching grace is missing, we find shallow understanding, doctrinal confusion, emotionalism replacing truth, and vulnerability to error. Without teachers, passion lacks foundation.

When one gift dominates the others, you find imbalance also occurs. Apostolic dominance without pastoral care becomes authoritarian. Prophetic dominance without teaching becomes chaotic. Pastoral dominance without evangelism becomes stagnant. Teaching dominance without prophetic life becomes dry. Evangelistic dominance without grounding becomes shallow. The five-fold is a symphony, not a solo.

In simple house church contexts, you may not have all five gifts present locally — but you must honour all five functions. And somehow, all their input is vital because of balance. Ephesians 4 reveals the end goal: unity of faith, knowledge of the Son of God, spiritual maturity, and stability against deception. When the five-fold functions in harmony, the Church becomes grounded yet powerful, compassionate yet bold, Spirit-led yet Scripture-rooted, missional yet relational. Such a house church is not celebrity-driven, not gift-competing, but Christ-formed.

In simple, organic contexts, a house church may not have all five gifts present locally. But it should value and remain open to all five functions. Some may be local elders who carry pastoral/teaching grace. Others may function trans-locally (apostolic or prophetic). Balance comes

through relationship, humility, and shared submission to Scripture. The five-fold ministry is not about titles. It is about equipping, maturity, unity, stability, and Christlikeness. When properly functioning, the Church becomes not dependent on leaders, not divided by gift, but mobilised in power.

In a house church movement:

- Elders provide local oversight and doctrinal protection.

- Fivefold gifts equip, activate, and mature the body.

- Apostolic voices help with multiplication and alignment.

- Prophetic voices bring direction and discernment.

- Evangelists stir outward mission.

- Pastor-teachers strengthen care and grounding.

If you collapse them into one category, confusion happens. If you separate them too much, fragmentation happens. The healthy model overlaps with clarity. Are elders part of the fivefold? Not automatically. But many elders function in pastoral-teaching grace. Fivefold describes gifting, while eldership describes responsibility. Grace is about equipping, and eldership is about oversight. Both serve the Head — Christ.



Prophets and house churches

The prophetic ministry in the New Testament was dynamic, relational, and deeply integrated into house church life, yet distinct from apostolic and elder oversight. We see prophets operating clearly in Acts of the Apostles 11, 13, 21, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Corinthians 12–14. In Acts 13:1, the church at Antioch had prophets and teachers ministering together.

This shows prophetic ministry was recognised, functional, and integrated into leadership environments. Prophets brought direction, not governance. Consider Agabus. In Acts 11, he prophesied a coming famine. In Acts 21, he warned Paul about imprisonment. He revealed, but he did not govern. He gave insight, but he did not control the church.

Prophets in house church environments brought foresight, confirmation, warning, encouragement, and alignment with the Spirit. But they did not replace the elders. It is imperative for house churches and the Church in general to be led by the prophetic voice. This has always been God's order, and it is evident throughout the Old Testament. It should be noted that prophets are not the elite class in the Body of Christ. They are servants, called to serve the Lord and the Body of Christ. They seek after truth and holiness.

You get different types of prophets. Some proclaim. Some teach. Some make music. Some are imbedded in a singular house churches, others are called to serve a network of house churches, and others are called to be trans-local. They play a critical role, along with the apostle, to guard doctrine and to stand guard against apostasy. For more insight, read a book I published titled "The Prophet of God."

Prophecy was participatory in house gatherings. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul describes house church meetings where multiple people could prophesy, others weighed

what was said, and order was maintained. This tells us prophetic ministry was not monopolised, but it was tested, and it was accountable. "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge." So prophecy functioned within community discernment, elder oversight, and apostolic alignment. Today, the church is saturated by a counterfeit and false prophetic movement because there is a lack of accountability and discernment. Within house churches, accountability and discernment become much easier to exercise, considering the participatory nature of such gatherings.

In Ephesians 2:20, the church is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets. This likely refers to foundational doctrinal revelation, Spirit-inspired proclamation, and Christ-centred unveiling. It also shows how house churches must function with the apostolic and prophetic input. This is God's order. New Testament prophets were not primarily predicting events (as has become the norm in modern-day churches). They were unveiling Christ and revealing God's present word to the church (s it should be).

In Acts 13, while leaders were fasting and worshipping, the Holy Spirit spoke, setting apart Paul and Barnabas. Prophetic ministry helped launch the apostolic mission, confirm divine direction, and discern timing. So prophets often worked alongside apostles. Apostles built and prophets discerned. Elders then safeguarded. Prophets were not independent authorities over churches, untested voices demanding obedience, replacement for Scripture, or immune from evaluation. Their words were weighed, their character mattered, and their ministry functioned relationally. Healthy prophetic function would look like Spirit-led encouragement in gathering, words tested by elders, direction discerned collectively, no personality dominance, and alignment with Scripture. Sadly, today, prophets have become gods unto themselves, and they are hardly tested. Those who are supposed to be accountable to them, and the same ones who bow before them. With house

churches, accountability is essential to safeguard doctrine and prophecy. False prophecy brings untold harm to believers, therefore, the Body of Christ in general.

If prophetic voices operate without accountability, then confusion increases. If prophetic voices are suppressed entirely, then spiritual vitality decreases. Balance is key. So in New Testament house churches, prophets revealed, apostles established, elders governed, and facilitators guided gatherings. Prophetic ministry brought sensitivity to the Spirit. It stirred the mission. It strengthened believers. It provided timely insight, but it operated in humility, order, and accountability.

Building a healthy prophetic culture in a house church network requires fire and framework, therefore, Spirit and structure. This leads to freedom and accountability. Without the Spirit, it becomes dry. Without structure, it becomes chaotic. 1 Corinthians 14 tells us that prophecy must edify, encourage, and comfort. 1 Thessalonians 5 reminds us not to despise prophecy, but to test everything. Ephesians 4 tells us that the prophetic gift has been given to equip the saints.

Prophecy will never override Scripture. Prophecy is not infallible, for man is infallible. Prophecy must be weighed because character matters more than gifting. If this foundation is missing, culture becomes personality-driven. With house churches, especially, prophecy should be relational, conversational, edifying, and simple. If prophecy becomes self-focused, sensational, and personality-centred, then you have a problem. Healthy prophetic culture magnifies Christ, strengthens faith, produces holiness, and fuels the desire to fulfil the Great Commission.

Elders and house facilitators

We need to understand there is a difference between someone 'hosting' the house church and the overseeing eldership. You can say the facilitator, or host, is directly involved with how the house grows, functions and 'breathes', while the elders will provide the support and guidance externally.

Since churches met in homes, hosts were often influential believers. Authority was rooted in sacrifice, teaching truth, protecting the flock, modelling Christ, and not control. It was organic but ordered, relational but accountable, simple yet powerful. As mentioned, the facilitator could also be the sole leader, therefore, an elder, or can be appointed by an apostle, or can be supported by a number of elders.

In the New Testament pattern, elder and house facilitator are not the same role — even though in small settings one person might temporarily function as both. When it comes to the elder, we consider Acts 20 (elders were exhorted), 1 Timothy 3, and Titus 1. 1 Peter 5 says, "1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being [b]lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."

As mentioned, an elder is a recognised spiritual overseer of the church in a city, or region, or just a singular home. Primary responsibilities include guard doctrine, shepherd souls, protect from false teaching, resolve disputes, train and appoint leaders, and provide spiritual covering for multiple gatherings. They can function city-wide or network-wide, not just one home. Qualifications is

character-based, above reproach, self-controlled, able to teach, proven in family life, and mature in faith. Eldership is not a function you step into casually — it is affirmed by the community and other leaders.

It should be noted that there is no formal NT office called “house facilitator,” but we see examples of believers hosting and guiding house gatherings. A facilitator is a servant-leader of a local gathering.

Primary responsibilities are to host the meeting, guide discussion, encourage participation, maintain order, care relationally for members, and communicate with elders. They are involved in one home or one small group. Where a facilitator has elder oversight, then preferably they may not carry doctrinal oversight for the city, or appoint elders, or correct major theological issues independently, or carry final authority in disputes. This should be left to the apostles or the elders, where applicable.

In pioneering stages (like Acts 14), the apostolic worker may start the gathering, shepherd the group, teach doctrine, function temporarily as elder, but as the church multiplies, leadership must differentiate. If you don’t separate oversight from facilitation, you risk personality-driven groups, doctrine drift, groups become isolated, and accountability weakens. A facilitator is simply the shepherd of the living room, and an elder is the under-shepherd of the flock of a city. The facilitator ensures participation, and an elder ensures protection. The facilitator encourages growth and an elder guard’s direction.

For a healthy multiplication model:

- Every house has a facilitator.
- Every 4–6 houses share a team of elders.
- Elders meet regularly for prayer and discernment.
- Facilitators are trained and mentored.
- Emerging elders are identified from among

facilitators.

This keeps relational intimacy, doctrinal unity, apostolic alignment, and sustainable multiplication.

Starting a house church

Anyone with a burden to start a house church can do so. Most likely, they have the burden of an apostle, or a shepherd, or even an evangelist. It is a good idea to start with prayer and personal consecration. Before you gather people, let God gather you. In Acts, the Church was born in prayer before it was born in power. The upper room preceded the public witness.

Anyone who wants to embark on this journey needs to ask, is this obedience or ambition? Am I willing to serve, not control? Am I prepared to disciple, not just host? A house church is not a meeting; it is a spiritual responsibility. A house church must be built on Christ as Head, Scripture as authority, the Holy Spirit as guide, and the Great Commission as mission. If doctrine is vague, division will follow. Study the pattern in Acts of the Apostles 2:42: Apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. That is your skeleton.

A good idea is to invite intentionally. Begin with 2–8 people, those who are hungry for discipleship. Those willing to participate because house churches thrive on depth before growth. Even Jesus Christ started with twelve — and poured deeply into them. Keep it reproducible. A simple flow might be a shared meal, worship (simple, not performance-driven), Scripture discussion (interactive), prayer ministry, and practical application.

Remember, authentic house churches thrive as an organism. It is alive with the divine. It is not supposed to be mechanical or religious, so avoid over-structuring. If the fire is real, the structure must protect it. But then it is the structure God instructs, and according to God's order. Otherwise, a house church becomes a birthing ground for another traditional or institutionalised church. We are called to be zealous for God, but without wisdom, one will burn out. Moses had to learn that lesson when he was given 70 elders to help him. The Body of Christ is not a one man

show, but a collective of people willing to serve the Lord and each other for the sake of the lost.

Those who want to start a house church, make it clear from the beginning that you are not gathering to consume. You are gathering to grow and to send. Encourage Scripture memorisation, accountability partnerships, evangelism practice, rotating facilitation, and spiritual gifting activation. According to Paul the Apostle, the goal is to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4). Every believer ministers, for we are all disciples in the Kingdom of God.

Leadership must emerge from maturity, not charisma, and from character, not necessarily education. Look for faithfulness, humility, teachability, sound doctrine, and consistency. In the New Testament, elders were appointed in every city — not to dominate, but to shepherd. Plural leadership protects health while isolation breeds imbalance. Healthy house churches honour the wider Body, remain accountable, avoid sectarian identity, welcome correction, and unity strengthens witness.

Remember, when the group grows beyond relational depth (usually 10–15), prepare to multiply. Do not split from conflict, but multiply from strength. Send trained leaders, bless the new gathering, and maintain relational unity. Fire spreads by ignition, not explosion. Sadly, many people leave house churches because they are offended and choose to start their own group based on their opinions or doctrines. The Body of Christ become very ineffective because we are so divided in beliefs and even doctrines. The church in the Book of Acts moved powerfully for they were united in God's truth, and where they strayed, the apostles like Paul, corrected them.

Anyone wanting to start a house church, remember it must not be built around a personality. Charismania, or the worship of people, has been a poison to the Body of Christ. House churches must stay true to the doctrine of Christ. House churches must guard against drifting doctrinally, tolerating hidden sin, abandoning mission for

comfort, and letting intimacy replace evangelism. A house church must be both family and frontline battle-hardened.

Starting a house church is not rebellion against buildings. It is obedience to discipleship. If your goal is fame, then stop. If you want to control, then stop. If it is a reaction against traditional churches, then stop. If your goal is to make disciples, shepherd souls, multiply leaders, and advance the Kingdom, then press on in the wisdom of God. And then seek support, begin to identify leaders, and above all, let disciples be made to fulfil the Great Commission.



Multiplication strategy plan

Multiplication must be intentional — not accidental, not reactionary, and not forced. It must not be based on conflict. The early church did not merely grow; it multiplied. In Acts of the Apostles, gatherings expanded, leaders were appointed, and disciples were sent. And Paul made it clear in 2 Timothy 2:2 to entrust to faithful people who will teach others also.

Growth, however, depends not on us, but on God. Growth comes not from clever marketing tricks. It comes from obeying and trusting the Lord. If we want to see growth, we need to walk in the love and fear of God. He needs to remain the centre of everything, all the time. He is the reason and existence of house churches. They exist not for the exaltation of man or to become rich, but to train disciples for the work of ministry.

In Matthew 9:35–38, Jesus travels throughout Galilee, teaching the good news of the kingdom of God and preparing His disciples to carry on His ministry. He looks at the crowds in their confused and vulnerable state and is filled with compassion. Because the spiritual needs were so great, Jesus asks His disciples to pray for more workers to evangelise the world: “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:37–38).

The harvest is a familiar biblical metaphor related to the kingdom of God (Isaiah 27:12; Joel 3:13; Amos 9:13; Matthew 7:16–19; 9:37; 13:24–30; Luke 10:2; Revelation 14:14–16). The lost and hurting people that Jesus sees and we see all around us are like ripe pieces of fruit ready to be plucked and gathered into God’s kingdom. God is the Lord of the harvest means God is the One who controls the times and seasons of the harvest (Jeremiah 5:24; Amos 4:7). The harvesting of souls is God’s work, not man’s (Colossians 2:13). Salvation, acceptance into God’s kingdom, is a gift of

God, through the grace He pours out on us (Ephesians 2:8–9). God chooses us (John 6:44; Romans 8:28–30; 9:15; Ephesians 1:4–5), regenerates us (Titus 3:3–6), gives us the faith to believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 12:3; Philippians 3:9), and seals us with the promised Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21–22).

God is the Lord of the harvest, which means the harvest's success depends on Him (Psalm 107:37–38). It is not by human might or wisdom that lost souls are gathered into God's kingdom, but by His Spirit working in people's hearts to complete the harvest.

Jesus' Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3–9; Mark 4:2–9; Luke 8:4–8) shows that God prepares human hearts to receive Him. Many individuals' hearts are like trampled, rocky, or thorny soil in which the Word of God cannot take root (see Matthew 13:18–22; Mark 4:13–19; and Luke 8:11–14). But some people have hearts tilled by the Lord of the harvest into good, fertile soil ready to receive God's Word. When they hear it, they accept it and then continue maturing and bearing abundant fruit (Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15).

The workers can't change the nature of the soil in the field. That job belongs to God—the Lord of the harvest. He is the One who puts “a new heart, and a new spirit” within His people and removes “the heart of stone” (Ezekiel 11:19–20; 36:26). As labourers in God's field, we are called to participate with Him, faithfully sowing, reaping, and praying, but the results of our labour are in God's hands. He is the Lord of the harvest.

