

The Power and Process of Partnership

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Aug 2nd

The Covid-19 Virus provides a powerful illustration of a deep spiritual reality! This highly contagious disease has left millions in our country (and world) “infected”, and “affected” billions with the anxiety, uncertainty and perplexity that surrounds it. In much the same way, Sin has infected and affected our entire world, ...Leaving us sick and in desperate need of the Great Physician! (John 3:15-18) Jesus warned us about the “thief” (serpent) that comes to “steal, kill, destroy.” (Jn 10:10a) God wants us Healthy and Strong so that we can:

Enjoy the Abundant life Christ offers (Jn 10:10), Become *“more than conquerors...”* (Ro 8:37) Enabling us to become His “ambassadors” (2 Cor. 5:20) and “salt and light” (Mt 5:13-16; Phil. 2:13-16) in order to minister to this broken, diseased world.

But sadly, like the ancient Jews of Moses’ day, we often become re-infected with other worldly viruses. (James 4) ue to the virility of sin’s viruses, God challenges us to “Examine ourselves” (Dokimazō: to test, discern, prove) Revealing that *“for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep”* (koi’maō: deceased) (1 Cor. 11:28-30)

The Great Physician offers His “Great Prescriptions” to help restore our health / strength so we can better represent Him and help a sick society. These include The Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20) And the Great Commandment (Mt 22:37) (megas entole) Powerful, Prescription. The first two aspects of The Great Commission involve Sharing God’s message of Salvation and then Encouraging a clear & obedient Association through Baptism.

Remember “Baptize” means *“to make fully wet, to dip or stain (aka: identify with)* and depicts:

An outward action that Reflects an internal change of allegiance. Col 1:13 It also publicly identifies us with Jesus’ Death, Burial, and Resurrection. (Ro. 6:3-5) and reminds us that although our Faith is very Personal, it should not be *“Private”*. (Psalm 107:2)

Biblical Baptism not only “associates” us with God, but also with His Church!

A Bible word for this association is *Fellowship!* (koinonia: “Partnership and Participation”!

We’re “partners” with God and each other in the accomplishing of God’s Purposes!

(1 Cor 3:9; Phil. 1:5; Rev. 4:11)

“Fellowship” involves a process whereby God grows us in the fulfilment of the Great Commandment so that we can effectively...fulfil the “Great Commission”. In Acts 2:41-47 God gives us a picture of this process revealing God’s original design for His Church!

God’s Process of “Fellowship” (Partnership) involves:

1. Membership. I choose to belong (Identify with) Acts 2:41

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized:

and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

A. God wants us to identify with His family. Eph. 2:19 *“Now ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God!”*

1) The Christian life is not just about believing, it’s also about *belonging!*

B. Notice some of the “pictures” God uses to describe His Church.

1) *Members* of a common Body. 1 Cor 12:27 *“ye are the body of Christ...members in particular.”*

Ro 12:5 *“we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”*

a) Every “member” must work together in order to be healthy and effective. Eph 4:15-16

2) *Marriage* to a common groom. (Eph. 5:22-31; Rev. 19:9; 2 Cor 11:2)

Eph 5:32 *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”*

Many “believers” are perpetually “dating” God, but never seem to act “married!” See Jms 4:4

3) **Materials** in a common Building (Temple). 1 Cor 3:9-11 *"we are laborers together with God: ye are God's ... building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth"*
Bricks that aren't "mortared" together are Fragile and Dangerous.

4) **Plants** (trees) in a common garden.

1 Cor 3:9 *"we are laborers together with God, Ye are God's husbandry"* (Ge-ōr'gion: garden)

Jn 15:1-6 *"I am the vine...ye are the branches"*

Is. 61:3 *"they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, That He might be glorified"*

a) Few vines or fruit trees can produce alone!

They need to cross pollinate in order to produce!

5) **Members** of a Common Family Eph. 3:14-18 *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."*

The Only time the word "Family" is found in the NT is about the Church!

CONCLUSION:

What do all of these have in common?

- **Members of a common Body.** (1 Cor. 12; Ro. 12)
- **Married to a common Groom.**(Eph.5; Rev. 19)
- **Materials in a common Building.** (Eph. 2)
- **Plants in a common Garden** (1 Cor 3:9; Is. 61)
- **People in a common Family.** (Eph. 3:14-21)

They all involve Diversity and Commitment!

Application:

- 1) Of the 27 books of the New Testament, **13** were written to the pastors / people of a local church!
- 2) Out of 114 times that the "church" is mentioned in the New Testament, **90** of them refer to specific local gatherings of believers who have banded together for fellowship and mission.
- 3) It's impossible to obey the more than 48 "one another" commands of Christ, Without being a committed part of a local church!

Are you a Connected and Committed part of God's Plan accomplished through His Church?