

Eph 4:11-16

LAKE GENEVA BIBLE CONFERENCE

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GETTING THE MOST OF THE PEOPLE WE HAVE

I. An Introductory Note:

Yes, it is a strange title for a series of studies at a Bible Conference but in some ways the subject is one that should be considered carefully. What is in the mind of the speaker is the situation in which there are many more observers, in a lot of fellowships, than there are participants. This is a delicate issue in many cases for we are not able to determine the participatory level of everyone in the company and can only make approximations. Caution is the word. But I often hear statements about the need for added help--the hope that someone would come forth and do something--and these expressions are frequently seen in larger meetings. It seems that in a New Testament sense that, if everyone gave the strength available to the life of the fellowship the body would be healthy and the testimony would be vigorous.

Ephesians 4 is a great help in this matter and it is apparent that Paul thinks every member of the association is equipped and should be giving help to the whole. My point in this study is to work from this foundational truth and suggest that we prayerfully seek to have the totality of the fellowship engaged in the witness of the fellowship. It is a goal which we are seeking and not often an accomplished fact although there are times when situations are better and/or worse. This is not a judgmental series of talks but one that is in the suggestive aspect. Of course we will not cover everything and what we do cover will be rather superficial but the hope is that it will help in directing our thinking on the line that we encourage all to be the vigorous part of the testimony that they should be.

My particular thinking is on these six lines:

- The Composition of the Fellowship
- The Making of Elders, Deacon, etc.
- The Development of Gift
- Helping our Youth
- Reaching out to the World Beyond Us

So, brace yourself for another Conference Point session. Remember to look at the display of Christian books and prepare to spend money lavishly. And if questions or problems develop in connection with this line of my thinking, I will be happy to discuss such things with anyone interested at any time.

II. The Composition of the Fellowship

Ephesians 4-5

A. Defining the Subject:

A fellowship is a gathering of persons of common experience. With regard to the church it is a matter of common spiritual experience. The point of this study is to see how the fellowship is put together and how it may prosper through the services and abilities of those who comprise it.

B. Spiritual Foundations

1. The Work of the Triune God
2. The Services of the Word of God. These are categorized as
 - a. Directive
 - b. Descriptive
3. The work of grace as experienced by the spiritual family and the recognition of committed responsibilities.

*Col 4
Rom 8: 33, 34, 26-27*

*Sp. for
to put
together*

C. Member Identification and Realities

1. The new birth
2. The spiritual realities: expressed by propitiation and imputation
 - a. Forgiveness
 - b. Acceptance
 - c. Separation
3. The Work of the Spirit
 - a. Revealing

*Gal 4: 32
Eph 1: 6
Col 1: 22*

M 16

*The
Member
Living a Real
Fellowship*

- b. Sealing (baptism?) *Gal 1:13, 1 Cor 12:13*
- c. Equipping *1 Cor 12:11*
- d. Leading *Rom 8:14*

4. Personnel Observations: Every member is important, needed, and capable to serve in "season".

- a. Equality - *1 Cor 12:27*
- b. Enablement - *Phil 4:7*
- c. Responsibility - *Phil 4:13 (1-3)*
- d. Motivation - *2 Cor 5:14*
- e. Particular differences -

D. Conclusion: Look at the fellowship:

- 1. Cherish it
- 2. Honor it
- 3. Pray and Encourage others in it
- 4. Determine, with the Lord's help, to do your part!

the Prophet

III. The Making of the Particular Servants of the Fellowship

A. Defining a distinction: "gifts" and "offices".

- 1. The Scriptures in Ephesians 4, et al, give an introduction to spiritual gifts. It is doubtful that all are mentioned in the four listing passages in the New Testament. In this matter it is seen that some gifts are exercised people and some are exercised abilities. In this discussion we are concerned with the "office gifts." *responsibilities*
- 2. The New Testament introduces us to "offices" in the identification of "elders", "deacons" and although we hate to admit it, "deaconness". To these specified offices we have added many more, e.g. a correspondent, a Sunday School superintendent, etc. Our additions, it would seem, should be in the general flow with the designated positions. Accordingly we do not "make"

Eph 4:1-12

*Prophets
Pastors
Teachers*

1 Tim 3:1-13

C

teachers

the designated persons of Biblical identification but we do identify them. A lot more must be said about this...probably the watchword is that you should prepare to be confused! (Strauch's books on elders and deacons are excellent source materials in these areas.)