Sometimes a crop takes years to yield its fruit, with different workers sowing, tending, and gathering in God's field (John 4:35–38; 1 Corinthians 3:6–9). God oversees the whole process. The phrase translated as “Lord of the harvest” means “Master of the yield” or “Chief of the harvest” in the original language. God Himself is the Commander-in-Chief of the harvest. He is infinitely concerned about the mission, with every aspect of its implementation under His sovereign control. The

labourers can trust Him with the outcome, even if they never see the fruit of the work.

So yes, we need to trust the Lord of the Harvest. Immediately after Jesus tells His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers, He summons the twelve and commissions them to go “to the people of Israel—God’s lost sheep. Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near” (Matthew 10:6–7, NLT). This mission would eventually expand to encompass all God’s servants, sending them to every nation and all the world’s people to make disciples until He returns (Matthew 28:19–20).

Today, the harvest is still in great supply, and there are still too few workers. This is why authentic house churches are needed. Places of consecration, prayer, worship, and which serve as barracks to raise disciples and leaders. May we all do as Jesus asks and pray to the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into His field. Indeed, as we bow before God, He shall multiply according to His way and timing. The goal remains healthy reproduction, not fragmentation. One will find that house churches will first undergo a process of strengthening the core before expanding. If multiplication is not in the DNA of the house church disciples, growth will turn into comfort.

Multiplication flows from maturing disciples. Such disciples are humble, teachable, and will have an evangelistic heart. Leaders are grown when they are allowed to teach, lead prayer, host, and organise outreach. Those who carry spiritual weight under the authority of God will soon be earmarked. Multiplication is only possible when tested and mature leaders emerge, as identified by the house facilitator, the elders, or the apostles.

Take, for example, Joshua succeeding Moses. He was not self-appointed, politically elected, or naturally inherited leadership — he was divinely chosen, publicly affirmed, and spiritually imparted as Moses’ successor. In Numbers 27:18–20, the Lord said to Moses: “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand

on him.” Joshua was already recognised as a man “in whom is the Spirit.” The initiative came from God, not Moses. It was not a family inheritance (Moses’ sons did not succeed him). So the choice was divine selection, not dynastic succession.

In Numbers 27:21–23, Moses brought Joshua before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly of Israel. He laid hands on him and commissioned him publicly. This accomplished transfer of authority, public recognition, and national legitimacy. Leadership in Israel was never meant to be secretive or private — it was confirmed before the people.

In Deuteronomy 34:9, we read, “Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him.” Joshua already had the Spirit, but there was a fresh impartation of wisdom for governance. The laying on of hands mattered spiritually. Joshua did not suddenly appear. He had been Moses’ servant (Exodus 24:13), a military leader (Exodus 17:8–13), one of the twelve spies (Numbers 13–14), a faithful minority voice with Caleb, and a man who lingered in the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 33:11). Leadership was recognised after proven faithfulness.

In Joshua 1:1–2, after Moses died, the Lord personally spoke to Joshua: “Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise.” So the succession was chosen by God, confirmed by prophetic command, publicly commissioned, spiritually empowered, and activated at the right time. Joshua’s appointment shows calling precedes commissioning, character precedes authority, public recognition prevents confusion, Impartation matters, and God confirms transitions. Joshua was not chosen because he was Moses’s relative. He was chosen because he carried the Spirit, faithfulness, and was in alignment with God’s purposes. His obedience was proven.

God is still the same today. Leaders are still supposed to be elected in such a manner, especially in a house church environment. There should be preparation, there

should be a calling, and obedience and faithfulness must be proven. God then selects, and leadership is confirmed before the disciples. With a strong leader, multiplication can then happen naturally and by Gods power and blessing.

Just so, the relationship between Paul the Apostle and Timothy is one of the clearest New Testament examples of apostolic fathering, mentorship, and delegated authority. In Acts of the Apostles 16:1–3, Paul did not randomly choose Timothy. Timothy had a good reputation among the believers, was already known and affirmed in his local region, and had proven character before being invited into apostolic travel. Like Joshua, Timothy was first faithful locally.

In 1 Timothy 4:14, we read, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given you by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the eldership.” In 2 Timothy 1:6, it says, “Stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” So with Timothy, there was prophetic confirmation. Elders laid hands on him, and Paul personally imparted spiritual gifts and authority. This was not institutional ordination, but it was relational, prophetic, and communal.

Paul then sent Timothy to Corinth (1 Corinthians 4:17), Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:2), and Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). Timothy functioned as an apostolic delegate, a doctrinal guardian, and a church stabiliser. But he was not called “apostle” as he functioned under Paul’s apostolic covering. Paul calls Timothy “my true son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2). This reveals spiritual fatherhood, deep relational trust, and transmission of doctrine and lifestyle. The pattern is relational succession, not title succession.

Timothy was instructed to appoint elders, correct false teaching, model godliness, and guard the gospel. He was more a transitional overseer and pastoral delegate than a foundational apostle like Paul. So we see a pattern of how Paul imparts, then Timothy guards and multiplies, leading to faithful men teaching others. This is sound

multiplication of leadership, leading to more house churches, training of other leaders, and training of more disciples. Indeed, Paul proves apostolic multiplication without institutional hierarchy.

With time, as leaders emerge and disciples become stronger, house churches begin to multiply, take hands and collectively drive the Gospel. Multiplication leads to an expansion of the mission fields.

Multiplication will, however, suffer from sending untested leaders, or a lack of doctrinal clarity, or when competition between groups is created, or when isolation from the wider Body of Christ exists. Multiplication must feel like family expanding, not siblings fighting! With house churches, one should always ask the following: Are people obeying Scripture? Are new believers being disciplined? Are leaders emerging? Is evangelism happening? Are groups reproducible?

Above all, multiplication will only work and be sustained when everything is done by focusing on God. It should be Christ-oriented, Christ-centred, and Christ-driven. When the Lord of the harvest takes His rightful place among the assembly of the people, then His Presence brings life.

A Church of equipping and of soul winning

There are many reasons for the existence of a local assembly called the ecclesia [church], such as worshipping and fellowship, but the reason for the gathering of the saints has somehow become lost in the haze of religion, tradition and man's perceptions and doctrines. These days, it seems we are trying to save the people in the Church, which is strange since the Church is supposed to be the living priesthood of saints.

Where the saints gather, that is where the church is, since the church is the Body of Christ; thus, every individual who is reborn in the Spirit (John 3). Church is not the building, or the programme, but a living and breathing holy priesthood of saints where two or more are gathered in the Presence of the Almighty. And amid such a gathering, one will most likely be the 'lost', thus those who are searching for an answer to their spiritual woes. But the church gathers not for the lost, but they gather to edify, encourage, uplift, empower and equip each other unto service. And naturally, elders will be most likely present, or shepherds called to guard against the wolves of deceit or the distortion of Truth.

These days, the Church has become an institution of religious programmes, where the saints who are the holy priesthood play little part in such a gathering, while those in leadership – such a structure being false by design and intent – try to save the lost instead of properly equipping the saints. Teaching ultimately functions where the saints gather, and such teaching and prophecy and the gifts of the Spirit should flow among all believers for all believers are the Body of the Lord.

Ultimately, preaching is for the lost, not for the saints, for the saints are supposed to be 'saved' and 'redeemed' otherwise they are not the church or the Bride. We preach the Gospel, and the ones who need to hear the truth of the Gospel are not the saved but the lost.

Where the saints gather, there we should be exhorting and equipping in the power of the Holy Spirit, all the while equipped to preach. We are not here to teach the lost but to evangelize so that they can come into the fold of the believers to be equipped and to be disciples. Teaching is for the redeemed, as part of equipping and empowering for service.

Discipleship is about being equipped, mentored, and empowered, while the process of being saved is being led to Jesus [thus the preaching of the Gospel). These days, we are preaching to the saved and teaching to the lost, instead of equipping the saints to preach to the lost! The saints assemble to be equipped (perfected) for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4). This is the genius of apostolic Christianity, but it is rarely taking place in the churches today. God's purpose is to train and equip His people, led primarily by the Holy Spirit and supported by those called unto such an office such as teachers or prophets. When believers are well-fed and well-taught in the whole counsel of God, then the body (the local assembly) will be healthy, the life of Christ will be manifested, and God will be glorified.

The main purpose of the local assembly (such as house churches), therefore, is for the saints, not for sinners. The local assembly, according to God's pattern, is to be primarily an edification centre (1 Corinthians 14:26), not an evangelistic centre; a soul-building station (Acts 20:28, 32), not a soul-winning station. It is a place thus for inspiration to go soul-winning.

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All powers is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever! have commanded you: Matthew 28:12, 16-20a

We are to fellowship to inspire and instil in us the importance of going soul-winning. Most people will never want to have a conversation with God on the streets, but we can take the message where they are lost. Mark 2 says: “15 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. 16 When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” 17 On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

The primary purpose of the local assembly remains to build up the believers in the most holy faith and to equip them for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12). And such work is to GO into the world, as Jesus did in Mark 2, to declare the Good News of the Kingdom to the sinners, to the spiritually sick and unhealthy. We are thus admonished to FOLLOW Jesus and to GO, but it is within the environment of fellowship of believers that we are strengthened and empowered to FOLLOW and to GO.

Jesus thus did not start the church as a place of evangelism. The evangelistic church is not in the Bible. The soul-winning church is. The New Testament church was a soul-winning institution where all of the members won people to Jesus. It says in “Acts 5:42 and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

The entire point of discipleship is to train and equip believers for the work of ministry, so that they can preach the Good News in homes, on the streets and in the marketplace. The entire point is also for some to start home churches and initiate the fellowship of believers for the sake of continued edification, upliftment and continued empowerment. This is the crux of Acts 2 when the believers continued to meet, and Ephesians 4 which speaks of the pastors, prophets, teachers, evangelists and apostles

equipping the saints for the work of ministry.

Some people believe that the New Testament church won the lost in the church and house-to-house soul winning. That is half true. They did go house-to-house soul-winning. The temple, however, was not the church, nor did they have a church in the temple. The temple was the location of the big gala occasion when they had their feasts and when all of the people would gather in Jerusalem. The temple was also the place where they conducted their daily business. It was like a city business district. This was not talking about witnessing in church, but about witnessing in public places as well as in people's homes.

It says in "Acts 8:1, 4: On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria ... therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." We also read in "Mark 16:15: They witnessed everywhere. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Jesus gave the Great Commission on several occasions. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts all give different phrasings of the Great Commission. That does not mean that Jesus spoke it only one time, and that each of them gave it in their own words. They each quoted Jesus. He did not just give it once. One of those times was quoted in Mark. It is not talking about standing behind a pulpit and preaching. It is not directed to a congregation. It is directed to every creature to GO into the world to become soul winners. And those who are won to the Kingdom then need to be disciplined to become soul winners. Thus, the gathering of the believers, be it in houses, small groups or in the traditional church on a Sunday, is the prime platform to raise disciples and equip soul winners.

Jesus said in Matthew to teach all nations. That word in Matthew is the Greek word "ethnos" which means ethnics or races. Mark 16:15 says, to go into the entire

world. The word "kosmos" is the word arrangement. When Jesus started the church, he started a soul-winning church. Soul winning was the fruit of the church and the result of the church. In the first century, the local churches were soul-winning churches. They were scattered abroad everywhere with everybody preaching or soul winning. The Bible says that every nation under Heaven was represented at Pentecost and every man heard the Gospel. Many people were doing the soul-winning. Peter's first sermon touched the lives of 3000 people! Yes, Peter and the rest of the disciples left the Upper Room, after being equipped and filled by the Holy Spirit to now win souls for the Kingdom.

But again, they did not forsake meetings and gatherings, for the sake of being edified and to remain accountable to each other. Indeed, a soul-winning church is where the people go out and win the lost and bring them back in to be equipped. An evangelistic church is where you invite sinners to come and the preacher tries to get them saved through his preaching. There is nothing wrong with that except the people go unfed. If the main thrust of the local assembly is to reach the lost, then evangelism will be unduly stressed and given priority and the edification and equipping of believers will not be given its proper place. If God's Word is properly taught, the unsaved who are in attendance will certainly hear the gospel, and the believers who need to be taught will not be neglected.

It is about bringing the gospel to the unsaved (Mark 16:15; 2 Corinthians 5:20). All believers are to be gospel preachers, not just the pastor on Sunday morning or Sunday evening. This is after all the intention of the Great Commission. Our gospel emphasis should be every day of the week, as we go into the world seeking the lost to win. But the hours that we spend with God's people should be rich times of being built up in the Word of God so that we can be more effective witnesses for Christ at work, at home or at school.

Ephesians 4: And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and

teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: The word perfecting means maturing. God gave apostles for the maturing of the saints. God gave prophets for the maturing of the saints. God gave evangelists for the maturing of the saints. God gave teachers for the maturing of the saints.

All these 'offices' were given for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. Every saint is commanded to do the work of the ministry. Every Christian is commanded to be a soul-winner. It is even the evangelist's job to mature the Christians so they will better do the work of the ministry. Jesus said in "Matthew 9:37: Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." Still today the labourers – those winning the souls – are few because we have not been preoccupied with making disciples or with equipping people to gather in the harvest. Labourers are few because the 'army' of soul winners has not been activated or mobilised. We have a massive army sitting in the pews over the weekend, or even attending home churches or small groups in the week, but they have not been properly trained or equipped! A lack of true, real and proper discipleship has resulted in such a grievous 'lack', for indeed the soul winners must take the Gospel to the people, and the people must be discipled and then be supported by a shepherd, and then also be fully equipped and empowered for service.

For many years, evangelists were men who travelled across the country and preached revival meetings. In truth, evangelists were also given for the perfecting or maturing of the saints, so the saints could do the work of the ministry. The apostles in the New Testament were not just soul winners, but they taught, exhorted, rebuked, and perfected them so that the saints could do the work of the ministry. One of the primary goals of the assembly of saints is therefore for people to become Christ-like and not merely saved (Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:13-15). The heart of the Lord is with the lost, but it is also with having

a relationship with His people. It doesn't help we try to save the lost by the saints themselves as undernourished, spiritually sick, and ineffective witnesses for Christ.

Remember, the saints are called to the work of the ministry. In most churches today the pastor bears the great bulk of the ministry load along with perhaps a few others. The great majority are content to sit in the pews, hear a nice message and perhaps come back on the following Sunday. The genius of New Testament Christianity was that the saints (the believers) were to be fully equipped and well-trained to go forth every day of the week and do the work of the ministry. Instead of one man or a few people trying to bear the burden, God intended to have a whole army of believers going forth trained and well-equipped to serve the Lord at work, at school, at home, in town or the local neighbourhoods.

The assembly of the saints are thus for maturing. The Body of Christ is the local New Testament church. God has given us the assembly of saints [church], so that every time someone tries to deceive us with a false doctrine, we will not fall prey to the error. God has given us the church for us to become mature. He wants us to grow up. That is what it is all about. We are called to come together and pray and encourage each other to mature. The assembly of the saints is there to help us to grow up.

