

DEVELOPING

AN

ECCLESIA



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BAPTISM AND FELLOWSHIP

When people are baptised into Christ they become part of a community or fellowship of believers who meet together to encourage each other in their faith.

In Acts 2:42 we read that the newly baptised believers immediately came together and; *"devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."* This is the basis of Christian living.

Believers join together to share their lives and four ways of doing so are highlighted in this verse:

- The apostles' teaching
- Fellowship
- Breaking of Bread
- Prayer

Believers are expected to spend time together and share their spiritual life with one another. All believers must share teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer with other believers.

Indeed we should want to get together and share with each other in all these ways since we are told in 1 John 1:3-4 that our fellowship together is designed to give us joy.

John makes it clear that believers must be together; *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, **we have fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7).

If we have been saved through Christ and walk in the light of the gospel, then we are automatically in fellowship with our fellow walkers in the light. We have no choice in this matter. God has put us together into a fellowship and there is no other way to walk in the light with Jesus.

We cannot say that we have no need of our fellow believers. Paul teaches us this by using the image of the body; *"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For **we were all baptised by one spirit into one body**"* (1 Cor 12:12-13).

We are all baptised into one body although we are all individuals. Just as a hand alone is not the body, so we alone are not the body. We are in fellowship with our fellow believers whether we wish to be or not. However we are only truly part of the body when we join together with our fellow believers.

When we are baptised we become part of God's family; a spiritual family with God as our Heavenly Father. We are not alone in our faith but have a new family in Christ.

Jesus tells us that we are; *"are all brothers"* with God as our Father (Matt 23:8-9). Paul also explains; *"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ"* (Gal 3:26-27).

When we were called to the gospel, we were chosen by God to become members of His household, His children; *"God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful"* (1 Cor 1:9).

We are God's choice. We are special. The same is true for all our new brothers and sisters. They are God's choice and they are special. We are all chosen by God to be part of His family. It is not for us to disagree with God's choice of our spiritual brothers and sisters!

In fact, God instructs us on how we should interact with them. We must *"have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart"* (1 Pet 1:22). The type of love we need to show is spelled out for us in 1 Corinthians 13. We can only love our new brothers and sisters if we meet with them and share fellowship with them.

We are called to be united in Christ with all our spiritual brothers and sisters. The Scripture is full of this teaching. Believers are so united that they are called 'one' - one body, one family, one loaf, one temple, one vine, one flock.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE IN FELLOWSHIP

Acts 2:42 describes four activities which believers share as part of being in fellowship together. We will consider these one by one.

The apostles' teaching

There are many types of teaching in the world, but it is only the apostles' teaching (which includes the teaching about Jesus found in the Old Testament) that needs to be shared.

The teachings specifically mentioned in Acts 2 are the death and resurrection of Jesus and the promise of the kingdom that was made to David. The requirement for this teaching - of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God - recur in Acts 8:12 and 28:31. This is the gospel message which unites us.

Just as there is light, there is also darkness. Believers in the light are not to fellowship darkness; *"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what **fellowship can light have with darkness?** What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God"* (2 Cor 6:14-16).

Just as God does not want unbelievers to enter his temple, so we should not fellowship those who are in darkness. Our fellowship is only with those who are in the light and this light comes from understanding the apostles' teaching.

Fellowship

Fellowship means a relationship based on sharing. In the time of Acts, we are told what they shared; *"All the **believers were together and had everything in common**"* (Acts 2:44).

They shared **everything**. They even sold their possessions; *"Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need"* (Acts 2:45). They did not consider their own possessions as belonging to themselves alone, instead; *"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No-one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had"* (Acts 4:32).

The fact that sharing is part of fellowship is shown throughout the New Testament. For example, the Macedonian ecclesias collected for other poor ecclesias even though they were poor themselves (2 Cor 8:1-5).

Giving is likened to a farmer sowing. Just as farmer does not receive a harvest unless he sows, the same is true for believers; *"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Cor 9:6-7). This is a voluntary act of service to others.

Fellowship means sharing with fellow believers who are needy. As Romans says; *"Share with God's people who are in need. Practise hospitality"* (Rom 12:13). We are expected to show love for one another in this way.

"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased" (Heb 13:16). Fellowship means making sacrifices for the sake of others.

'Fellowship' means particularly sharing with the widows in need (Acts 6:1-6).