B. Biblical Identification

1. "Elder", "pastor", "bishop" essentially describe the same "office". The Old Testament may set a pattern in the "elders of Israel" (Exodus 3:16, 18:21-23, 24:9 etc, and Numbers 11:17) The "seventy" sent by the Lord Jesus may follow some of this precedent (Luke 10:1) The equation of the office may be seen from a study of Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 3:1 and 1 Peter 5:1-2

a. Elder:

(1) Qualifications

1 Timothy 3:1; 2-7
Titus 1:5-9

There are other qualifications not so stipulated but obviously given by the nature of duty.

(2) Duties

1 Peter 5:1-3
Hebrews 13:7-17
James 5:14

And there are other duties implied

(3) Recognition: Hebrews 13, et al

(4) Practical Questions...there are several!

b. Deacon

(1) The term

(2) The idea

Acts: Holy Spirit

Acts 14:23
Titus 1:5

descriptive: what the deacon is (Paul 1:3)

(1:3)

1 Tim 5:17, 18

1. who is he?
2. in/with whom?
3. age
4. capability

a body of only administrators

that from the rule 7-17

Acts 6:1-7
Philippians 1:1

(3) The nature of service

(4) Qualifications:

1 Timothy 3:8-13

c. The deaconess

Romans 16:1 in the Greek text. We are not told much about it but put with Philippians 4:2-3 it seems that such duty was recognized.

C. Conclusion: The specified offices ought not to be ignored. I am familiar with many of the disputes about them but the designations come from God and we should be sensitive not to allow any part of the direction of the Lord to be overlooked.

IV. The Development of Gift

Romans 12:6-21, etc.

End

A. The Concept

The gifts of which we speak may be seen as the ministries of the Holy Spirit to believers by which they are enabled to serve the Lord and the fellowship. They are gifts but they must be discerned and exercised to benefit the body. There are four major listings of them in the New Testament and they may be classified somewhat in this order...but we will not split hairs over it!

Romans 12

1 Corinthians 12.....Both are "working" gifts

1 Peter 4:8-11

Ephesians 4:7-16.....Both working and office gifts.

H: 11

the office position

As I have mentioned before, I do not think this is a total listing of all gifts but a demonstration as to how the Spirit enriches the assembly.

The "sign gifts" are points of argument and we will mention them in passing but not in polemical detail.

B. The Gift Theology

1. The Divine Working:

- a. The Spirit: 1 Cor 12:4, 8, 9, 11,
- b. The Lord: 1 Cor 12:5
- c. "God" 1 Cor 12:6; 18, 21, 28

One cannot miss the aspects of Divine Sovereignty seen in the gifting process and one can also see the stimulus given with the suggestion to seek the "best gifts".

2. Note that under these terms, each believer is:

- a. gifted
- b. appointed
- c. responsible

3. The working of all together is that which builds the body in love and subsequent growth.

C. Discerning the gifts. It goes without saying that this is not so easy as it sounds. It is important, however, and I will press the point that the nature of one's gift is best discerned by giving oneself to the work or witness of the body. Some explanation is necessary.

1. Identify the gift broadly
2. Determine how it may be used in the fellowship. Consultation with the elders is a good step.
3. See what may be available for your interest.

Put your
energies to
the search

4. Encourage others to participate with you
5. Study the Scriptures to see the inner working and cooperation of believers in a testimony. Begin in 1 Corinthians 3 and work also in 2 Corinthians 6.

working together,
labour?

D. Some Practical ideas (I think)

1. Remember that we do not create gifts.....we discern them and give them room to function.
2. Therefore create opportunities to serve, function, or whatever/
3. Multi-gifted persons are certainly welcome but should not be allowed to dominate or hinder others whose skills may seem less but who need the functioning.
4. See that all who fellowship are encouraged to be part of the "team."
5. Be honest in gift evaluation...do not be sycophantic or perpetually cynical.

E. Conclusion.....in the words of the Apostle..."develop the gift that was given to you" 2 Timothy 1:6

V. Encourage the Societal Segments of the Fellowship

Titus 2

A. Defining our topic

While the fellowship is a family, like most families it has several segments. Each of these has the potential to be a great help to the body if awareness of potential is understood. The assembly oversight should be discerning in these areas but all believers need to be perceptive and strengthen one another in worship or witness. For our general purposes I will notice three segments at this juncture:

- the body as a whole
- the brothers
- the sisters

We can do much to strengthen and see the Lord work in a fellowship if we took seriously the aid each group could provide and accordingly urged it to do so.

- B. The Body as a Whole (The term "brethren" is usually used to refer to the body as a whole although it may have a limited usage at time to refer to the male members. Context helps us with this.)