Let us return unto the purpose of the assembly of the saints so that we can equip, encourage, edify and support each other to win the lost. After all, we are called to tell the world about Jesus and share the Gospel, but then again, we must make sure we share the right Gospel, and share the truth of Jesus and not spread more lies and deceptions. Discipleship in the truest form is vital, so that we remain in truth, in the Word and the Spirit, for the sake of winning souls, no matter the cost and no matter the challenges.

What is broken with the discipleship blueprint?

The Great Commission offers a clear blueprint of how the church is supposed to function and to achieve its core purpose of declaring the Good News across the world. It is called discipleship. And not discipleship in terms of the pastor offering a service on a Sunday, but is one where every member of the Body of Christ is actively involved, a) being a disciple and b) making disciples.

After all, you cannot make disciples unless you are first a disciple! But we are not making disciples. Therefore, no one is being made into a disciple. And a disciple, as a follower of Christ, is the Church. Where the disciple goes, we will find the manifestation of the Kingdom on earth. Yet, this system of 'being' and making disciples is broken. We are not making disciples but merely focusing on church congregants. Disciples build the Kingdom, while congregants build man's church! The Great Commission is clear, we are called to make disciples, yet we are more concerned with 'making' pastors instead of mentoring believers to be true followers of the Lord! After all, you cannot 'make' a pastor. You are either called to shepherd or not. God calls you into your calling, to serve the Lord is not a job!

Thus, we are not making disciples who follow Jesus, or who walk in His Truth or in His Ways. We are not making active disciples, mobilised and living out their calling to the glory of God. We sit with congregants who are tossed to and fro by every wind of teaching, who have lost contact with the Holy Spirit, and who have failed to fructify (bearing fruit) by abiding in the Lord. We are called to be disciples who first seek the Kingdom of God, yet we do not even know what the Kingdom is.

Oh yes, we know the mechanics of the church, and how to run the church, but do we truly know the eternal, spiritual and supernatural Kingdom of the Living God?

Ephesians 4 is very clear that the pastors, teachers,

apostles, prophets and evangelists, by God's grace, are called to equip the saints for the work of service. Is this happening? Of course not. The bulk and majority of the work of service has been done by the pastors, teachers, apostles, prophets and evangelists, called by some the five-fold ministry and by some as simply the ascended gifts of Jesus. Who is supposed to do the majority of the work? Yes, the saints so that by equipping and empowering them they may make disciples. To make disciples is part of the service to the Kingdom of God. So if the saints are not mobilised, equipped and empowered, what then is broken? Yes, those who are supposed to do the equipping and empowering of the saints! Tradition and religion have not dictated for hundreds of years that the clergy does the work of ministry, yet they simply must equip the saints to go into the world – thus mobilised and activated – to make disciples. Yes, saints who live out the Great Commission, we seek the Kingdom, who manifest the Kingdom and who are the Church as ambassadors of the Living Lord!

We read in “Ephesians 4: 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the [e]difying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom 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 for the edifying of itself in love.”

So the five-fold ministry or offices, or whatever you may wish to call it, is responsible for:

- a) The equipping of the saints for the work of ministry

- b) The edifying of the body of Christ
- c) The unity of the faith
- d) The knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Do we find such unity in the faith in the church? No, not at all. We find plenty of lateral unity where people flock to certain denominations that appease them according to the brand of truth being taught and preached, yet where is the vertical unity with God? Vertical unity leads to lateral unity in the faith. Do we find the Body of Christ functioning as One as the early disciples did in the Book of Acts? Hardly.

We find the Church is practising isolation instead of seeking the common good. We are willing to unite around a profane fire (false doctrines and ideas and practices) instead of letting God's pure fire purify and refine us to be united with God first and foremost.

Do we find the Body of Christ edified and exhorted? No, we find a Church seemingly lost at sea, uncertain, fearful and full of doubt. Covid-19 exposed the widening cracks. And yes, it is strange that we are seemingly lost at sea since we have been given a spirit not of fear, but of power, of a sound mind and of love. Why do we not find a Body that is full of boldness, full of praise, full of faith and full of conviction? Thus a Church that is so on fire for God as we see in the Book of Acts? Because the Body is not being truly fed, truly equipped or empowered, thus edified and exhorted in her loving pursuit after God.

Is the Body properly, effectively and sufficiently equipped for service? Of course not. The church is divided between the supposed classes of the clergy and the laity, where the clergy wants to do all the work of service instead of equipping the Body to do the work of the Great Commission. Most of the saints attend Church one day a week, instead of being in Church every single minute of the day. How many saints are baptising people in water of Spirit, or delivering people, or praying for the sick? These are the duties and ministries of every disciple. Yes, some

are looking after the poor and the needy (which is great), but the weightier matters of the Kingdom also need to be attended to with due diligence and passion.

The task of equipping is important according to Ephesians 4 so that those who are called to DO the ministry are:

- a) No longer children,
- b) Tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting
- c) Speaking the truth in love
- d) Growing up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ

Do we find spiritual maturity in the Body of Christ? There is a lack of character. Lack of wisdom. Lack of discernment. Lack of truth. Lack of values. We have become so self-centred and so self-conscious that we have lost sight of the Kingdom of God. We are so embroiled in the carnal and fleshly temptations and desires we have lost sight and touch with the fiery touch of the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1 speaks of such growing maturity: “5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Do we find the saints are stable, walking in the truth and keeping the course? How can we when it seems so many saints do not know the Word of God? The Word of God is the light and the lamp unto our path. It guides,

leads, teaches and shows us the right way to travel, and this is the Way of God. Do we truly know the Word as taught by the Spirit of God from Genesis to Revelation, or do we know in part or according to our perceptions? Indeed, because of the lack of understanding of the Word, which brings forth wisdom and counsel, there is a lot of deception that bewilders and spiritually corrupts. Spiritual maturity breeds discernment, yet when we remain 'children' in the spirit we can easily be deceived, manipulated, exploited and led astray.

Sadly, in churches, there is a lot of foolishness, along with plenty of fables and demonic teachings! Traditions and the temptations of fame and fortune have caused plenty of distractions and confusion regarding the Truth and Knowledge of the Kingdom. 2 Peter 2 says "1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber."

Do we find the saints speaking the truth in love? 1 Thessalonians 2:10 says that "with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Here is the reality – the Church has lost its love for the Truth! Yet the Truth of the Lord, according to John 8:32, sets us free. Jesus is the Truth. So if we lose our love for the Truth, have we not lost our love for our First Love? To the church in Ephesus, in Revelation 2, we read: "4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place— unless you repent."

If we love the Lord, then we must love His truth! Yet this is not happening as evident by Paul's prophetic word in "2 Timothy 4: 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."

If we have lost our love for the Truth, then we are in very deep trouble, for a disciple walks only in the Truth of God, speaks such Truth, adheres to it, defends it and upholds it. We are called to walk only in the Truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom and not in any other truth. Yet the love of the truth – thus God's truth- has waned as we seek after our truth, and the truth that pleases us. Such truth stands in rebellion against God and smacks of witchcraft and idolatry. After all, man seeks so often these days to promote himself above the truth and glory of God.

We read in "1 Corinthians 1: 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the [h]disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe."

Do we find a people growing up in the image of Christ, always abiding, always yearning and seeking His Kingdom, His will and Way? It says in "John 15: New King James Version: 1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you

abide in Me. 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”

The verb fructify means making (something) fruitful or productive. When we abide in Christ, we begin to bear the fruit of Christ, therefore we grow and reflect the image of Christ. And such fruits is of course highlighted in “Galatians 5: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”

You see, the saints need to be taught how to abide in the Lord, how to walk with the Lord and how to truly bear fruit! They are to be taught discipleship through proper discipleship so that they can bear fruit (fructify) and make disciples! Yes, we are called to be a Body of Christ working together for the common good of the Kingdom. Thus a royal priesthood filled with the Spirit of God, mobilised and activated, thus living out the Great Commission to manifest the glory of the Kingdom on earth. The question remains, do we see a Church bearing fruit, thus a Church abiding in the lord, or do we see a Church that resembles more the world? If this is the case, then again the five-fold ministry or whatever we call it has failed in its task to equip, empower and lead the saints in the “knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

So if you then consider it, the saints are disempowered, walking in deception and they are misguided regarding God’s Truth, His Will and Way because:

The pastor has not been shepherding, protecting,

leading and guiding as led by the Spirit of God (and he can only truly shepherd when being shepherd by the great Sphered Jesus)

- The prophet has misguided, beguiled and deceived through false visions and prophecies

- The apostle has not established the firm, sure and solid foundation of Jesus

- The teacher has not been teaching the truth, and thus the love of the truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom

- The evangelist has not been leading the lost to a true, real and lasting relationship with Jesus

What is broken is the ENVIRONMENT that we utilise to supposedly equip and empower the saints. Acts 2 is clear – they met from house to house. It says in “Acts 2:46: So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,” and also “Acts 5:42 And daily in the temple, and every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” It says in “Acts 7:49 ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, Or what is the place of My rest?’” God’s intention has always been that everyone in the Body is involved, participating, active and equipped for ministry (in whatever capacity). You cannot do so in environments where no one is truly active or learning or being allowed to live out a life yielded to the Spirit of God. Instead of keeping the environment smaller, we have enlarged the environment so that we sit with mega-churches where congregants have lost touch with what it means to be a true disciple.

Consider that only unto Moses and Solomon were a task given to build a sanctuary for God. Acts 7 makes it clear that the Lord asks us “what house shall we build”. God intends to dwell with those who follow and love Him. He wants to tabernacle with His adopted sons and daughters. Thus where two or three are gathered so is He present. God wants to dwell and fellowship with us in our

homes, for this is part of our personal space. Big buildings are great for common worship, but in the smaller environments, the brethren in greater unity seek the presence of God, the leading of the Spirit and the truth of the Gospel.

In Acts 10, we find Peter speaking to the Cornelius' household about the truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom. It was done within an intimate environment. We then read "44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God."

Glory to God! Within such a personal and intimate environment you have the opportunity for true discipleship, in-depth teaching and preaching. It allows for true transparency, accountability, encouragement, edifying and yes, testing of prophecy.

It lends to the reality of "1 Corinthians 14: 26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. 28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. 30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

Where God is present, there is order. His will, His way and His truth is established. In such an environment of fellowship (as seen in Acts 2), prophecy can easily be tested, and all teaching and doctrine can be weighed and

discussed. It offers little room for deception or spiritual abuse, for truly in such an environment the Body of Christ is one, united and strong in the love and liberty of the Lord. There is no room for man's ego, pride, or division or carnality. It is an environment of trust, faith, strength, hope and God's glory to manifest among the brethren. Indeed, it says "behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

In the grand scale environments, people are simply becoming lost among the numbers, not being truly disciplined to be disciples in service of God. In the smaller groups, real needs are identified, and we can discern if someone is truly walking with the Spirit, walking in Truth or victory, has truly been delivered and truly know the Lord. A house church (which is radically different from cell groups) is run by God, led completely by the Holy Spirit and is completely and utterly Jesus-orientated, Jesus-focused, and Jesus-centred. House churches are all about discipleship and glorifying God. There is no room for man to take centre stage or for the Holy Spirit to be replaced by philosophy, ideologies or entertainment.

What is broken is our INTENT and MOTIVATION. So many people have left the church or have backslidden because "they have tried church". Their intention and motivation are not focused on a relationship with Jesus. People go to church to be seen, for their problems to be resolved, or for their crisis to fade away. They "try church" as a possible path to spiritual enlightenment, or peace of mind or some sort of personal fulfilment. We do not try Jesus. We live Him. We breathe Him. We die to the old self. He is not our lifestyle, He is our Life. People attend church for it promises a 'good time', and so many go to well-known churches pastored by well-known pastors, for it is about status, and feeling they will be blessed. Yet for the true disciple, it is not about the show. Or entertainment. It has all to do with Jesus. It is all about His Kingdom. It is not about the self, but about a life committed, submitted and yielded to the Glory of the

Highest.

What is broken is the MESSAGE. Our message is not the true Gospel of the Kingdom, thus seeking God, denying the self and carrying the cross. It is no longer about the sacrifice on the cross, the Blood spilt, or about the spiritual struggles. People seem to follow Jesus for it has become all about money, and being blessed, and being empowered to lead a great and wonderful life. For Paul, the message was very much different. Acts 20 says “24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” And also “Romans 1:14-15 “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.”

Philippians 1: (New King James Version): 1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; 7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.

We can see Paul is passionate about three things in this text. All three things are directly related to each other. If we are to live the Christian life to the fullest, we too should have passion when it comes to these three things. He's not passionate about his health or comfort. The miserable setting in which he is now residing is a pit of disease and suffering. He's not passionate about his current financial situation because he has given up

everything as a missionary. Paul isn't passionate about his Jewish credentials; later on, he would call his resume a resume of rubbish. At the end of the day, three things kept Paul going and gave him hope. As he sat in prison these three things kept his spirits up and they defined his message and his focus.

He first had a passion for Jesus Christ (1:1-2). It's hard to miss the fact that Paul's passion is for his Saviour because in two verses Jesus is mentioned three times. He knew what he was (a persecutor of the disciples) and he knew what he was now. Before his conversion, he served sin and Satan and now he and Timothy were servants of Christ. Before his conversion all he knew was religion, working hard to earn standing with God. He was busy obeying all the rules and regulations to get God to like him. He was busy outshining everyone else. Paul was a lost religious man. Now he had met Christ and saw the futility in his religion. He had been given grace and grace far exceeds religion.

We read in "Philippians 3: 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the

fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Paul’s focus was clear. It is all about Jesus and nothing else. The message is Christ, nothing else. He was only interested in being found in Christ. Such should be the focus of the Church again. And our message should be purely Jesus and nothing else. For in Christ, we attain real righteousness which is His not found through working hard at man’s rules. The good news is Christ gives His people His righteousness which meets God’s requirements. Our message and focus thus should only be Jesus!

Secondly, Paul had a passion for fellow believers (1:3-5). Paul was not a heartless theologian but a passionate lover of God’s people. And this is important. For if we truly are focussed upon God and love God above all, we shall love those who follow Him for we are then brothers and sisters in Christ. Indeed, Paul cared for them very deeply. He loved them and even placed himself in danger for them. His relationship to them caused him to be thankful every time he prayed for them. He was thankful for the news he had been given that even under difficult times, they remained faithful. He loved them because they loved God. That’s really what the letter to the Philippians is all about; fellowship in the Gospel. Paul was passionate about Christ and the Gospel and so were those in Philippi. They shared a special relationship that had as its common denominator Christ. Yet our fellowship should be based on our love first and foremost for Christ, for out of our love for Him we shall love each other as followers of the Lord.

After all, the Gospel is a message of real life. It’s not some philosophy or grand idea, it’s not positive thinking or positive living. Paul simply wanted to see his friends. He loved them dearly because they loved the same Saviour, and that was their connection. This is a real Church – a common love flowing from a common love with a great and almighty God. A Church that is united in such love, in such fellowship and in such truth.

Paul demonstrated his love for the brethren (because of their pursuit and love for God) in several Scriptures, such as “Romans 9:2-4 I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites...” and also “Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.”