Fellowship means not only sharing spiritual blessings with our brothers and sisters, but sharing our material blessings as well (Rom 15:27).

Breaking of Bread

Believers break bread and drink the wine together to remember Christ and his sacrifice; *"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?"* (1 Cor 10:16).

The Greek word for 'participation' is the word fellowship. Believers remember the death and resurrection of Jesus together and share the wine and the bread. The early believers *"broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God"* (Acts 2:46).

Our life as a Christian starts when we are baptised into the death and resurrection of Jesus. Once we have become associated with the life of Jesus in this way, we continue to associate with his death and resurrection regularly in the breaking of bread. In this way our life as a believer is always associated with the work of Jesus.

The breaking of bread service provides us with an opportunity to examine ourselves and rededicate our lives to God and Jesus (1 Cor 11:28).

Prayer

The pattern of praying together commenced at the beginning of Acts; "*They all joined together constantly in prayer*" (Acts 1:14) and "*they raised their voices together in prayer to God*" (Acts 4:24). There is a need for communal prayers as part of fellowship (Acts 12:5, 2 Thess 3:1). Believers are told to keep on praying (Rom 12:12, Col 4:2, 1 Thess 5:17). This is something we do collectively as well as individually.

Believers meet together to teach, fellowship, break bread and pray. This meeting together of believers in the pattern for Christian living today; "*all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade*" (Acts 5:12).

Additional Activities

The early chapters of Acts describe several other important fellowship activities. Being 'devoted to the apostles' teaching' included teaching non-believers about the gospel; "*Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ*" (Acts 5:42).

At times believers had to suffer for their faith (eg Acts 8:1). When Paul suffered for Christ, he described this as "*the fellowship of sharing in his (Christ's) sufferings*" (Phil 3:10). So believers will have to suffer at times for their faith. We are to expect this; "*we are God's children. 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*" (Rom 8:16-17).

We will all share in the sufferings of Jesus to a greater or lesser extent during our lives so that we may share in the future glory of Jesus.

We may have to face opposition from non-believers, even from members of our own family. If this happens, then we can be encouraged by our fellow believers to stay strong as we stand together with them in faith.

The Ecclesia

In the New Testament, the word for 'church' is always the Greek word 'ecclesia'. 'Ecclesia' means an 'assembly of called out ones,' and refers to the believers who have been called out from the world to be 'in Christ'.

God is concerned with the people who believe in Him, and not in church buildings. The most common form of meeting place in the New Testament was not a church building but the home of individuals (Acts 12:12, Rom 16:5, 1 Cor 16:19, Col 4:15, Philemon 1:2).

Christ is the head of the believers in the ecclesia (Eph 5:23, Col 1:18). He is the head of the people and not the head of a building. So it is clear that the word 'ecclesia' refers to the believers who meet together and not to the place where they meet.

The 'ecclesia' refers to the people who are 'in Christ' and have come together for a common purpose. The believers in Corinth were sanctified (made holy) in Christ along with other believers; *"To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ - their Lord and ours"* (1 Cor 1:2).

The believers were together in the ecclesia at Corinth, as well as being together with other believers who live everywhere else.

This document relates to the fellowship of Christadelphians (meaning brothers in Christ). We are in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in our nearby ecclesias, with those in our country and throughout the world.

The common purpose which unites the ecclesia is Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9, 2:2, 3:11).

Jesus must be the foundation of every ecclesia.

When Peter understood that Jesus was "*the Christ, the Son of the Living God*", Jesus told him that "*on this rock I will build my church*" (Matt 16:16-18).

Therefore all ecclesias are built on this foundation of understanding that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah).

Ephesians puts it like this; "*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostle and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord*" (Eph 2:19-21).

In Acts 7:37-38 Stephen refers to Israel in the wilderness as an ecclesia; "*This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people'. He was in the assembly (Greek: **ecclesia**) in the desert, with the angel that spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.*"

Just as Israel was called out of Egypt to be with God, so the members of the ecclesia are called out from the world (that is, worldly thinking and behaviours) to be with God.

As Israel had to leave behind the evil practices of Egypt, so today believers must leave behind the evil practices of the world.

John highlights this; "*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (1 John 2:15). In the same way the ecclesia must be a place which is full of the love of God and where love for the things of the world is absent.

We are to be holy, which means to be 'separate' or 'different' from the world. So Peter tells us to live "*as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful lusts*" (1 Pet 2:11) and to live "*as strangers here in reverent fear*" (1 Pet 1:17).

