

The Godly Woman as Christ's Representative

The Church

The first two institutions established by the Lord were the *home* and the *church*. This should give us some indication as to the importance and value God puts on both of them.

The word "church" can mean many things to different people. Here we will use it in just two ways: (a) The body of believers everywhere united in Christ; (b) The local assemblies of believers.

Our discussion mainly concerns relating properly to the local church and spiritual leadership in the local church.

Pray your class members will get a new vision of the importance of the church and how they fit into it. Some of the principles of spiritual leadership presented may be quite new to some. Pray their hearts will be open and receptive to God.

A. Object Of The Lesson

1. To help the group understand what the church is.
2. To relate to it properly.
3. To understand the principles of spiritual leadership.

B. Discussion Questions

1. Define the universal church. (body of believers everywhere). Define the local church. (body of believers meeting together in a local assembly to be taught, built up, edified, and sent out to reach others for Christ).
2. What is meant by "a body of believers?" (any and all, who by an act of their will, at a point in time, have invited Jesus to come into their lives and rule there as Savior and Lord).
3. How do you interpret I Corinthians 1:10?
4. How are spiritual leaders of ten chosen? How should they be chosen? (Psalms 75:6,7)
5. Discuss the criteria one should use in choosing a church home.
6. Teacher, give the members of your class a quiz to see how knowledgeable they are about important issues of the church they are now attending. (For instance: What are the qualifications for membership in your church? What is their stand on baptism? According to your church what is the meaning of salvation? What are works and what place do they have in a Christian's life? What is the stand your church takes on the word of God?) Point out to them that if we are giving our life, time, money and etc. to a local group of believers we should know where they stand on these issues so we will know whether or not we agree with them.
7. Where do you think you have fallen short of the fruit of the spirit in your church relationship? (Galatians 5:22,23)

8. How far does authority go in spiritual leadership (II Corinthians 1:24 F. F. Bruce Expanded Paraphrase says: “We are not dictators over your faith by which you stand before God.”) Ecclesiastes 8:9 NASB

9. How would you define spiritual leadership? (Spiritual leadership divides itself naturally into three kinds: the natural leadership, the elected leadership, and the God-ordained, heart - tie leadership. Natural leadership would be the father in the home. The elected leadership would be the undershepherds of the flock called by a local congregation or chosen for them by the presbytery. The third type of spiritual leadership with the God-given heart tie is a commitment of a person to someone more mature in the faith, asking the more mature one to help them grow and deepen in knowledge of the Lord).

10. How would you recognize a spiritual leader? (The way to recognize a spiritual leader is to see if he has any followers. According to Ezek. 3:17 a spiritual leader is one who faithfully shares God’s message and has your best interest at heart.)

11. How can you know if someone is caring for your soul? Psalm 142:4, Isaiah 41:28, Isaiah 59:16 (These verses indicate that it would be someone who cares for you, someone who is a counselor to you, someone who intercedes for you, someone who is sharing her life with you, praying with and for you, showing concern for you, being honest with you, taking time for you even though it costs her something.)

12. Is it important that someone care for your soul? Why? (Everyone needs someone to look to from the standpoint of leadership. Being under spiritual leadership gives us protection, helps to hold us to our highest and best, and encourages us to attempt things for God which otherwise we might not. Having someone along side to encourage and admonish us is one of God’s choicest gifts to us here on earth.)

13. What is the responsibility one has who is caring for the soul of another? (to love her, pray for her, speak the truth in love - Ephesians 4:15, be grateful for the privilege, determine her needs, impart ministry skills, help mold her character, be an example in pacesetting, help her share her life with others, not give up on her.)

14. What is the responsibility that one being cared for has to be the one caring? (Be grateful - Galatians 6:6 Williams; be submissive - Hebrews 13:17 Phillips; be teachable - Proverbs 10:8; be available)

15. How would you go about finding someone to help you? (Pray and ask God, be on the lookout for a Godly person, ask them to help you, be prepared to pay the price, realize you are not doing God or the other person a favor by receiving help - it is a privilege.) How would you find someone to help? (Pray and ask God, get your own life deep enough that you have something to share, watch for the person that keeps hanging around you - they may be the one! I Timothy 1:18 (NEB). Why is there not more of this type of thing going on? (The cost is too high.)

C. Suggestions For Conclusion

1. Share what your application is from Galatians 5:22,23 in regard to your church relationship.

Perhaps what Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse wrote regarding these verses will be of help to you as you seek to allow God to express Himself through you in your local church situation. Dr.

Barnhouse says the fruit of the Spirit is really one fruit. It is the full fruit of love and he expresses it in this way:

Joy	is love singing
Peace	is love resting
Long-Suffering	is love enduring
Gentleness	is love's touch
Goodness	is love's character
Faithfulness	is love's habit
Meekness	is love's self-forgetfulness
Self-control	is love holding the reins

2. You might want to give an opportunity to the women to Pray through questions 13, 14, and 15 that you perhaps used from the discussion questions with regard to their need for a spiritual leader and their need to be a spiritual leader to another.

D. Additional Scriptures

Matthew 4:19; I Corinthians 12:21; I Corinthians 11:1; Ephesians 4:1-3; Acts 2:42; Acts 2:46,47; Hebrews 10:24-25; Hebrews 13:7; Hebrews 13:15 (LB)

E. Possible Projects

1. Meditate on the responsibility that one has in caring for the soul of another. If you have this responsibility, are you fulfilling it well? If you do not have this responsibility now, will you make a list of the responsibilities one has in caring for the soul of another, and to begin praying over them. Ask God to build them into your life and send someone to you to whom you may be of help.
2. If you are being helped by another who is your spiritual parent, make a list of your attitudes toward this one to see if your attitudes fit the word of God.
3. Pray this week about what ministry God wants you to have in your local church.

F. Extra Helps

God's Man in China by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor
A New Face for the Church by Lawrence Richards

***Note: In preparation for teaching Session 17 (*A Fit Helper for Him: Follow the Leader*) I would highly recommend you read a small paperback book entitled *Me? Obey Him?* By Elizabeth R. Handford (Sword of the Lord Publishers, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130.) Probably you can find it in a local Christian bookstore, but if not, it can be obtained from the publishers.