Paul was willing to sacrifice, suffer and die for Jesus and others. Jesus was also willing to sacrifice everything for the good of others, thus His sacrifice on the cross. And this should be our focus and message as well – denying the self and carrying the cross for the sake of the Kingdom. And when we live for the Kingdom, we seek God to be glorified, for the lost to be found and our brethren in Christ to be strengthened, edified and uplifted. Indeed, we read in Acts 9:15-16, “But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” Paul was willing to suffer, for the Gospel is life and the eternal hope for all of those who are lost and spiritually dying. Is this still the passion of the Church today? Are we still willing to lay it all down so that a broken world may know Christ? Are we willing to suffer so that our brethren in Christ may be edified and exhorted?

His third passion was a passion for the message of Grace (1:6-7). After all, we have all been saved by grace. Paul prayed for the brethren because they all shared in the wonderful work of Jesus on the cross, and such work is one of grace. Paul rejoiced in his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ because he saw evidence that their conversion was real. He witnessed first-hand the fruit of the Spirit exhibited in their lives. He had reason to be confident that their Christianity was genuine. He wasn’t confident because they had done something incredibly religious; no, they exhibited a consistent walking in the Spirit. Paul had

every reason to be confident in those Philippian believers because the Holy Spirit took up residence within them.

Indeed, Paul knew God was the One working in their lives, and so Paul rejoiced in grace, thus in Christ. For God alone is worthy of our trust. Ephesians 2 says “4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”

God alone does the work of regeneration or bringing the dead sinner to life. It’s completely a work of God to bring the spiritually dead to spiritual life. God alone makes dead things live. God’s work brings spiritual life, and spiritual life brings a renewed mind, which leads to the spiritual fruit of good works. Paul knew that God would finish what He started because of grace. They were partakers of grace like Paul was, and thus Paul rejoiced and found strength in their companionship. This reality should be our focus and our message, for by grace we are saved, but such grace is the work of God, who is the author and finisher of our faith.

Thus, the message and focus of the Church should be on grace, but not grace at the expense of obeying God. Not the grace at the expense of worldly liberty or carnality. We can be united by grace, but then it must be a genuine grace flowing from a true and real relationship with God. And in such fellowship and unity, we can garner strength and confidence from each other in our pursuit of the living Lord, to His Glory and for His Glory. By such grace, we are strengthened in love and hope as disciples.

What is broken is the WAY we have been equipping and empowering the saints. Jesus said He is the Way. His Way is the only and the best Way. No other way. Certainly not the way of man. The way of Jesus was discipleship. Yes, every person needs to make disciples. Every believer needs to be active and mobilised. The church way is to make congregants, thus becoming members of a church group or a denomination. They eventually follow man, while a

disciple only follows God and Go's Truth and God's Will.

The church's way of quipping is for believers to attend services on a Saturday or Sunday, and the word is then proclaimed to them. Yet they are not being disciplined, as Jesus taught and showed us. They are not personally mentored. Word proclamation is great, but Spirit-filled preaching is designed to edify, correct and encourage and teaching is to lay the groundwork of our spiritual construction so that the saints may do the work of ministry! Jesus showed true discipleship. He walked with the disciples. They were His friends. They learned and watched him teach and preach the Kingdom for three years before they even ministered. A true disciple is constantly active, moving in the Spirit, always serving and always obeying the call of God.

What is also broken is the CONNECTION and FOCUS. We are supposed to be a royal priesthood connected all the time to heaven. This is reflected in Jacob's dream of the ladder. We are called to constantly abide in the Lord and be led by the Spirit of God. Our gaze should always be on the Kingdom. All that we do, say and think should be God. Yet the church is saturated with fleshly and carnal behaviour, doctrines, and divinations (disguised as prophecies).

Romans 8 says, "5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." 9 But you are not in the flesh but the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life

to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

Galatians 5:25 says, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” Of the Spirit we read in John 16: “14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.” You see, the Spirit has come so that we are constantly and always connected with the Spirit, the Son and the Father! Yet we need to be disciples who are connected to the Spirit, for then we shall stay focused on the Kingdom. Yet what has been happening in churches is that we are no longer truly teaching on the Holy Spirit, or even moving or ministering on the Spirit of God. The Church has lost its connection, and thus you cannot make disciples or train or empower without the Holy Spirit. Once connected, we can truly make disciples to the glory of God.

Our focus should be Jesus. We should be constantly connected by the Spirit so that we are worshippers in spirit and truth. And yes, connection speaks of prayer. It speaks of reading the Word. It speaks of fellowship, intimacy and walking in holiness.

It speaks about seeking God above all else, always and all the time. Philippians 4 says “8: Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” Yes, we must think of the Kingdom, speak Kingdom and act Kingdom, for this is the way of the disciple. What is broken is that we forget that Jesus and only Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We need to walk in His Way and abandon our paths of self-enlightenment. We need to walk in His Truth again and abandon our wisdom, our agendas and our programmes. Our truth, our way and our methods of promoting artificial life will no longer suffice. This is the broken way. Jesus is the right way.

May the Lord indeed stir in our hearts and open our spiritual understanding to the critical importance of embarking on Christ's mission. May the Lord stir in us a mighty and deep faith that cannot be moved. May He stir in us a great passion for His mission, and may we with zeal seek His way and truth and will. Dear believers, there is a deep stirring in my spirit, for we need to hear what the Lord is saying to us, the church, more than ever. His mission is still the same. Time is slipping away, yet we are slumbering as the world is dying. How we need the fire of God to burn in our hearts again! Yes Lord, send the fire again so that we may be sold out for Your Kingdom, Your mission and vision.

It is time for us to fulfill His mission by fulfilling the Great Commission! It is time now, not tomorrow. We have been crying out to the Lord for Him to move and revive His people as if the Lord is slumbering. Our Lord never slumbers, and He never forsakes, but it is His people that have fallen asleep and slumber. We need to arise from our 'sleep' and embark on His mission to His Glory. It is time to be the church, to shine our light and be the salt of the earth. It is time to get to work in bringing in the harvest, for we are living in the last of the last minutes. Time is indeed running out.

The Lord is watching for those hearts that truly turn to Him, who cry out to Him, who yearn and hunger for Him, for then truly the touch and glory of the Lord shall be known. For too long, the people of the Lord have remained in the valley, chasing after golden calves, consumed by this world, consumed by the Self, allowing themselves to listen to lies while embracing deceptions. For too long, there has been a time of forsaking the truth of God, forsaking His Spirit, forsaking purity, forsaking holiness, for it is not the Lord who slumbers, but his people who failed to make the main thing the main thing, which is to lead the broken and the lost to Christ.

It is time for God's glory in us to arise. It is time for humility in the Body of Christ so that the power of the Lord

may be manifested for the world to witness. For those who yield and submit shall truly see the might of the Lord! Only those who are reborn in the Spirit shall see the Kingdom of the Lord (John 3). How long shall we dwell in the valleys? How long shall we depart from the ways of the Lord? How long shall we not listen to the voice of the Lord? How long shall we quench the Spirit? How long until we truly submit, yield, surrender, and give our all to the kingdom of the Most High? How long cries the Lord until we truly bow before Him, give our all, seek Him, hunger for Him, and desire Him above all? How long shall we remain indecisive, stubborn and not in His will? How long do we seek our way and not the way of the Lord?

Yes, Lord, we are here to yield. Let it be all about You and Your mission so that the reality of John 3:16 may be fulfilled. For there is healing and deliverance in Your Glory! Truly, as we submit and truly abide in Him, we shall see spiritually and physically the harvest coming in. May we indeed be counted among God's labourers, be good stewards as faithful disciples, and may we long to see God's glory cover this earth.

Stick to the mission

A mission statement can be described as a summary of an organization's core purpose, focus, and aims. This includes key objectives. A vision statement, on the other hand, is a description of the desired future state of the organization.

When Jesus departed, He gave the church (the ecclesia) a clear mission statement. It is the statement of Matthew 28, which speaks of the Great Commission. The church is not an organisation or a company, even though many have turned into one, but a living organism of believers collectively serving the will and purpose of a loving and living God. And what is the Great Commission, therefore, the mission? Go and make disciples so that the world may be told of Jesus and, therefore, be saved.

Some will say some translations never speak of making disciples. The King James says in "Matthew 28: 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

But is the purpose of teaching the nations of Christ not to make disciples? If one teaches someone about Jesus, one is surely equipping them to be a follower of Jesus. And such a follower is a disciple. Either way, if we lean towards teaching nations or making disciples, it is the same thing.

We are called in God's wisdom and by His Spirit to teach all people about Jesus, for the purpose of making disciples. It doesn't happen automatically. It will take a concerted and decisive effort. This is also why the Lord entrusted some with the responsibility to equip and train believers to become effective disciples and to ensure they walk in the fullness of Christ and of unity (Ephesians 4).

Hudson Taylor, a British Baptist Christian missionary to China, said: "The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed." Yes, it is a command. Jesus didn't advise us to reach the world by making disciples, but it was an instruction. What is the

purpose of the Great Commission? O win souls for Christ! What is the purpose of the church? To win souls and then to make disciples of them! The church has no other mission than to tell the world of Christ and to make disciples. It is a simple instruction from our Master, yet one the church has half-heartedly followed as it follows its own pursuits and desires.

Oswald Jeffrey Smith, a Canadian pastor, said: “Any church that is not seriously involved in helping fulfill the Great Commission has forfeited its biblical right to exist.” How can we be the church if the Great Commission is not our burning desire? Are we here then for our own needs or to obey God by winning the lost? Athanasius Yohan, the founder and president of GFA World, formerly known as Gospel for Asia, said: “Rediscover the real meaning of the Great Commission. Beginning in our own prayer and devotional lives, we must begin to feel the compassion of the Lord for a lost and dying world. As we have already seen, the Great Commission is not something that was given to a tiny group of specially trained and educated envoys. It was given to all Christians—to the whole Church. It is something that we are all to be engaged in naturally every day.” John Wesley so adamantly declared: “You have one business on earth – to save souls.”

We are called to engage in God’s business, which is to save souls by making disciples of them. God’s business is our business; this should be our priority, our mandate, and our calling. We expect God to bless our business when it is not His business! The main thing about the ecclesia is very clear. Making disciples. Who is a disciple? Anyone who follows Jesus. The first disciples were so effective in their duty of fulfilling the Great Commission because they stuck to the mission. The mission is the mission of Christ, never man. The entire Body of Christ, consisting of many believers, has one mission, which is the Great Commission. There is no other mission. Any other mission is man-centred and man-focused. The first centre disciples understood that it is all about being on a mission to fulfil

the mission of the Great Commission.

Matthew 28 says, “18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway*, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” The New King James says, “19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The word “nations” in Greek is *ethnos*, which speaks not of geographical countries as we know them, tribes, nations, or a group of people (such as an ethnic group). So the mission is clear. We are called to make disciples. To be a disciple implies you have given your life to Christ and are now reborn by His Spirit. Jesus said in “Acts 1: 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The Holy Spirit has been sent so that the Church may fulfil the mission of Christ. And such a mission was outlined in Acts 1 as well.

Revelation 7 says, “9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” Revelation 7 is what happens when the mission of Christ has been fulfilled. This is, therefore, the vision of the church – to see the entire world disciplined and serving the world. It is clear that all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues will stand before the throne and before the Lamb. This means the mission of Christ has been fulfilled, fulfilling also the vision.

The problem is, the church of today it seems to be constantly going off-track, not keeping the main thing the main thing. There is one Body, one faith, one Spirit and one mission. God has empowered believers with different abilities, gifts and callings, but for the purpose of collectively fulfilling the mission of Christ. So often you hear that a church says they have this mission or that mission, but there is only one mission. If we do not follow the mission of Christ, then we are surely not disciples of the Lord. Surely this first-century church was so effective because they sought to fulfil the Great Commission, and nothing else. It was about reaching all tongues and tribes, telling them of Jesus and making them into disciples. It is not good enough to simply tell someone of Christ; you have to make disciples of them.

The church of today has lost track of its main mission because we have been influenced by the world and its ideas. We are too busy building our kingdoms, running as businesses, instead of making disciples! Our ideals, mission and motive are many times man-centred or earthly-bound, instead of seeking the ways, the truth and the life of the Kingdom. The problem was that many Jews, and maybe even Judas, made the mistake of making the Kingdom of God of this earth. And we still make the same mistake today. We want to drag the Kingdom down to our level, instead of meeting God. There is thus the necessity to follow the principles of how to lead a life of a true disciple as taught by Jesus Christ. We need to know what it is and to pursue it, for then all shall be added. We receive God's blessings when we abide in Him and live according to His ways.

It is reckoned that about 7 billion people on Earth do not really know or follow Jesus. There are also so many within the church that have never been discipled. Has the church been sticking to the mission? Certainly not. For a long time, it seems the church has not been on a real mission to fulfil God's mission. It is because the church has become sidetracked with its own missions, such as building

its own empires and kingdoms of power and fame. God's grand mission and eternal purpose on the earth and in heaven centres on Christ, both the individual Christ (the Head) and the corporate Christ (the Body). This universe is moving towards one final goal – the fullness of Christ, where He shall fill all things with Himself. To be truly missional, then, means constructing one's life and ministry on Christ. He is both the heart and the bloodstream of God's plan. To miss this is to miss the plot; indeed, it is to miss everything.

Only when we listen to God, trust Him and stand in faith, can we walk in such a manner where our hearts are not troubled, and where the peace of Christ rule in our hearts (Colossians 3:15). Indeed, by turning our ears away from God we allow the fear to steal our peace and joy, and we will become blinded to our purpose, to our hope, to our mission, to God's vision and to God's plan. Yes, many are the plans of man, but only the plan of God shall prevail, so we need to listen to God, and then our faith, which only needs to be like a mustard seed, will arise to drive back the darkness as we arise as the children of God to the glory of God.

The Kingdom is only built upon the truth of One – Jesus. In the Kingdom, there is one vision, one truth, one Spirit and one mission. Jesus remains the Lord and King, and never man. It says in 1 Corinthians 14:20 that the “kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” It also says in “Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” The Kingdom of God is one of Power. It is not religion, because religion deals with the will of man, which degenerates to trivialities such as meat, drink, dress code, the ambience, style of music and so on. The Kingdom of God is about holiness, purity, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, one finds life, hope, light and love. The first disciples walked in power as recorded in the Book of Acts. They walked in the might of the Lord, for they preached the Kingdom (there was no formal church as we know it

today).

Remember, they were told to wait in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit would enable them to receive power from on high. Jesus alluded to the importance of being born again by the Holy Spirit in John 3. The disciples were empowered to walk in the power of the Kingdom because they moved in the power of the Holy Spirit, who led and guided them in all Kingdom Truth!

We cannot walk in the power of the Kingdom if we fail to submit and move completely in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit is the one that grants us the wisdom, might, power, knowledge and counsel to preach the Kingdom and not fall in the pitfalls of religion! For it is written in "2 Corinthians 3:6 (KJV): 6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. Indeed, for the Kingdom of God brings life, but religion destroys." We are urged to preach the Kingdom, for the Kingdom is the Spirit that brings life, while religion, comprising our traditions and customs, eventually kills. For those who stand with the Kingdom are not divided, but they are united by one truth, for there is no division of doctrine or truth in the eternal Kingdom.