The book of Corinthians describes some of the bad examples from Israel in the wilderness, which the ecclesias should avoid – idolatry, sexual immorality, testing God and complaining (1 Cor 10).

God's people cannot be holy if they live like the people in the world. We must be different from the world, putting off the works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21) and showing forth the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). If we live in this way we will be very different to the world around us.

The ecclesia is the place where spiritual fellowship occurs and the four elements of fellowship must take place there.

A Place of Teaching

The ecclesia is where the teaching of God's word takes place, not only to the brothers and sisters but also to interested friends.

God's word is good for teaching, rebuking, correcting and instructing (2 Tim 3:16). We must do this patiently and carefully; *"Preaching the word, be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction"* (2 Tim 4:2).

God's word must be correctly interpreted when we do this (2 Tim 2:15). We need to teach with all wisdom as Paul did (Col 1:28) and also ensure our manner of life is in accord with our teaching (1 Cor 4:17).

We must dedicate ourselves to reading, knowing and teaching the Scriptures. Paul said; *"Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching"* (1 Tim 4:13). So the Bible must have a central place in the affairs of the ecclesia.

Bible reading should be a feature of our meetings along with explanatory preaching and teaching eg, ecclesias read out the letters Paul wrote to them. (Col 4:16) and there is a blessing for those who read aloud and those who hear the message (Rev 1:3)

Singing hymns is another way of teaching; *"Let the word of God dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*

with gratitude in your hearts to God” (Col 3:16) and “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord” (Eph 5:19). For this to happen the words of the hymns need to conform to the apostles’ teaching.

A Place of Fellowship

The ecclesia is the place of sharing. This includes sharing the spiritual blessings of our faith and hope and the great love extended to us. It also includes practical responsibilities, such as collecting for the poor, looking after visitors, building up our brothers and sisters and running the ecclesia. It includes sharing in the sufferings and joys of God’s household, so that we *“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn” (Rom 12:15).*

The ecclesia should be a safe place where each member feels able to share their joys and burdens and receive the encouragement, care and comfort that they need.

We all have a duty to make sure that our fellow believers have a minimum of food and clothing. James makes this clear; *“Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (Jam 2:15-17).*

John makes the same point; *“If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words and tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:17-18).*

As members of the ecclesia we need to know each other well enough so that we are aware of each individual’s spiritual and material needs and can ensure that those needs are met.

Ecclesias need to pay special attention to the needs of widows and orphans as James 1:27 tells us. The importance of getting this right is shown by the setting up of a widows support group by the early disciples (Acts 6:1-6). This was the first care group and is a good example to others.

We need to remember that it is the duty of the family to help first, so that the ecclesia can concentrate on helping those without any

family. If we do not look after the members of our own family then we have denied the faith and are worse than unbelievers (1 Tim 5:8).

Having a collection is one means by which ecclesias can help other members in practical ways. The funds could then be used to help those with the greatest need. The practice of collecting one day a week is described in the ecclesia at Corinth (1 Cor 16:1, 2 Cor 8). If brothers and sisters do not have money to put in the collection they can give food, clothing, free labour, etc.

A Place to Break Bread

The ecclesia is a place where believers break bread regularly to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. The members of the ecclesia need to agree together on a regular day and time for the Breaking of Bread service. This is usually on a Sunday but can be on a different day of the week if this allows more people to attend.

The ecclesia must provide bread (or other food which is made from grain) or wine (or other liquid from the grape). The ecclesia may need to collect money to purchase wine.

A Place of Prayer

The ecclesia is a place for communal prayers (1 Tim 2:8). There are many things we can pray for such as:

- preaching (1 Thess 5:25)
- the sick (Jam 5:14)
- spiritual strength to do what is right (2 Cor 13:7)
- thanks to God (Col 1:3)
- restoration (2 Cor 13:9),
- wisdom (Jam 1:5)
- the return of Jesus

- forgiveness of sins
- many other spiritual reasons

God wants His people to keep on praying to Him and He is listening (Luke 18:1). That is why He says; "*The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective*" (Jam 5:16). There is no matter too small or too great to approach God about.

The Building of the Ecclesias

God helped the early ecclesias to develop spiritually by the provision of the Holy Spirit. There were different roles in the ecclesia. There were apostle/prophets/teachers, miracle workers and healers, helpers, administrators and speakers in tongues (1 Cor 12:28).

