

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE CLUB

WITH TEACHING COMMENTARY BY NICK BOORK

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August 22 – 1 Corinthians 14:18-40

I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; ¹⁹ yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. ²⁰ Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature. ²¹ In the law it is written: "With *men of* other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord. ²² Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. ²³ Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. ²⁵ And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

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.

³⁴ Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. ³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. ³⁶ Or did the word of God come *originally* from you? Or *was it* you only that it reached? ³⁷ If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. ³⁸ But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. ³⁹ Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. ⁴⁰ Let all things be done decently and in order.

OKAY, HERE'S MY TEACHING COMMENTARY

Let's look at some of the elements that contribute to a healthy Church meeting. In verse 26 Paul says that when you come together each one of you has something to bring and contribute to the meeting. Obviously this is not talking about a mega church or even a large gathering of

Christians because it's impossible for everyone to participate in those types of larger meetings. However when you have smaller groups of Christians gathering in Jesus name everyone is able to participate in the various gifts of the Holy Spirit and share in different parts of the meeting. Paul says when you come together everyone of you has something already! Paul was teaching these believers that it was really their responsibility to seek the Lord and receive from the Holy Spirit what they needed to bring to their meetings and these meetings were probably in the homes of believers. Many times what happens in larger churches today is members only come to receive and not give. This is totally un-scriptural and will create very weak Christians. God fully expects us to grow and develop into the character of Jesus Christ and use the gifts that he has blessed us with to serve others and witness for Christ.

We know that in the early church in Jerusalem the Christians met both in Solomon's temple and from house to house. So it's not a right or wrong issue of whether we should meet in large meetings or small meetings. Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Church said something that I think puts it all into perspective that a church always needs to be growing in two directions at the same time becoming both larger and smaller at the same time. What he was saying was Churches need to be growing larger because the members are sharing their faith and winning other people to Jesus Christ. The church needs to continue to grow smaller as it develops multiple leaders and small groups or cell groups as some churches call them. These are smaller groups that gather frequently. You see what happens today in the mega church is that many times believers come in and the kind of don't connect and get lost in the masses. Mega churches are great as long as they have lots of developing leaders like the ministries of deacons and elders and small groups where people can connect to share spiritual gifts and receive one from another.

When you're part of a small group you can actually participating using the gifts in you. For example if you have a teaching gift you can share a teaching, if you have a singing gift you're able to lead the group in songs of praise and worship the Lord, if you have the gift of encouragement or exhortation you're able to encourage and lift and motivate people. If you have the gift of leadership you're able to lead the group into the things of God in a decent and orderly fashion. If you have a gift of prophecy you are able to prophesy, if you have a gift of healing you surely can pray for the sick that are in the gathering and if you have a gift of hospitality you're able to open up your home and make people feel very welcome and provide a platform for Christians to gather.

My wife fingers and I have started many small groups and been a part of small groups all of our Christian lives. For us, small groups or cell groups are the highlight of our Christian experience because you connect with people at a different level of then you do in a large gathering. I think what's happened in many churches today is that they have settled into I kind of Evangelical reformed worship pattern where the majority of those that attend are only spectators and listeners. Yes they come and worship the Lord and that's wonderful and give in the offering but they really don't participate by connecting to others. This is the danger of larger churches. Larger churches absolutely must develop a structure that allows believers to grow in their gifts

and small groups is the best way to do that. We read about the elements of church life that the first Christians practiced. Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles' doctrine** and **fellowship**, in the **breaking of bread**, and in **prayers**. Notice the four elements listed here that were vital:

The Apostles Doctrine: Represents the preaching and teaching of Jesus Christ and the word of God. Acts 5:42 "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ." I absolutely love to lead small groups through books of the Bible also known as an inductive Bible study. I simply print off a portion or Scripture from a chapter of the Bible and we go around the room and each one reads a verse then as the leader I guide to group to answer questions about what we just read and then lead them in prayer to apply it to our lives. This is so simple yet so very powerful because first it is the written word of God that we are sharing as a group and God is speaking to the group through his Word. Then it's amazing how the Holy Spirit will cause the group to talk about certain aspects of the Scriptures. It is very common for those attending the meeting to testify that, "The Lord really spoke to me tonight!"

Fellowship: Represents the kind of connection we have one with another by the Holy Spirit when we are in Christ and part of his body participating with each other in the love of God. This is a spiritual fellowship that we share in Jesus Christ as the family of God. There is nothing like this kind of fellowship because it is divine and you can't find it anywhere else on the planet. There is a certain kind of bonding that happens in small groups that doesn't happen in large groups. It's because of the relationships that are developed and how each one both gives and receives in the meetings.

The breaking of bread: Represents both receiving the Lord's Supper together and sharing meals one with another. There's nothing like sharing food with other Christians in the context of a small group. Taking communion together as a small group is also very powerful. Something that I have learned when we host small groups in our home is to always provide either a meal or some kind of snacks to begin the meeting with. This always helps to break the ice and get people into fellowship as we sit around munching, drinking coffee or tea and talking informally for about a half hour before officially starting the meeting.

Prayers: The book of Acts is filled with examples of Christians gathering together to pray in small groups. Prayer should be the backbone of every church in the world. Jesus said my house would be called a house of prayer for all nations. Prayer would also include praise, worship and petitions of all kinds in the small group. Jesus promised that were only two or three would gather together in his name that he would be there in a special way by his presence and he gave this promise in the context of believers praying together in agreement. Matthew 18:19-20 Spirit led prayer brings a powerful anointing and a dynamic into a small group that is hard to explain. Prayer creates an atmosphere of faith as each member of the

group praises and connects to God and one another sharing our petitions and praying one for another.

If you don't have any small groups at your church then invite a bunch of friends over for some pizza, begin to ask people to share what God is doing in their lives, read and explain a couple of verses from the Bible, ask those attending what you can pray for and then begin to pray for those needs and praise the lord and you will be experiencing the presence of God in a small group and on your way to experiencing a fresh dynamic of church life!

WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?

- 1) Small groups are a great place to practice spiritual gifts
- 2) The book of Acts teaches us that there were four basic elements to church life and each of these can be practiced in a small group.
- 3) If you are not currently part of the small group I would encourage you to seek out a dynamic small group that meets through your church and get involved or start one yourself.

PRAYER TO APPLY THE WORD OF GOD TO OUR LIVES



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