We all know the well-known Scripture of "Romans 12: 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

God has given us a mandate (each believer) to fulfill, and such a mandate is for the purpose of fulfilling the mission. Our calling works towards fulfilling the Great

Commission as set out by Jesus. God gives us the ability, both natural and spiritual, to fulfill that mission. If we remain true to our mandate, then nothing can stop it from coming to pass! It is like being given a stamp of approval from the King of kings to fulfill your mandate, no matter what man or hell says or does to stop you! The mandate carries the highest authority and approval.

In Acts 8, we find valuable lessons on keeping the main thing the main thing and how a disciple must always be prepared, trained, and willing to be active and mobilized to fulfill the mission of Christ. In this Scripture, we find the account of Christ being preached to an Ethiopian. So we read: “26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert.” Here, God, through an angel, gives a command to the disciple. He needs to ARISE and GO. When Jesus called His disciples, He told them to follow Him. They needed to leave behind their old life, arise therefore from their former ways and GO in pursuit of becoming fishers of men. As disciples of God, we are called to FOLLOW Jesus and GO into the world, to thus fulfill the Great Commission. After all, it says clearly in Matthew 24 when it comes to our mandate to GO, therefore take action. In Philip, we find a disciple who was definitely following Jesus, for the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, and so Philip was now prompted to GO in order to be active and mobilised in pursuit of the Kingdom.

When we come to God, and we choose to follow Him as our Lord and Saviour, then indeed the Lord arises over us. For the light of the world – Jesus – comes upon His followers. And for what purpose? For the followers to arise, thus to go and to shine the light of God. As spoken in Isaiah 60, such darkness has already covered the earth and the deep darkness of the people. These are the days and times of Noah, for the world is filled with violence. As children of God, we are called to ARISE from our spiritual slumber and apathy and walk in God’s glory. It says in

“Matthew 5: 14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Also, take note, Phillip obeyed the Lord. Even though an angel spoke to him, it reminds us that we must always be willing to listen closely to God, which means we need to know the voice of the Lord. A disciple of God surely cannot ARISE and GO unless He knows the voice of God, for the voice of God leads the disciple in the way of the Kingdom. Jesus is the Way, Truth and Life, but we can only know such truth, such life and the way if we follow Jesus, thus know His voice. We are living in a world of many different voices, including the devil’s, so we need to make sure, thus discern, what is God’s voice and what is our own, or the world’s or the devil’s. For this is vital to remain in God’s will, for in His will there is life and hope. Samuel was called as a boy by God, yet he didn’t know the voice of God. Just so, as disciples, we must be able to discern the voice but also teach others to know God and thus to know the voice of the Lord.

We also read “and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” God is never vague. God always provides clear and detailed instructions. We, however, need to know God to know His will and instructions. God gave clear instructions to Noah to build the Ark, and to Moses to build the Tabernacle and to Solomon the Temple. Jesus also gave us clear instructions on how to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth, primarily by fulfilling the Great Commission, which focuses on true discipleship. To follow God’s instructions is to follow His Will, and we must seek for such will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We then read: “27 So he arose and went.” Yes, Philip obeyed! He did not question God. He did not wait hours or days for confirmation. He arose and moved because he

knew the voice of God. Yes, he did not even pray over it. For surely obedience is greater than sacrifice. Philip did not hesitate, yet we are living in a world where the church suffers from great spiritual apathy and passivity instead of arising and moving as God commands. Jonah was told to arise and go to Nineveh, yet he disobeyed and was swallowed by the whale. Just believe and just obey!

It says: “ And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.” Philip found the eunuch because he obeyed God, and he moved as God commanded. Yes, the Ethiopian was definitely ready to hear the Gospel, but God needed a servant to go and declare the liberating news of the Kingdom. The angel of the Lord gave Philip the initial instructions, and then Philip was further instructed by the Spirit of God. How vital is it for the believer to be led by the Spirit of God? It says in “John 3: 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Philip was indeed about to see the manifestation of the Kingdom of God with God touching the life of this eunuch!

Philip knew the Spirit of God, for he recognised when the Spirit moved and led him. And so, submitting and yielding to the Spirit, we find that Philip was empowered to be a witness of the Kingdom. He may not have travelled far as a witness, but he was witnessing to a man who had travelled far, so the Power on High – the Spirit – was about to empower Philip to be a witness unto a man who would take the Gospel to distant shores. Yes, just believe and trust God. Always yield, always trust, for God shall indeed use His servants mightily.

Philip was again prompted into action. He had to overtake the chariot. This was a matter of urgency. There was no time to debate, or pray, or contemplate! Yes, Philip,

run and overtake! Disciples of God have a call to action – to fulfil the Great Commission. Yes, so many times we are sitting instead of rising, and we are not moving forward or overtaking what God has assigned or mandated for us to accomplish. Philip had to simply do as God commanded, for what God commands shall be. We read: “30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this: “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth. 33 In His humiliation, His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.”

Let us focus on what the eunuch said: “How can I, unless someone guides me?” Let us take note and be fully aware that, according to the Great Commission, as disciples of God, we are to make disciples, therefore a process of guiding, mentoring and sharing the Word of God. It also says in “Ephesians 4: 1 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” God gave certain abilities to certain people for the purpose of equipping, empowering and training disciples in the fullness of God and the fullness of the Word. For what reason? Yes, to do the work of the Lord, thus make disciples, evangelise and fulfil the Great Commission. Thus, appointed men and women of God to guide, to mentor and to lead for the purpose so that disciples are thus equipped and empowered in order to guide others to God and then trained in the Word of God.

The world is desperately in need of God’s Truth, and the disciples of God are the ones to share and instruct in

such Truth. This is a process of evangelising and discipling, which is only possible when we are first and foremost led by the Spirit of God, who leads us in all truth and who takes what is from Jesus and declares it unto us. So we can only effectively share the Gospel with the world – thus Jesus – by knowing Jesus and His Kingdom. And this only happens when we are reborn, filled by the Spirit and led by the Spirit of God. Such is the way and nature of a true disciple.

It says in “Luke 6:40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.” This is proper and true discipleship! Not to conform anyone to follow our doctrine or our ideas, but to become like Jesus. And discipleship is training, and we are called as disciples to be perfectly trained and to perfectly train others in order for us to be like Jesus “till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4).

In Hosea 4:6 it says: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” There is a growing danger in the church today because so many do not know the Truth of God. So many in the church are like the eunuch, for they have never been properly guided to become a disciple who knows the Scriptures and who knows the ways of the Kingdom. And so it says in “2 Timothy 3:16: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” God intends the earth to be flooded with His Glory, thus His Truth, but for now the world is suffering because of a lack of truth, thus the prevailing darkness.

Indeed, we desperately need to make disciples again who are guided by the truth of God and who know the truth, so that they can guide others. Disciples who know the presence of God and dwell in such Presence, thus

dwellers in His Glory. And here the house churches, as found in Acts 2, play a pivotal role in creating an environment for true discipleship, where the disciple is guided, activated and mobilised in his or her calling.

Even in prison, Paul kept to the mission. In Acts 16, while they were worshipping God while imprisoned, the doors to the jail opened. We read, “27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.” 29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” 31 So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

Paul has been miraculously saved from his bondage. Instead of considering his safety or escaping, his thoughts turned towards the mission of Christ, which is to save the lost and to make disciples. In Acts 16 we read of how right there and then Paul declared the Gospel of Jesus to the jailer. Yet, Paul did not leave. That wasn't the fullness of the mission. We then read, “32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.”

What happened in Acts 16 reflects Acts 8. Paul and Silas obeyed God. They worshipped God until the power of God touched the willing heart of the jailer. Paul and Silas were not angry at the jailer, but in the love of God, like Philip, guided the jailer in the liberating power of the Gospel. The jailer wanted to be saved, so he needed someone to guide him. They even evangelised to his household, and yes, this serves as another testimony that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28). And like Philip, Paul and Silas didn't

hesitate, they took action, they proclaimed the Word and they baptised those who were willing to come to the Lord. This is discipleship in action. Deliberate. Full of intent and full of purpose.

We continue reading in Acts 8: “34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.” Take note, Philip opened his mouth. He was willing to serve. Willing to share. It reminds us of how Stephen, before being stoned, opened his mouth to testify to the goodness and greatness of God (Acts 7). Stephen truly allowed God to speak, calling the people stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears (verse 51) for they resisted the Holy Spirit. We also read how what Stephen said cut to the heart of the people (verse 54), and they gnashed at him with their teeth. You see, Jesus spoke as one with authority and not as the scribes (Matthew 7:29, Mark 1:22). We need to learn to yield and submit to God so that He can speak through us, for then in the Spirit of God we shall speak by His authority and truth, for the truth of God truly does set free (John 8:32).

So many times, we might think we are not prepared or might feel we are not ready for the task to declare the Gospel, but we are called to only obey and allow the Spirit of God to lead. Paul writes in “1 Corinthians 2: 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” The true power in evangelism and sharing the Word is speaking as the Spirit leads, not solely relying on one’s own intellect or upon one’s own reasoning. In our wisdom and power, we shall fail, but in the might and power of God, we shall preach the living word of God. After all, Peter preached such a living word of power and might by the Spirit directly after Pentecost (Acts 2), and 3000 lives were touched.

We read in “Matthew 10: 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.” Indeed, we need to allow God to speak, and not to fear what to speak. We need to let God guide for us to guide others. It says in “1 Corinthians 2: 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.” Indeed, if we are submitted and yield to God, then truly we shall speak as the Lord leads and we shall speak the mind of God.

We continue reading: “36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” 37 Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” 38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.”

So often, we allow traditions to cause us to hamper the work of God. In the case of Philip and the Ethiopian, we might first want to phone a pastor to conduct the baptism, schedule a baptism, or question the validity of the baptism. We might even be caught up in the way to conduct the baptism! Here, the Eunuch was willing. He was ready. He believed in Jesus. God instructed Philip to be there. So Philip had to do the baptism. Whatever God commands, the disciples must obey and do as the Lord leads. We read in “Colossians 2:8: Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” A disciple does not follow man, but God. The apostles were constantly on trial for declaring God’s Word, and so we read in “Acts 5: 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Yes, a disciple obeys God and not man! And yes, a disciple follows the commandments of God, and not the

traditions of man, which form religion.

Paul wrote in “2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” And what is this tradition that Paul refers to? It says in Acts 2 that the first disciples (verse 42) continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship. We must thus continue in the ways of God, in His teachings, as upheld by Paul and the other disciples. Any other teachings or Gospel is spoiled by the traditions of men, and becomes accursed (Galatians 1). For this reason, it says in “Mark 7:8: For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do” and also “Mark 7:9: And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.” Yes, we must never forsake the way or truth of God for the way or truth of man.

At the end of this extraordinary tale of evangelism, we read: “9 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.” Indeed, God, as the supernatural God of the impossible, is always present with the disciple who obeys, who is faithful and true to the Kingdom. Because of Philip’s obedience, the eunuch’s life was changed from ashes to praise, while the disciple encountered the power of God, who placed himself somewhere else to continue fulfilling the Great Commission. Yes, there is power in the presence of God, and there is power in God’s love, grace and mercy. There is power in obedience, faithfulness and being willing, like Paul, to carry out the Lord’s will as the Lord instructs and guides.

While the Spirit of the Lord deals with our sin, at the same time, we need to realise the Spirit of the Lord also

deals with the conviction of our purpose. Is there, therefore, truly a conviction in our heart to serve God, a conviction to pursue Him, a conviction to love Him, a conviction to run the race He has set before us, a conviction to fulfil the Great Commission and a conviction to preach His Truth? Does such a conviction drive us, no matter the trials, no matter the cost or the price to pay? For such conviction, we urgently need it in perilous times!

Paul certainly had such a conviction. His entire ministry speaks of keeping the main thing the main thing. With the conviction of the Holy Spirit burning within us, we can complete the race; we can set aside all hindrances and challenges and embrace what God has called us to do. Hebrews 12 says, “1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Remember, Paul endured every hardship and suffering you can imagine in his service to God. His journey is spelled out in 2 Corinthians 11. Despite all of this, Paul wrote about standing one’s ground. Why? Because he was convicted of God’s greatness, God’s goodness, God’s redemption and salvation! He was convicted by the Holy Spirit that the Gospel is the Good News and thus to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. He was fully convicted that such news is the message of the cross that sets the captives free and binds up the brokenhearted. Yes, this was a man convicted of his own mortality, of his own humanity and weaknesses, yet he persisted, yet he endured because of conviction. Of the conviction of preaching the Gospel at all cost we read in “Ephesians 3: 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of

the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the [d] manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the [e] principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. 13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.”

Paul suffered it all to preach the manifested wisdom of God and to make known to the world of the redemption by the Blood. Remember, Paul was opposed not just by fellow disciples, but by the Roman Empire, and the pagan ways of Greece and Asia Minor. Yet he endured, yes, he endured and ran the race because he was convicted that no matter the cost, the Gospel needed to be preached! He made sure of his calling and election, and so he ran the race and endured it all to the glory of God. In the end, he writes “2 Timothy 4: 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

This is conviction! He has come to the end of it all, he has fought the good fight, and he has kept the faith in order to receive his crown of righteousness. Paul was a man driven and convicted because he not only preached the Gospel, but he believed it, and he was willing to give his very life to glorify God. Do we truly believe the Gospel? Are we still convicted of the message of the cross and the Blood? Also remember, the ‘pouring out of a drink offering’ is a metaphor for the blood Jesus spilt on the cross. Jesus spoke to this directly in Luke 22:20 when He instituted the New Covenant. He picked up a cup of wine and said, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My

blood.” Jesus’ sacrifice fulfilled the need of a drink offering, His blood literally pouring out when the soldier pierced His side with a spear (John 19:33).

Paul even endured the “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7) “to keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations.” He called it “a messenger of Satan” that had a purpose of “torment.” Many explanations have been put forward, but whether Paul is referring to a physical, spiritual, or emotional affliction—or something else entirely—has never been answered with satisfaction. Whatever it was, God’s goal in allowing the thorn in the flesh was to keep Paul humble. Indeed, Paul remained humble in his pursuit of God because of the conviction of the Holy Spirit to only seek to glorify God.

May we, therefore, walk in such a conviction – a conviction of God’s Truth, the conviction of the power of the cross and the Blood, the conviction of the Gospel, the conviction of abiding in the Lord (unity) and abiding in love and unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let us remain humble, let us remain true to the Lord, and may we with conviction run this race because God’s Word is Truth and God shall be with us. May we stand our ground, yes, stand, no matter the cost, no matter what we endure! May we stand no matter what the enemy throws against us. Jesus stood His ground in the wilderness when the devil tempted Him. And so by His strength and grace (2 Corinthians 12:9) and conviction, we can stand and fight the good fight of faith. So let us stand, be vigilant, be alert, and with boldness and humility declare the intended wisdom of God to fulfil His everlasting and glorious mission!

House churches: Activation, Accessibility, Unity, Association and Accountability

The Gospel is like a caged lion. It does not need to be defended; it simply needs to be let out of its cage - Charles Spurgeon

What the surgeon said is so true. But the problem is

that we have caged the Gospel by institutionalising it. We have added religion and our traditions to the brewing pot to create our own brand and flavour of Christianity. The only way for the Church to really make an impact in the world once again is for the Gospel to be uncaged, but this means that divisional walls need to fall, disciples need to be raised up again as sons and daughters of the Lord, and for the Church to return in Spirit and in truth to the Kingdom.