We do not have apostles, prophets, miracle workers or speakers in tongues today. However, this list tells us of the different activities and their importance. The most important activity was the teaching, then helping (equivalent of fellowship or sharing), and finally administration.

The teaching of God's word is the most important activity as this instructs us about everything God wants us to know; the good news of His kingdom, the name of Jesus and how to live as citizens of that kingdom now by following in Jesus' footsteps.

All three areas of activity are necessary but God gives the teaching of His word the highest priority.

Ecclesias should consider carefully how they carry out these three activities and ensure they give each the right level of time and attention:

1. Teaching
2. Helping
3. Administration

An ecclesia that focuses on Administration will be well organised but lack Scriptural focus and loving care for its members.

An ecclesia that focuses on Teaching alone will be disorganised and lack the love that its members should have for each other.

An ecclesia that focuses on Helping will be an ecclesia of love, but will lack the spiritual foundation and organisation.

An ecclesia requires all three activities in order to be the ecclesia that God is looking for.

In the list of ecclesial roles listed in Ephesians 4, the teaching roles are given the greatest importance (Eph 4:11) The purpose of these teaching roles are explained; *"to prepare God's people for the works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ"* (Eph 4:12-13).

This verse can be seen as highlighting the **purpose** of the ecclesia. We can break the list down to see this more clearly:

- To prepare God's people for service
- To build up the body of Christ (the ecclesia)
- To reach unity in faith and knowledge
- To become mature, becoming like Christ himself

By doing this, the ecclesia is able to withstand false teaching (Eph 4:14), speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15) and be built up in love (Eph 4:16). The ecclesia should be so united in Christ that it is like Christ.

The ecclesia is likened to a building in 1 Corinthians 3. The believers are like the individual bricks. The work of building is never finished because the ecclesia is never becomes fully like Christ himself.

There is always building work to do. However, the ecclesia must be careful how it builds. If it does not build correctly, then its work will not stand the test and what has been built will be destroyed (1 Cor 3:12-15).

Clearly pulling the ecclesia down is not acceptable; *"If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple"* (1 Cor 3:17). People who divide the ecclesia by selfishness are like this (Rom 16:17, Titus 3:10).

The ecclesia is also likened to a body. The ecclesial body has to be fed and strengthened. The body must grow on the milk of the word of God (1 Pet 2:2). But then it needs to progress onto solid food (1 Cor 3:2, Heb:5-12-13).

In this description, the milk is the basic teachings of the Bible. However, the ecclesia needs to grow up and take on the solid food; *"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil"* (Heb 5:14).

The ecclesia does this by learning from the Bible and moving from basic teaching on to deeper matters. By doing this we will grow to know God's word so well that it influences our behaviour in all circumstances. This means that we do not teach merely to increase knowledge but to help every member of the ecclesia learn to put that knowledge into practice in their every day life.

The book of Hebrews highlights activities which describe the work of the ecclesia (Heb 10:22-25).

The ecclesia must do all these;

1. *"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith"*
2. *"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess"*
3. *"Let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds"*
4. *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing"*
5. *"Let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching"*

The Role of Elders (Shepherds)

Today we no longer have apostles sent by God or prophets who are given revelations. Such roles were necessary for the early ecclesias when there was no Scriptural guidance. We now have the New Testament which teaches us how ecclesias are to be run. This is the work of the Elders (shepherds).

Elders were set up in the ecclesias by Paul and his fellow preachers (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5). These were overseers of the ecclesias. Scripture describes this role as like a shepherd overseeing the flock (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet 5:2-4).

We need to be very clear that this overseeing role is **not** one of being the head or of status, privilege and dominance, but rather one of **humble service** (1 Pet 5:2-3). Just as a shepherd cares for the health of the flock and spends his time watching, gently guiding, feeding and healing, so the elders **gently** guide and care for the ecclesia.

Whenever the word elder is used throughout the rest of this booklet it is understood to be talking about the caring role of a shepherd tending to the welfare of his sheep NOT the role of a boss or chief lording it over his subordinates/minions/employees. This is why we have put the word shepherds next to the word elders in the title of this section.

We are given a number of lists of the qualities that an elder should possess (1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:7-9, 1 Pet 5:1-5). These qualities were shared by the elders (shepherds) in the Old Testament (Ex 18:21-22, Deut 1:13-17).