1. 1 Corinthians 12---is any part not useful? *v. 22, 27*
2. 1 Corinthians 3----is any part self-sustaining? *v. 9, 1 Cor 4:7*
3. Is there any part that should feel inferior or superior to another?
1 Corinthians 3, etc. *v. 5*

C. The Brothers:

Particular responsibilities are assigned to the brothers and to the sisters as noted in our next section. Some brothers are unaware of these things and therefore are more observers than participants. Some will expect others to do things that belong to the initial party. Failure to accept spiritual responsibility produce lethargy and ineffectiveness.

1. The aged men and the younger men: Titus 2:1, 6
2. The administrators (for want of a better term) 1 Timothy 2:12-15
1 Corinthians 11:3-9
3. The oversight *Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 5*

D. The Sisters:

1. A modeling, teaching role: Titus 2:3, etc.
2. A ministering role: Philippians 4:3
3. A family role: 1 Timothy 5:14 (Eph 5:1)

Please note that these defined areas are not necessarily (for men and women) mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive. There is a lot of overlap and common sense will help in observing it within the parameters of the Scripture.

E. As a Unit: brothers and sisters:

1. A living role 1 Corinthians 7:3-5
2. A walking role: 2 Thessalonians 3: 6, 14, et al.
3. A family role: 1 Timothy 5, Ephesians 5

F. Summary:

All of these may be expanded greatly. Too often in a fellowship we tend to be watchers only. Our great desire is to see the Lord honored in worship and obedience, exercise and judgment. The Scripture is both descriptive and definitive in many points but we are too often willing to sit by and take little responsible action. I regret having to treat these matters in something of a cavalier fashion but in the long run the point becomes....what does God expect or desire for us that our lives may praise Him more and better establish His testimony.

VI. Helping Our Youth

A. Introducing this section of our material

In our spiritual societies there are a lot of divisional matters that are extra-biblical but the distinction of youth and age is not one of them. The youth of today will be the aged of tomorrow and they will be best benefited by a mature body of older believers that helps them grow in the right way. Paul's letters to Timothy give a lot of help in this matter but there are many practical points of advice given in Scripture and perhaps one of the most pointed is this:

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy Word. Psalm 119:9

Consider how this is supported by 2 Timothy 3, Ecclesiastes 12:1 and chapter 11 and 2 Timothy 2.

B. Consider the services of youth in the Bible (partial consideration)

1. Naaman's maid.....2 Kings 5:2
2. Paul's nephew.....Acts 23:16
3. God's messenger....Zechariah 3:4

4. The prophet's helper...1 Kings 6:17
5. Moses sister....Exodus 2:4,7
6. A boy's lunch.....John 6:9

C. Some particular steps:

1. Biblical thought....Deuteronomy 6

2. Practical applications:

- a. Programs
- b. Involvement
- c. Accountability
- d. Discipleship
- e. Exampleship

*Mission
Trips*

teach the Word
aware, etc. helps
ask how
one on one

3. And a positive attitude goes a long way!

- a. Do not detract
- b. Try to live in the present
- c. Remember--honestly--your own youth
- d. Bear in mind that youth is almost always impetuous...and gets less and less as age grows.
- e. It is also important to recall that youth is just one generation behind you.....

(don't discount)
(things do change)
(we were not always "nature")

D. Conclusion

Aim: that yielding to Christ will be the great goal

VII. Reaching Out to the World About Us.

Everyone reach out

Acts 1, etc.

A. Defining this field of study

One may call it "missions" if one wishes to do so but the very term may seem to be remote to us and keep us less than active. We may also confuse the ideas of mission with some sort of mysterious professionalism and find our participation very limited. What fascinates me with this subject is the objective truth the if each of us just put forth a little effort there is no telling what the end result might be. We really do not need more professional workers but we do need more confessing

Parade

the call
for workers
(George Allen)

Christians. We are told to pray that the Lord of the harvest will raise up workers for the harvest field and that is a mandated prayer. But one will often find that while he is praying for the Lord to do something the Lord will also indicate that he should do it! We have enough people to have a vibrant witness but often the people we have are not in the trenches of witnessing Christians...I will tell you of my struggles with this matter...well something of them.