You can ask the following question: Why do so many churches bring the world into the church? It is not because it is safer and more convenient than bringing the Gospel into the world? After all, it takes effort to go out in order to share the Gospel. It means leaving our comfort zones.

House churches are the perfect environment to address the prevailing issues that have caged the Gospel, and that have caused an immobility and an almost spiritual paralysis among the servants of God. For within such an environment, God again takes the centre as the main focus, and the Holy Spirit is allowed to move, as it is only in the Spirit of God that we can move in the fullness of the Truth and the power of God. For man is never head of the Church, but only God. Within such an environment, there is room, opportunity and the means to disciple, to be a disciple and to move in one's call and gifts. Thus, to be the Church, and not just attend church.

Indeed, to let the Gospel out of the cage speaks of activation. It speaks of mobilisation. It speaks of servants of God moving and doing, all the while following Jesus. Acts 10:30 speaks about "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." Yes, Jesus was always active and mobile, bringing the Gospel, thus the manifestation of the Kingdom, to the people.

Unfortunately, over the last 2000 years, we have systematically erected more and more walls around the Gospel, caging it in, and so we have created

denominational divisions, but we have also created separation in terms of class, race and between clergy and laity. Indeed, we are supposed to keep separated what God has divided, but we are supposed to remain united in what God has joined. Jesus has come to set the captives free, but we have decided to enslave again through our legalisms, traditions and religious mindset, thus creating a church that is still struggling to be free in order to deliver the world from bondage.

There are several important issues that house churches do address and can rectify, one being division, a second being a lack of accessibility, thirdly a lack of activation, a fourthly wrong association and fifthly a lack of accountability.

Acts 2, which speaks of vital church growth, shows how the disciples addressed these issues, and because they were united with God and each other, the Lord of the Harvest added to their numbers (it was not because of their clever sermons or programmes that caused the growth).

It says from verse, “41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

On the first point, much has been written on the importance of unity. It says in “Psalm 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together

in unity!” Also in Acts 2, it speaks how “all who believed were together, and had all things in common”. Unity is key to revival. Unity is key to making an impact in the world. But it begins first with our unity with God, and then we shall be united among each other because of our unity in Christ.

And were these disciples of Acts 2 truly united first with God and then each other? It says that “they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” The Apostle Paul also wrote in “1 Corinthians 12: 12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.” While our traditions may divide us, which is human nature, we can never be divided on the Gospel and the Truth and the Way of the Kingdom.

Secondly, we need to consider the sad reality that so many pastors and spiritual leaders have actually become inaccessible to the flock as shepherds. They are present on the pulpit and on the TV, but are they truly available to constantly meet and engage with the congregation? It may not be the case for all, for this is a gross generalisation, but some of the bigger churches run as a hierarchy of leadership, where senior pastors remain so often distant and aloof from the masses. You therefore have to work with those in leadership in the lower ranks.

In some institutionalised churches, this is not the case, and pastors are available in general, but are we really as accessible as Jesus was to the people? Jesus was constantly among the people, and He was constantly ministering, teaching, sharing, and caring. He was the true Good Shepherd of John 10, looking after the flock. In smaller groups, accessibility becomes easier and more flexible. One cannot imagine that the first disciples kept themselves distant from the masses, which clearly was not the case in

Acts 2. The process of discipleship, mentoring, teaching and caring requires constant interaction and accessibility.

Thirdly, Jesus said to go and make disciples in the Great Commission. His command for the disciples, also underlined in Mark 16, is one of action, not one of stagnation and passivity. Disciples follow, and they go. They are involved, interactive, ministering and sharing the Kingdom of God as the Lord leads.

We read in “Luke 10: 1 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. 2 Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.” More than ever, we need disciples who will reach out to the lost, disciple, pray for the sick, cast out demons, pray for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and activate others to fulfil the great commission. This is mobilisation, and this is activation

Fourthly, regarding association, it is important to surround yourself with those God has ordained to be on your path for they will lead you further in your mandate, and they shall ultimately edify, encourage, exhort, and enlighten you and you shall be open to correction and through such a holy and God ordained association there will be open accountability and the means to stay true to the Lord in Spirit and Truth. House churches indeed create such an environment.

Sadly, many children of God are shipwrecking God’s purpose and plan in their lives because of their associations, which are leading them astray, that is causing a spiritual drain, that is causing the adoption of incorrect and unholy life patterns and behaviour and ultimately causing them to lose sight of God’s mandate. For this reason, because they are not associated as God has ordained, they have not moved spiritually forward or upward, for they are held back, held down, paralysed,

immobilised, and they are being led out of the will of the Lord. This lends again to unity, for those who are united in God shall be brought together in unity, and therefore wholesome and godly association from which springs forth life, edification, activation and discipleship.

Ultimately, and fifthly, what is so needed right now in the Body of Christ is accountability. For some time, we have hidden behind doctrines of “not judging” and “do not touch God’s anointed” to justify wrongful actions, behaviour and erroneous teachings. We are finding so many false prophets operating because there is a lack of accountability, and this is also the case for many pastors and spiritual leaders.

Within a small group or house church, accountability is of absolute necessity, and everyone needs to be open to be corrected, rebuked (if needed), encouraged, and aught. We read in “1 Peter 5:5 - Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” And also “Proverbs 13:18 - Poverty and shame [shall be to] him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.” More than ever, we need to be accountable towards each other in the Body of Christ for our actions, for this leads to greater unity.

Homes of prayer and watching

When it comes to house churches, prayer is not a “ministry department.” It is the engine room, the fire on the altar, and the spiritual defence system of the community. In a simple church setting without heavy structure, budgets, or institutional buffers—prayer, intercession, and watchfulness become even more vital.

This is why God is calling for house churches that will function like 24 hour prayer homes. Places where prayer becomes essential. The early believers met in homes, but they were marked by persistent prayer. Acts 2:42 says, “They devoted themselves... to the prayers.” Notice the word devoted. Prayer was not occasional, it was foundational.

The need for prayer warriors and true intercessors is of critical importance in the end times. The end-time remnant, therefore, the true Bride of Christ, is going to need a lot of prayers to remain standing, to endure, to overcome and also to fulfil its task of fulfilling the Great Commission. A lot of fervent prayers are also needed to pray for the lost, the forgotten, the broken, and the downtrodden.

It says in “James 5:16: The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” We are involved in a spiritual war (whether we like it or not), and we live in terrible and perilous days of darkness, but those who seek His righteousness and follow God can stand upon the Word that one’s prayer avails much! Prayer of the righteous will thus be useful and beneficial, all to the glory of God.

One man who knows about the power of prayer in difficult times is John Knox, who was born in Scotland in about 1514. Converted to Protestantism from Roman Catholicism in 1543, Knox lived during a time when it was often very dangerous to be a follower of Christ.

When the Roman Catholic Mary Tudor (also known as “Bloody Mary” because of her ruthless persecution of the

Protestants) became queen in 1553, Knox, who was in England at this time, was forced to hide. He eventually landed in Geneva, where he met John Calvin, who became his mentor. Knox returned to Scotland in 1559, the year after Queen “Bloody Mary” died and was succeeded by the Protestant Queen Elizabeth. He remained in Scotland, bringing reformation to the church until his death in 1572.

Today, people remember Knox as the leader of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland and the founder of Scottish Presbyterianism. But what others don't realise is that by the end of his ministry, he became better known for his prayer than for his other ministries. The devout Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, is reputed to have said, “I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.”

She saw the impact of Knox's prayer. From a human point of view, it was the prayer of Knox that sparked the Reformation in Scotland. His prayer became the fuel of the ongoing reformation during his time. His prayer shook the land of Scotland, causing a revival among God's people.

Perhaps of all the prayers of Knox, “Give me Scotland, or I die” is the most quoted one. It was not an arrogant prayer but a passionate plea, showing his intense desire for the conversion of the people of Scotland. His prayer was an expression of his great confidence in God. His prayer also echoes the Apostle Paul's prayer in Romans 10:1, “my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”

Knox remained prayerful even to death. It is said that during his dying hours, he was much engaged in meditation and prayer. Knox was not perfect, but we can definitely learn from his prayer life. Prayer is not an option for the believer. It is a necessity to fulfil God's purposes in the world and in our individual lives. Time spent in prayer is not time wasted but time invested. As we embrace the will of God, as we live before Him in the righteousness of Christ, as we seek to fulfil His purposes, nothing will be able to hinder our prayers, and we will

begin to understand Jesus' saying, "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Indeed, we need prayer warriors like John Knox! We need true intercessors who have spent time at God's feet, lifting up the Bride, and praying for the lost to find their home in Christ! And such intercessors and prayer warriors I believe are forged in house church environments.

It says in "Ephesians 6: 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

We often read about the armour of God, but so often we neglect a very important piece of the armour – prayer! And remember, the armour of God is critical to understand and grasp because in this spiritual war, we always need to wear it and keep the armour polished and functional. We are urged to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

A dedicated and functional prayer life is vital in our dangerous times, as we continuously seek the Lord's will, His ways and His truth. And when we speak by the Spirit, this can imply always praying as led by the Spirit, or speaking in the heavenly languages as given by the Spirit. Either way, Romans 8:26 holds true: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans." The most powerful prayer is one prayed in the Spirit, even if it is in your earthly language, because it is driven by God Himself. There is great power in prayer!

Prayer is of critical importance! After all, there are dozens of real-life accounts in the Bible where Jesus and other disciples battled in prayer. God shut the heavens and

prevented rain from falling for three years at Elijah's request. He parted the Red Sea for Moses to lead His people through. He cast out demons; Jesus healed the sick and gave sight to the blind, and on more than one occasion, raised people from the dead, like Lazarus.

The power of prayer isn't in the words you utter. It's not about what you pray or even how you pray. Prayer can be defined as talking to God, but it is much more than that. Prayer is an act of worship that glorifies God and reinforces our need for Him. Through living a life of prayer, we communicate with the very source of and purpose for our existence. Prayer flows from intimacy, from fellowship with God and a deep love for Him.

David was one of the greatest men who ever lived. He was a man after God's heart. He was a descendant of Abraham, Israel and Judah. He was a great warrior, builder and king. He was the first of his dynasty, which was chosen by God to bring forth the Messiah, the ultimate King of Israel and the nations. David was a prophet. And he was a poet and musician. And he prayed a lot – about everything. He wrote down many of his prayers and put them to music, creating the Book of Psalms.

He wrote most of the book of Psalms, which has been the prayer book of Israel and the Church for 3,000 years. David knew how to pray.

Following Pentecost and at the time of the birth of the Church, in Acts 2, we read of how the disciples would regularly meet to fellowship. The church experienced a vital growth, not only because it adhered to the truth, but because it continued steadfastly in prayer. When facing great danger, the early disciples sought the Lord and prayed. Yes, prayer is powerful! It is also vital, and as believers in Christ, we need to pray more. As believers, we are constantly facing threats, so as the corporate Bride, we need to seek the Lord in prayer. This calls for unity, just as the disciples, in the beginning, were united with Christ and each other.

Years ago, the Lord placed in my heart the absolute

necessity for 24-hour prayer houses. God calls for a praying Bride, who seeks His will day and night. The devil knows that the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. He wants believers to stop praying or to pray less. He keeps us busy, for if we start praying collectively as the Bride, then surely the gates of hell shall be shaken!

Our English word “intercession” is derived from the Latin for “to come between,” which means both “obstruct” and “to interpose on behalf of” someone. Christ stands between us and the Father. That’s why we pray “in Jesus’ name” because it’s by His sacrifice that we are made righteous and can approach the throne of God. Believers are, therefore, able to bring the needs of other people before God through Christ.

While we may not all be gifted as intercessors to be steadfast in prayer (Colossians 4:2), we are all called to pray. Paul exhorted the church to pray that he would boldly declare the gospel (Ephesians 6:19). He told the church to pray for one another with “supplications [...] and thanksgivings,” (1 Timothy 2:1), and he prayed for them too. “We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfast hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:2). We all need intercession, even believers. Paul was moved and encouraged by prayer on his behalf.

You can say intercession is a prayer that pleads with God for your needs and the needs of others. But it is also much more than that. Intercession involves taking hold of God's will and refusing to let go until His will comes to pass. Intercession is warfare -- the key to God's battle plan for our lives. But the battleground is not of this earth. Intercessory prayer takes place in this spiritual world where the battles for our own lives, our families, our friends and our nation are won or lost.

Intercessory prayer is simply a pointed, persistent pleading on behalf of someone else for a deep need.

Specifically, in the New Testament, we read that Jesus and the Holy Spirit interceded on behalf of God's people for various reasons. The reality is that we need a lot more intercessory prayer in the Body of Christ, and especially intercessors to heed the call for 24-hour prayer houses. We live in times of so much deception that all believers need prayer right now, and we need to pray day and night for the lost and the broken.

Remember, the Lord or the devil doesn't sleep. While we are human, we are also many in the Body of Christ. More than ever, there should be greater unity in the Body of Christ, where together believers take hands to pray and to stand in the gap. Through prayer, particularly intercession, the Body of Christ truly takes up its place on the watchtower while the spiritual war wages and the ancient dragon seeks to devour. In prayer, we must declare God's will, His glory and truth.

Intercession is vital these days as it has always been important throughout the Bible. Abraham interceded on Lot's behalf to save him from the destruction of his home town (Genesis 18-19), Jonah (though begrudgingly) interceded for the town of Nineveh (Jonah 3), and in the greatest act of intercession, Jesus came down to earth to live as one of us and interceded for our salvation (John 17:20-26; Luke 23:34).

As believers, we are not praying enough. 24-hour prayer houses are of critical importance, for the devil is on a rampage to destroy, kill and steal. Now is the time to pray for the youth, marriages, the Bride of Christ and for those still lost in the wilderness. It is time that all believers continue steadfastly in prayer, with the intercessors at the forefront of this mighty battle.

There is great power in prayer. We cannot only be occupied with preaching and teaching God's word, but we need to pray the word, and we need to seek the face of the Almighty day and night! 24-hour prayer houses. It is time. In every city and every town. Constant prayer across the globe, interceding and seeking the Lord's will and that His

hand shall move in power.

Ezekiel 22 says the following: “30 I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for [the sake of] the land, that I would not destroy it, but I found no one [not even one].” Ezekiel 22 summarises the sins and abuses of the nation. As punishment for Israel’s sins, God says He will disperse them among the nations. In the ancient world of the Bible, cities had walls surrounding them to protect them from enemies. When the wall was breached, the city was vulnerable to destruction; the only way to secure it was for people, at times, to risk their lives by literally standing in the gap in the wall and fighting the enemy. Another option was for the gap to be repaired as soon as possible. If a breach were left unattended or unrepaired, the city would fall.

So in Ezekiel 22, the “gap” here represents the danger facing Jerusalem: God’s wrath is about to break through in judgment on the sinful city. So the Lord asked if there was anyone who would, in righteousness, intercede on behalf of the city and seek God’s mercy. If the gap is not repaired, then destruction is imminent. God searched for such a defender, but He could find none. It seems that, if someone had been willing to “stand in the gap,” the destruction of Jerusalem could have been avoided. Since no one was available or willing to defend the breach and rebuild the wall, judgment fell.