Some of the key qualities are listed below:

- A good example to the flock
- Impartial, especially when making judgments about the right way to handle a situation
- A good knowledge of God's commands.
- Able to teach.

- Not greedy for money
- Manages his own household well
- Good reputation among outsiders
- Humility

The elders (shepherds) are not free to do as they please, because they are accountable to God. In the light of this knowledge elders should be very careful to ensure that they carry out their duties in a Christlike manner.

At many points in Israel's history, elders did not live up to God's expectations. If we look at what they did wrong as described in Ezekiel 34 we will come to a clear understanding of the true role of an elder.

The bad elders or shepherds:

- Did not strengthen the weak (v4)
- Did not heal the sick (v4)
- Did not bind up the injured (v4)
- Did not seek the lost (v4)
- Ruled harshly and brutally (v4)
- The sheep were scattered (v5-6)
- Did not protect from wild animals (v8)

An elder or shepherd **must do the opposite** of;

- He must give the ecclesia spiritual food and drink, which is the word of God (that is Bible teaching)
- He must guide gently
- He must visit the sick (and in prison, Matt 25:35)

- He must help the widow, orphan and stranger
- He must help the spiritually weak and encourage them to maintain their faith
- He must seek the lost
- He must keep the flock united
- He must protect from spiritual danger

Jesus, the good shepherd did all these things for his flock, living a life of humble service and finally giving his life for his sheep.

A role of a shepherd is a role of **service**. The shepherd continually looks after the flock. The shepherd does not primarily care for himself.

Jesus set the example of service when he washed the disciples' feet (John 13:12-17). He taught that the greatest among the disciples must be the servant and must be humble (Matt 23:11-12, Luke 22:24-27). Being an elder is **not** about being the head or the boss but about selfless devotion to the other brothers and sisters in the ecclesia.

This means that elders do not have a higher status than other members of the ecclesia. They must not have titles such as 'pastor' as is the practice of other groups (Matt 23:8-10). They must not behave like the pastors in other churches. The opinion of elders should be respected and followed by the ecclesia, **providing their opinions are biblically based** (Heb 13:7,17, 1 Thess 5:12, 1 Pet 5:5).

Elders are always brothers. Each ecclesia should have several elders with the total number dependent on the size of the ecclesia. These elders work together to nurture the flock and to share the burden of care. Having more elders ensures that more experience and understanding is available when dealing with the various matters which arise in ecclesial life. It also ensures that no single brother dominates the ecclesia.

We must always remember that the ecclesia belongs to God not man. It does not belong to the elders nor to all the members.

It is a good thing for a brother to be an elder and to shepherd the ecclesia (1 Tim 3:1). Elders must guide the ecclesia in matters which require fair spiritual judgement (Ex 18:22, Deut 1:16-17). Making the wrong decisions can cause much damage.

It is important for an ecclesia to have elders who are spiritual. Elders have a big impact on the ecclesia. If an ecclesia has elders who are Christ-like and treat the ecclesia as Christ's beloved flock, then the whole ecclesia is usually Christ-like. However, if an ecclesia has elders who are not Christ-like but act in a harsh and selfish manner then the ecclesia is often weak and many sheep are lost.

We will end this section by once again emphasising that elders are not bosses ordering other ecclesial members about and insisting on their own way. Instead they are required to be caring shepherds looking out for the wellbeing of each individual member of the ecclesia and ensuring that the ecclesia is strong, united in love and eagerly awaiting the return of Jesus. Any reference to Elders refers to this caring, shepherding role.

The Role of Servants ('deacons')

The role of 'deacons' are the roles of 'servants'. The Greek word for 'diakonos' is actually the word for 'servant'. There is much work to be done in the ecclesia, so it requires many people to serve the ecclesia.

Those who serve the ecclesia are required to have certain attributes (1 Tim 3:8-13). These are:

- Respected by others
- Holding the faith well
- Not greedy for money
- Managing their own house well

There are many ways that believers can serve the ecclesia. A strong ecclesia has many believers who actively serve the ecclesia in lots of different ways. In a weak ecclesia the believers are not willing to be servants.

Servants of the ecclesia can include sisters as well as brothers (the following are occasions where the same word for 'servant' or the verb 'serving' occur in the context of women: Rom 16:1, Matt 8:15, 27:55, Luke 8:3, 10:40, John 12:2, 1 Tim 3:11).