B. Further consideration of the Acts passage:

the World
the Spirit (R)

1. What is the word of urgency by the Lord?
2. Where will the disciples exercise their calling?
3. What is the promise of the Lord for aid?
4. What is the immediate help that motivates?
- (10) 5. What events threaten the success of the apostolic mission?
6. What is the assurance that this work is not purely fleshly?

vs 4 Repent.
Wait.
Pharisees, not wanted,
inconvenient.
"Love with fear"
14th. 28:20
Heaven
taken up with
glorious

vs 11

C. And a somewhat closer look at Romans 1

1. Paul's desire
2. His message
3. His audience

(11) some blessing
(14-17)
the Roman church
Jew / Gent

D. Some practical points for the fellowship

1. Stay abreast of what God is doing in winning people. Write to and pray for missionaries and evangelists.
2. See what community needs may exist in our own community.
3. Be prepared to follow the advice of Galatians 6:10 (do good)
4. Find some part in the work and stick with it...suggestions follow:

Phila-
in 77 M also

E. Conclusion: Remember the adage that says....."The fellowship that will not go will soon be gone."

VIII. And by Way of Summary

The problem I have been trying to work with in these talks is the problem of not making the fullest use of the people we have in a fellowship. I understand that if the fellowship is only two or three people this might not be the case but in many meetings the numbers of uninvolved people is surprising. The fact is that many of them do not know they are uninvolved....they enjoy the fellowship and are thankful for a spiritual base. That they do not know this status is a fault that may be passed on to the rest of us who are so concerned with our duties, etc., that we fail to make room or provide guidance for others.

We have for the most part plenty of people if we get the most out of them that is possible by the grace of God and the urging of the Spirit. It is not a matter of compulsion or brow-beating but simply a recognition that every one should have a share in the glorious work of God and to that end we encourage all the participants in a fellowship to be doers, not just watchers. In many cases, however, before we dare think of helping someone else, we need to survey our own participation. But I have said that often enough that it will be allowed to rest right now.

Getty the Most of the People
 We Have 5 steps mobile 12:18-31

I. Introduction (5 steps) 12:18-31
 A. Greeting
 B. Review, Composition of the Body
 Be the official assigned (Palm & Sweet)
 Greatest (3) Day of Gift (4) Sweet Sign
 Possible Tonight: Encourage the proper use of
 gifts (Illustration: Remar)

II. Discussion
 1. Ask for what will edify the Body (the Body)
 12:31, 14:26
 Your Fellowship { 1 Cor 14:17 - things that make for peace
 14:17 - things that enlighten others
 14:24 - things that allow the presence of the Spirit

B. Constitution all service by love
 13 - of God, of Father, of the Lord!

The Spirit
 Gifts
 Charismata

{ Defining love
 Do you love if you do not give?
 14:1 follow each other

C. Do all things in obedience and trust
 14:20,
 14:40

No rebellion - no divisions

III. Conclusion

(Make Your Own Contribution)

Take Geneva

Getting the 'Most of the People We Have

Phil. 1:18-30

I. Introduction

A. Greeting

B. Review...

C. Text: theme: Stick Together

D. Ref: Smith talk

II Discussion

A. What does it mean

1. Phil text 27-30, 21

2. One loyalty 27... Christ, Gospel

3. One spirit 27... a moral faith

4. One message @ the faith of the Gospel
(in Christendom)

B. How is it maintained?

1. Hebrews 12:12-14

2. Solve problems 12

3. Resolve issues 13

4. Press forward 14

C. What is the result?

1. Passage 1 Thess 5:14-15

2. Mutual strengthening

3. understand

4. effective service

III Stick Together - the Conclusion.

Deke Geneva

Getting the Most of the People We Have July 2003

I. Introduction

A. Greeting

B. Review

C. Text: Galatians 6:1-10
D. 9 - Continue doing what is right

II. Discussion

A. Some general things - 1. "

B. Carry for one another
v. 1 the Command of the Lord
v. 2 Jesus

C. Maintain our own spiritual development
v. 3 we often worry about
v. 4 the wrong things.
v. 5

D. Encouraging the work of the Lord
v. 6 Vally Bible (DVBS)
v. 7 Yonkers (workers)

E. Showing God's love everywhere
v. 9 Eph 2:10
v. 10 Titus 3:8

III. Conclusion: Do what is right.

Genesis

Getting the Most From the People's House #7

I. Introduction

1 Thess 1:1-5

A. Greeting

B. Praise

C. Question: why so many who do not participate

D. A quick note: some are otherwise spiritually occupied, some are disabled.

(a breakdown, etc.)

II. Discussion

A. Some do not understand - we are in a battle

1. Text

(a cloud of confusion)

2. Eph 6

3. 2 Cor 10: 3-4, etc

B. Some are handicapped (too occupied)
with habits like

1. weight

2. sin

(Demas)

C. Some are not motivated or feel inadequate

1. 1:2

do not always attend on Jesus

2. Paul

3. the end and the power

D. Some are fearful

1. 2:3

2. 2 Tim 1

E. Some do not know

- pray

- ask

- worship

submit to the Father

III Conclusion: Getting the most