This is similar to the Genesis account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. God reveals to Abraham that Sodom and Gomorrah are to be destroyed for their grave sins (18:20). Abraham pleads for the lives of any righteous people living there, especially the lives of his nephew, Lot, and his family.

Still today the question echoes of who will in this last hour of perilous times (2 Timothy 3:1), like Abraham, be willing to stand in the gap of the Church? Make no mistake, there are plenty of “gaps” in the church walls, and the church is facing the danger of being overrun by the

enemy and even judgement at the hands of God for her idolatry, treachery and devious ways.

There is just no more room for us to argue that it is OK with the church. The enemy is no longer at the door but has been allowed to breach the walls. Sin, iniquity, witchcraft and all other forms of rebellion and carnal behaviour are evident in this Church, once described by Augustine as the City of God. It is time to again take a stand on the walls and declare God's Word and God's Truth. It is time again to stand at the city gates and declare what is proper, holy and pure. It is time again to stand in the gap, and to defend God's holy ways and truth no matter the cost. Who is prepared in this hour to be true watchmen, to be a rebuilders of what is broken and a restorer of what the enemy (John 10:10) has stolen and trampled upon?

Why prayer is crucial in house churches:

- Keeps Christ central instead of personalities
- Prevents drift into casual fellowship only
- Sustains spiritual fire in small gatherings
- Discerns direction without bureaucracy

In a house church, prayer replaces machinery. It becomes the primary way the Head leads the Body. Intercession is standing in the gap, before God for people, and before people on behalf of God. In small communities offense spreads faster, false doctrine spreads faster, and personal wounds affect everyone. Spiritual warfare can feel more direct. Intercession covers these vulnerabilities.

Every healthy house church needs people who pray before conflict erupts, discern attacks before they manifest, and carry the burdens of others quietly. Intercessors are often unseen stabilisers. In a spiritual sense, the Lord is calling for watchmen, and in truth, every believer is a watchman. We have all, in varying ways, been tasked to keep guard, to watch, to be alert and to be aware of any dangers or threats against the Bride of God, against our families, our nation, our marriage and our very own lives. We need to stand guard against what is false, what is

deception, counterfeit, unholy, profane, carnal and rebellious in nature. Ezekiel 3:17 says, ““Son of man, I have made you a watchman.” A watchman watches for danger, sounds the alarm, and warns before destruction.

In a house church context, watchmen help discern spiritual atmosphere shifts, doctrinal compromise, unhealthy relational patterns, and outside influences. Without watchfulness, intimacy can become vulnerability. There’s a danger here too. Watchfulness must not become suspicion, control, or hyper-spiritual fear. True watchmen are humble, submitted to leadership, anchored in Scripture, and motivated by love. Intercession should create peace, not anxiety.

In a healthy house church apostolic voices bring direction, prophetic voices bring alignment, pastoral hearts protect people, teachers anchor doctrine, evangelists push outward, and intercessors guard inward. They are not competing roles — they are protective layers. In house churches, dedicated prayer rhythms (weekly or daily) should be considered, along with rotating prayer leadership, quiet discernment times before decisions, encouraging prophetic impressions to be weighed, and private intercessory teams who carry burdens. We are not talking about formal departments, but living spiritual culture. House churches thrive not because they are small. They thrive because Christ is truly Head. Prayer keeps Him central, intercession builds unseen walls, and watchmen guard the gates.

We find watchmen of all kinds of nature, and of calling and of importance and of ability. Just as in the days of Israel, we too find in the church-appointed watchmen who keep watch over the local congregation from an external point of view similar to one standing on a rooftop gazing over the fields, and we also find those watchmen who are more internally involved in the flow of spiritual matters, making sure that no idolatry, rebellion or lawlessness takes hold internally.

We also find watchmen who keep watch and guard

corporately over the Bride, and we also find watchmen who are stationed in the “countryside”, meaning the marketplaces of this world, where a lot of the saints are in operation. The end-time remnant will be characterised as a people who watch and pray. Jesus used the phrase “watch and pray” on a couple of different occasions. Once was the night before the crucifixion. Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He prayed that “this cup be taken from me” (Matthew 26:39). After the prayer, He found His disciples sleeping. He was grieved that they could not even pray with Him for an hour and warned them to “watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

Another occurrence of the phrase “watch and pray” is found earlier in Jesus’ ministry when He prophesied about the end times. Luke chapter 21 details many of those events, and Jesus warns that they would happen suddenly: “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap” (Luke 21:34). He then says, “Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man” (verse 36).

The word translated “watch” means “to have the alertness of a guard at night.” A night watchman must be even more vigilant than a daytime guard. In the daytime, danger can often be spotted from a distance. But at night everything is different. A night watchman must use senses other than sight to detect danger. He is often alone in the darkness and without the defences, he would otherwise employ. There may be no indications of an enemy attack until it happens, so he must be hyper-vigilant, suspecting it at any moment. That is the type of watching Jesus spoke about.

Jesus warned us that we are too easily distracted by the physical and will be caught unaware if we do not continually discipline ourselves. In the Garden of

Gethsemane, sleepiness overcame the disciples. Their physical need overpowered their desire to obey Him. He was grieved when He saw this, knowing what was ahead for them. If they did not remain spiritually vigilant, in tune with Him (John 15:5) and ready to deny the flesh, they would be overcome by the evil one (1 Peter 5:8).

Jesus' disciples today must also watch and pray. We are easily distracted by this world, our fleshly needs and desires, and the schemes of the enemy (2 Corinthians 2:11). When we take our eyes from Jesus and His soon return, our values begin to shift, our attention wanders, and soon we are living like the world and bearing little fruit for God's kingdom (1 Timothy 6:18–19). He warned us that we must be ready at any moment to stand before Him and give an account of our lives (Romans 14:12; 1 Peter 4:5; Matthew 12:36).

We can only remain faithful when we are devoted to prayer. In prayer, we continually allow God to forgive us, cleanse us, teach us, and strengthen us to obey Him (John 14:14). To keep watch, we must pray for endurance and freedom from distractions (Hebrews 12:2; Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18). We must pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). When we live with the eager expectation of the Lord's return and expect persecution until then (2 Timothy 3:12; Matthew 24:9; 1 Peter 4:12), we are more likely to keep our lives pure and our hearts ready to meet Him.

We after all need the discernment of times and seasons and so we need to know what is also happening in the world and how it affects the church – especially when it comes to the economy, philosophy, religions and politics. Such watchmen were of critical importance during the hundreds of years of religious conflict and in the turbulent ages when the world saw many social, political and economic upheavals that threatened to destabilize the church.

And why must we watch and pray? Because there is a clear and intentional onslaught against the spiritual 'gates'.

This has been revealed by the Lord. This is not an attack for the 'now' but an attack that has always existed. This is an attack that is escalating, intensifying and becoming more vicious than ever before. It is an attack to lead people away from God, thus an attack on the destruction of the person.

And we are talking here about the 'gate' – entry point – of nations, of cities, of homes, of families, and our very lives. A gate is a strategic point. It is a point of legally 'controlling' what goes in and goes out of the 'city'. The enemy is laying siege to gain entry, for once he has entered through the 'gate', he comes to steal, to destroy and to kill. For the Lord has shown the enemy has come like an assassin, like a thief and as a destroyer.

Let us first understand the importance of a gate in the Scriptures. Besides being part of a city's protection against invaders, city gates were places of central activity in biblical times. It was at the city gates that important business transactions were made, the court was convened, and public announcements were heralded. Accordingly, it is natural that the Bible frequently speaks of "sitting in the gate" or of the activities that took place at the gate. In Proverbs 1, wisdom is personified: "At the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech" (verse 21). To spread her words to the maximum number of people, Wisdom took to the gates.

The first mention of a city gate is found in Genesis 19:1. It was at the gate of Sodom that Abraham's nephew, Lot, greeted the angelic visitors to his city. Lot was there with other leading men of the city, either discussing the day's issues or engaging in important civic business. In the Law of Moses, the parents of a rebellious son were told to bring him to the city gate, where the elders would examine the evidence and pass judgment (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). This affirms that the city gate was central to community action. Another important example is found in the book of Ruth. In Ruth 4:1-11, Boaz officially claimed the position of kinsman-redeemer by meeting with the city elders at the

gate of Bethlehem. There, the legal matters related to his marriage to Ruth were settled.

As Israel combatted the Philistines, the priest Eli waited at the city gate for news regarding the ark and to hear how his sons fared in the battle (1 Samuel 4:18). When King David ruled Israel, he stood before his troops to give instructions from the city gate (2 Samuel 18:1-5). After his son Absalom died, David mourned but eventually returned to the city gate along with his people (2 Samuel 19:1-8).

Therefore, in essence, to CONTROL THE GATES OF ONE'S ENEMIES WAS TO CONQUER THEIR CITY. Why? Because it was the place of trade, commerce, and where the judgment was passed. Part of Abraham's blessing from the Lord was the promise that "your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies" (Genesis 22:17).

When Jesus promised to build His Church, He said, "The gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18). An understanding of the biblical implications of "gates" helps us interpret Jesus' words. Since a gate was a place where rulers met and counsel was given, Jesus was saying that all the evil plans and schemes of Satan himself would never defeat the Church. Thus, for those who are the Blood, the devil cannot rule, and he cannot control or take up a place of dominion (manifested in the old days as taking control of trade and commerce).

So let us understand, a gate is of great significance. Again, to control the gate means you control the "space" behind the gate. To control the gate(s) of a nation means you can control the nation, for it means you can control governance, business, and even launch an attack against the spiritual strongholds within the nation.

We need watchmen and prayer warriors to stand guard over the gates of homes where house churches have been born. We need to guard against demonic infiltration and internal disruptions. We need to pray for revival, for growth, for the Spirit to move, for sound doctrine, and for the fire to burn on God's altar. Yes, we need to pay and

guard against abominations, heresy, false altars, deceptive doctrines, and the exaltation of man. House churches need to be safeguarded and protected through prayer and 'watching'. If we don't, the enemy will seek to enter and control the environment within. This is when discord erupts, and the poison of the devil pollutes the well of God's living waters.

Let us remember the truth that the devil roams like a lion, seeking to devour and to destroy (1 Peter 5:8). This Scripture also speaks about being alert, because the devil is always looking for ways to attack our gates, to attack our homes, our lives and our families. He is constantly roaming like a roaring lion, trying to impart fear, trying to confuse and to deceive. The very tactic of the devil is to lure us away from the Lord, from His Truth and from His Kingdom so that our 'gates' of our nations, the churches, our homes and our lives are exposed to the infiltration, infestation and corruption of the devil. He wants us to move away from the Light of the Lord, from the Blood and the Covering of the Lord by moving into the carnality and depravity of the world. For then the devil can attack and devour and destroy.

Now, let us understand the enemy can either lay siege to a gate or take it by force or the gate can be so seductive that he is ALLOWED LEGALLY through the gate. The enemy is a sly fox, and the reason why there are so many false doctrines and teachings in churches today is that the devil has been allowed through the gate. And once the enemy gains LEGAL entry, he can operate legally to destroy, kill and steal. This is why we need to pray over house churches and the gates, so that no legal ground is given.

This is what happens in countries throughout the world, where the church has not been a watchman and so has allowed the enemy into the nation, into the government and into commerce. The result is a corrupt nation that suffers violence, lawlessness and anarchy. Why? Because the enemy has been allowed to enter

through the gate. Let us understand, the enemy wants to enter through the gate. He wants to control us. He wants to come into our homes and into our families. As Christians, we must be careful and not allow him in, but so great are the onslaught and so intense the attack this is what is happening. If we give way, if we compromise, then we give the devil a foothold.

Just so, our hearts, our minds, and our senses are all gateways into our soul and spirit. All believers in one sense or another are watchmen, firstly as a watchman over our own lives, for it says in Proverbs 4:23: Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. We are called to firstly keep guard over our own hearts, but also to stand guard for our brothers and sisters regarding dangers, threats and any other disabling forces and lastly to keep a watch over the lost who are still held captive by the darkness.

We need to be so aware of our spiritual walk and we need to keep guard over our own “gates”. We need to aware and be alert to every danger and threat that attempts to steal God’s presence. We need to be wary and alert to such pitfalls, temptations and tests that rise against our brothers and sisters in Christ and we need to be discerning regarding those who are still lost and who are looking to find their way.

It says in “2 Timothy 1: 11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. 13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”

In the days of Jerusalem, we find the Lord called for watchmen to stand guard on the walls, at the city gates, on the ramparts and in the countryside – these watchmen were tasked to discern danger, to discern any form of

external or internal threat and they were tasked to provide an additional sense of security and peace. The Old City walls contained 43 surveillance towers to guard the 11 gates, illustrating the importance of standing guard over the gates. The concept of watchmen is, however, not only pertinent to Israel's history – during all the wars and conflicts, armies have used sentries and watchmen to keep guard and to stand at the post regarding any dangers.

We read of such watchmen in “Song of Solomon 3: 3 The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city”, and also in “2 Samuel 18: 24 While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates, the watchman went up to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked out, he saw a man running alone. 25 The watchman called out to the king and reported it.”

A prophetic action of a watchman is found in “Isaiah 21: 11 A prophecy against Dumah: Someone calls to me from Seir, “Watchman, what is left of the night? Watchman, what is left of the night?” 12 The watchman replies, “Morning is coming, but also the night. If you would ask, then ask; and come back yet again.” And also in Hosea 9:7-9: 7 The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired person a maniac. 8 The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim, yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God. 9 They have sunk deep into corruption, as in the days of Gibeah. God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins.”

We find in the Bible that Ezekiel was charged as a prophetic watchman, meaning one who watches for any internal or external threats spiritually, and he was tasked to keep watch over God's pending judgment as Israel slipped deeper into idolatry and spiritual rebellion.

We perceive therefore that Ezekiel was tasked to warn the people against the “sword”, against wickedness and

against idolatry. Ezekiel, therefore, understood that he was called to keep guard against wickedness in the sense that the wicked ways of the people invited judgment in the form of the sword. And the words of the Lord are quite harsh, for He warns Ezekiel that if he fails to react to what he sees and he fails to sound a warning then the blood of those who perished are on his hands.

So yes, the onslaught is real. We live in a world of great depravity, where the truth of God has been abandoned for New Age teachings, secularism, and the exaltation of the Self. We live in a world of 2 Timothy 3: But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

We need to be alert, we need to be sober, and take guard against the ways of the enemy who seeks to infiltrate, manipulate and cause destruction, and death. It says in "Revelation 22 of the Perfect Life, thus the end of all (the New Jerusalem) and God's final establishment of rule: 3 There will no longer exist anything that is cursed [because sin and illness and death are gone]; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve and worship Him [with great awe and joy and loving devotion]; 4 they will [be privileged to] see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 And

there will no longer be night; they have no need for lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign [as kings] forever and ever.” Only then will there be no more need to stand guard over the gates, but until then, when darkness is no more, we must remain vigilant and on guard.

Yes, we need the watchmen to arise! For the Lord has shown this is a relentless attack – an attack upon attack. And we need to take note of what the enemy is doing lest we be swept away by the demonic onslaught. This onslaught comes in the form of anything unnatural, unholy, immoral, false, counterfeit, and deceptive. It is an onslaught of great darkness and spiritual destruction. We need to realise modern-day warfare is very similar to spiritual warfare. Let us arise, until sheep become lions, until children become men, and until warriors take their place on the Lord’s battlefield. Let us arise with the song of Psalm 24 in our hearts. God is indeed calling an army who is willing to watch and pray, to discern, to “see”, and to keep guard.

Teachable and Reachable

The Lord once said to me that His children must remain teachable and reachable. And I believe this can only take place effectively in a house church environment. To be teachable and reachable applies to all disciples, no matter our calling or mandate.

Firstly, we must remain reachable in the sense that we are in a position to be reached by God. This may sound strange, but so many times the arrogance, the pride and the ego of even the believer can lead us to become 'deaf' and 'blind' to God's will, plan, truth and purposes. When God speaks, we must listen. We must be open to His guidance, and we must be like Samuel, who says, "Your servant is listening". So this calls for great humility, the ability to be a true living sacrifice and to choose above all that God's will trumps our will. We **MUST** always be willing to listen, to correct our path, to learn and to seek the perfect will of God.

Secondly, we must remain reachable so that others may reach us, so that we can share the Gospel, train, equip and disciple. Jesus sat with the sinners, not because He advocated sin, but because He was being reachable so that the sinners may be reached and saved with the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus was being reachable when He went to the tombs and was met by the demon-possessed man. Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh and so refused to be reachable. His pride and misplaced perspectives landed him in the stomach of a whale. May we remain constantly available and accessible, and also usable, pliable and flexible in the hands of the Lord. Being reachable also implies being available to be of service to the Kingdom of God. We are called to be servants, thus disciples, no matter our calling, mandate or education. We are all called to be humble followers of the Lord, fulfilling the Great Commission in love, by His grace and strength.

Thirdly, we must remain reachable in such humility so

that others may REACH us when we need correction, or reproof, or encouragement, or a word from the Lord. This calls for transparency and the ability to be reached, thus promoting accountability and the common strength of the Body of Christ that functions as a family of believers. We are not called to be a spiritual island or a recluse, or believers who are blinded by illusions of grandeur. We need each other in the Body of Christ, and thus we must be willing to listen, to be helped, to be supported and to be guided, mentored, or even equipped as God leads. Thus, we are called to be available, accessible, transparent, accountable, and reachable and always will to serve the Kingdom of God as God dictates, ordains and purposes.

Regarding being teachable, this applies in the same context as being reachable. We must remain teachable in the sense that we are in a position to be taught by God. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We can only walk in sound and true doctrine, thus the Gospel of the Kingdom, when we are taught directly by God. Our ears must always be turned to God, and we must always be willing to listen, to submit, to learn and be willing to give up what is erroneous and false. Our senses mustn't merely bend to the whim of this world, but we must speak as God leads, listen when He speaks, see what we need to behold, to taste His goodness and even smell the sweet aroma of His presence. Again, this calls for great humility and a contrite heart. It calls for a bended knee and for true worship where we yield and submit to God's wisdom and counsel.

Secondly, we must always be ready to teach others in all truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom as we are taught by the Holy Spirit in all truth (John 16). Matthew 4:23 says, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people." We must always be ready, prepared and

pliable in the hands of God to equip, to teach, to help others and to share the Gospel. The story of how Philip helped the Ethiopian to understand the Gospel in Luke 8 is a perfect example of being reachable and teachable. Study it, for it speaks volumes of how we must be led by the Holy Spirit in all spiritual manner, in our ways, actions, deeds, conduct and speech.

Lastly, we must remain teachable, thus open to being taught by others while testing everything against the Word and before God. We must never come to the point where we refuse to admit errors, or mistakes or refuse to ever be corrected. We are never the finished product. We continually learn, which requires constant teaching and training. 1 Corinthians 8:2 says, "And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." The truth is that growth is only possible when we are willing to adopt a teachable spirit. That means having a passion to learn, possessing an intention to learn daily, and reflecting on what we're learning to know how to apply it.

When we're willing to seek out and learn lessons directly and primarily from God, and then secondary from others, from experience, and reflection, then we're able to increase our capacity for growth. And so it says in "2 Timothy 3: 14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Yes, Lord, help us to be reachable and teachable. Help us to grow in Your love, holiness, purity, truth, grace and compassion. May we yield to Your wisdom, bow to Your majesty, and may Your Word always be found as sweet nectar on our lips.

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

The House Church Manifesto

This manifesto can be adopted by anyone or a group of disciples who truly seek to be faithful to God and to be part of the authentic house church movement.

“We return to the fire. We return to the table. We return to the pattern.

The Church was not born in cathedrals. It was born in rooms. Upper rooms. Living rooms. Hidden rooms. In the pages of Acts of the Apostles, the Spirit did not fall on an institution — He fell on gathered believers. Bread was broken in homes. Prayers shook foundations. Ordinary men and women became flames of God. This is our blueprint.

WE REJECT SPECTATOR CHRISTIANITY

The Kingdom does not advance through audiences. It advances through disciples. In a house, there is no stage to hide behind. No spotlight to perform under. No crowd to disappear into. Every believer carries the Word. Every believer prays. Every believer ministers. Every believer grows. We are not consumers of sermons. We are carriers of Christ.

WE RESTORE SPIRITUAL FATHERING

Discipleship is not a curriculum — it is a life shared. As Paul the Apostle walked with sons and daughters in the faith, so we walk together. We open Scripture. We correct. We encourage. We weep. We endure. Truth is not downloaded, but it is demonstrated. Impartation flows through relationship and maturity grows in proximity.

WE BUILD COVENANT, NOT CONVENIENCE

The early believers devoted themselves — not casually, but completely. In homes, you cannot fake love. You cannot manufacture unity. You cannot escape accountability. Meals become sacred, prayer becomes

warfare, confession becomes freedom, and communion becomes power. We are not attending an event. We are becoming a family.

WE CHOOSE MULTIPLICATION OVER MONUMENTS

You can shut down a building, but you cannot shut down a home filled with fire. House churches are unstoppable because they are reproducible. Simple. Mobile. Spirit-led. Persecution may scatter us, but scattering only spreads the flame. We do not build monuments to gather crowds. We ignite living rooms to send disciples.

WE DECLARE CHRIST ALONE AS HEAD

No performance. No personality cult. No empire building. Only Jesus, for He is the Head of the Church, the Shepherd of souls, and the King in our midst. The Word is opened in such an environment. The Spirit is welcomed, the saints are equipped, and the lost are sought.

WE EXIST TO MAKE DISCIPLE-MAKERS

The commission of Matthew 28 still stands for it has always been the blueprint. We do not gather to be inspired and remain unchanged. We gather to be transformed and then sent. And so every home becomes a training ground, every table becomes an altar, every believer becomes a witness, and every gathering becomes a launchpad to fulfill the Great Commission.

THIS IS OUR STAND

We will meet. We will pray. We will break bread. We will raise sons and daughters of bold faith. We will endure hardship. We will multiply. We will burn brightly in ordinary places.

The Church is not a building. It is a Body. And the Body moves best when every member functions. The fire has never depended on platforms. It has always depended on surrendered people. Let the living rooms burn again.

Let the saints arise again. Let disciples be made again. Let the homes burn again with God's Presence, and may the common become holy, and the divine be embraced.

This is the pattern. This is the call. This is the hour for the blueprint to be upheld so that the end-time remnant may arise to bring in the end-time harvest."

THE HOUSE CHURCH MANIFESTO

WE RETURN TO THE FIRE. WE RETURN TO THE TABLE.
WE RETURN TO THE PATTERN.

**WE REJECT
SPECTATOR
CHRISTIANITY**

EVERY BELIEVER
PARTICIPATES.

**WE RESTORE
SPIRITUAL
FATHERING**

DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH
RELATIONSHIP.

**WE CHOOSE
MULTIPLICATION
OVER MONUMENTS**

HOMES THAT
SEND DISCIPLES.

**WE DECLARE
CHRIST ALONE
AS HEAD**

ONLY JESUS.
NO COMPROMISE.

**ALL CALLED
FOR THE GREAT
COMMISSION**

TRAIN & SEND
THE SAINTS.



THIS IS OUR STAND.

**THE CHURCH IS A BODY.
THE FIRE IS ALIVE.
THE TIME IS NOW.**

**LET THE LIVING ROOMS BURN.
LET THE DISCIPLES RISE.**

House Church Leadership: a manifesto of fire

This manifesto can be adopted by anyone or a group of disciples who truly seek to be faithful to God and to be part of the authentic house church movement.

“This is not a platform-driven ministry. This is not personality-centred control. This is New Testament leadership, forged in homes, refined in persecution, empowered by the Spirit.

WE REJECT LONE-RANGER LEADERSHIP

In the book of Acts of the Apostles, elders were appointed in every church, plural. Not one throne. Not one personality. Not one voice. A plurality of shepherds. Men and women proven in character. Leaders are known by their fruit, not their followers. The house church is not built around a brand. It is built around Christ.

We Lead by Character, Not Charisma

The qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 do not celebrate gifting — they demand holiness. Above reproach. Faithful in marriage. Self-controlled. Hospitable. Able to teach. In a living room church, hypocrisy cannot hide. Leadership is not a microphone. It is a life laid down.

WE SHEPHERD — WE DO NOT DOMINATE

As written in 1 Peter 5, elders are to shepherd the flock willingly, not lording it over those entrusted to them. We refuse control. We refuse manipulation. We refuse spiritual intimidation. We lead by example. We lead by sacrifice. We lead from among the people, not above them.

WE BUILD PARTICIPATORY GATHERINGS

In 1 Corinthians 14:26, each one brings something. A psalm. A teaching. A revelation. The house church is not a stage. It is a body in motion. Leaders guard doctrine and order, but the Spirit moves through all.

We Honor Apostolic Alignment and Prophetic Input

Local elders shepherd faithfully, yet we remain connected to the apostolic and prophetic foundation, like Paul the Apostle strengthening the churches he planted. House churches are not isolated islands. They are advancing outposts of the Kingdom. They must be guided by the prophetic voice and strengthened by apostolic wisdom. Without a healthy apostolic and prophetic input, the foundation cracks.

WE FOLLOW THE SERVANT KING

Our model is not an empire or to build kingdoms of fame or fortune. Our model is the cross. Jesus Christ washed feet. He laid down His life. He conquered through sacrifice. So we lead by kneeling. We overcome by loving. We lead the charge by serving.

THIS IS OUR DECLARATION

We will raise elders, not celebrities. We will cultivate families, not franchises. We will release disciples, not spectators. We will multiply shepherds, not platforms. In living rooms and kitchens, in apartments and farmhouses, in cities and villages, yes, the Church will rise again in simplicity and power.

- 🔥 Spirit-filled.
- 🔥 Scripture-rooted.
- 🔥 Christ-exalting.

This is house church leadership. This is New Testament order. This is the way forward.”

HOUSE CHURCH LEADERSHIP:

A MANIFESTO OF FIRE

— WE REJECT — LONE-RANGER LEADERSHIP

*A Team of Elders,
Proven in Character,
Built Around Christ.*

— WE SHEPHERD — WE DO NOT DOMINATE

*Leading by Example
& Sacrifice.*

— WE HONOR — APOSTOLIC ALIGNMENT

Connected to the Mission.

— WE LEAD BY CHARACTER, — NOT CHARISMA

*Above Reproach,
Faithful & Self-Controlled.*

— WE BUILD PARTICIPATORY — GATHERINGS

*Each One Has a Gift.
The Body Ministers.*

— WE FOLLOW THE — SERVANT KING

*Kneeling to Lead,
Serving to Overcome.*

— THIS IS OUR DECLARATION —

- ✦ Elders, Not Celebrities.
- ✦ Families, Not Franchises.
- ✦ Disciples, Not Spectators.
- ✦ Shepherds, Not Platforms.

SPIRIT-FILLED • SCRIPTURE-ROOTED • CHRIST-EXALTING

THE CHURCH WILL RISE AGAIN!

A house church network covenant

This manifesto can be adopted by anyone or a group of disciples who truly seek to be faithful to God and to be part of the authentic house church movement.

“A covenant protects unity, doctrine, and mission as house churches multiply. It keeps fire from becoming fragmentation.

HOUSE CHURCH NETWORK COVENANT

“One Body. Many Homes. One Mission.”

We affirm:

- Jesus Christ as the only Head of the Church
- Scripture as our final authority
- The Holy Spirit as our present guide and empowerer
- The Great Commission as our shared mandate

(Gospel of Matthew 28:19)

- We exist to make disciples who make disciples.

OUR SHARED DNA

Every house church in this network commits to:

- Christ-centered teaching
- Participatory gatherings (not spectator-driven)
- Devotion to prayer and the Word
- Intentional discipleship
- Evangelistic mission
- Leadership development
- Planned multiplication

Our model reflects the pattern seen in Acts of the Apostles 2:42, which is teaching, fellowship, breaking bread and prayer. We agree on essential biblical truths, including The Trinity, salvation by grace through faith, the authority of Scripture, and the necessity of repentance; the transforming work of the Spirit; and the future return of Christ. We allow charitable diversity on secondary issues

while maintaining unity in essentials.

OUR LEADERSHIP CULTURE

We commit to:

- Servant leadership (Mark 10:45 principle)
- Plural leadership where possible
- Accountability and transparency
- Moral integrity
- Doctrinal soundness
- Humility and teachability

Leaders will not dominate, manipulate, or build personal empires. We reject personality-driven movements.

OUR MULTIPLICATION COMMITMENT

We covenant that:

- Growth will lead to multiplication, not stagnation.
- Emerging leaders will be trained before being sent.
- New house churches will be commissioned in unity.

We will celebrate sending, not fear it.

We follow the generational vision of 2 Timothy 2:2. This is to entrust the truth to faithful people who will teach others also.

OUR RELATIONAL UNITY

Though meeting in different homes, we commit to:

- Honouring one another publicly
- Resolving conflict biblically
- Avoiding gossip and division
- Gathering periodically as a wider family
- Supporting one another in crisis

We are not independent silos. We are one Body expressed in many homes.

OUR ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE

We agree that:

- Leaders meet regularly for prayer and oversight.
- Doctrinal concerns are addressed collectively.

- Moral failure is handled with both truth and restoration.

- Major directional shifts are discerned together.
- Isolation is not protection.
- Unity is protection.

OUR MISSIONAL OUTLOOK

We will:

- Reach our neighbourhoods
- Disciple new believers immediately
- Encourage every member to share the Gospel
- Serve our communities practically
- Raise up leaders from within

Our homes are not safe havens from the world. They are sending bases into it.

OUR DECLARATION

• We are one network. Many tables. One Lord. One Spirit. One mission.

• We choose unity over ego. Truth over preference. Multiplication over comfort.

- Servanthood over status.

We covenant together for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom.”



House Church Network Covenant



We, as a network of house churches, joyfully covenant together to follow Jesus and fulfil His mission in our communities:



We covenant to Foster spiritual community and deepen our love for one another.



We covenant to Grow as disciples of Jesus and encourage one another in faith and holiness.



We covenant to Make and multiply disciples through relational evangelism, that touches households.



We covenant to Gather in Jesus' name with devotion to prayer, Bible-teaching, communion, and sharing meals.



We covenant to Serve our neighborhoods and bring compassion and justice to the poor and hurting.

Signed with joy in Jesus' name.

House Church & Leader

and