The Bible in the Ecclesia

The ecclesia is built on the teaching of the Bible. The Christadelphian Bible Mission (CBM) functions to promote Bible reading and teaching, as its name suggests.

Bible reading and teaching must be the foundation of ecclesial activities. Ecclesial members must be encouraged to read and learn from the Bible in their own homes. Individually, we should ensure we regularly read our Bibles in our homes. This will enable us to grow in wisdom and understanding, which will help us to live more like Christ.

Making sure every believer has a copy of 'The Bible Companion' is one way to encourage people to read their Bibles regularly. It has Bible readings set out for each day so that we can read the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice over the course of a year.

However, this is not the only way to read the Bible. The important thing is that everyone takes time to read something from the Bible every day and to meditate on what they have read.

If someone is unable to read then they can get others read to them. This is where other members of the ecclesia can help out. Spoken readings are also available on-line.

If readers or listeners have questions about the passages of the Bible, they should discuss them among themselves. If there are any questions they cannot answer or require more information about they can note them down and ask others with greater biblical insight.

The role of the elder includes helping believers understand the Bible and patiently explaining things to them. The role of the individual believer is to ensure they grow in their understanding of the Bible.

When the ecclesia comes together, it should encourage its members to live their lives in the way that Christ lived. The best way to do this is to read and learn from the Bible.

All meetings should include Bible reading. One way is to begin each meeting with a Bible reading and a Bible thought from these readings. The Breaking of Bread service should include a relevant Bible reading.

One way to encourage Bible learning in the ecclesia is to run Bible classes, where the Bible is read, taught and discussed. Classes should be designed to suit the membership of the meeting, so that it builds on the understanding it already has. If there are beginners, then beginners' classes can be run to meet their needs. The books of Genesis, James, the Gospels and Proverbs are good books to start with.

Here is a suggestion as to how a Bible class could be run:

- Hymn
- Opening Prayer
- Bible Reading (any passage)
- Bible thoughts and teaching based on the reading
- Bible discussion and questions
- Summary of what has been learned
- Hymn
- Final Prayer

This is only a suggestion. There are many other formats which can be used and the most appropriate format should be agreed by all the members.

Those who teach must be particularly careful how they live their own lives. This is because they will be judged by Christ more strictly than others (Jam 3:1).

Teaching non-believers is an important part of the work of an ecclesia. Brothers and sisters should aim to train themselves in God's word so that they can teach non-believers the basic gospel teachings in a way that they can understand. In this way they can be used by God to bring others to repentance and baptism. This will save people's lives and bring honour to God's great name.

Strong ecclesias are active in their preaching. They are also good at nurturing and encouraging both new believers and long-standing members.

The Breaking of Bread

The breaking of bread service is an essential activity for every ecclesia. In this service we follow the command of Jesus to break bread and drink wine in memory of his death and resurrection (1 Cor 11:23-25).

When we break bread, we proclaim the death of Jesus until he returns to this earth (1 Cor 11:26).

The breaking of bread service is described in Matthew (26:17-30), Mark (14:12-26), Luke (22:7-21) and 1 Corinthians (11:17-34).

Only baptised believers are permitted to break bread and drink wine.

A breaking of bread service must include;

- 1) A prayer for the bread and breaking and eating the bread,
- 2) A prayer for the wine and drinking of the wine.

There are other activities which, while not critical to include, are mentioned in the Bible and are usually added to the service:

- 1) a spiritual talk usually called an exhortation (Acts 20:7)
- 2) hymns (Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26)
- 3) a collection (1 Cor 16:1)
- 4) prayers (Acts 2:42)

Each ecclesia should decide which order of service best fits their needs. A possible service order could be:

- Hymn
- Opening Prayer (Main prayer on behalf of ecclesia and its members)

- Bible Readings
- Exhortation based on Bible teaching
- Breaking of Bread Prayer
- Breaking and eating of the Bread
- Drinking of Wine Prayer
- Drinking of Wine
- Breaking of Bread Hymn
- Ecclesial Announcements (news of members and activities)
- Collection
- Hymn
- Closing Prayer (including praying for what is in the announcements)

It is not essential to follow this order, but is only given as a suggestion to help new ecclesias consider how they might run their own service.

In the New Testament they broke bread once a week (usually on the first day of the week which is Sunday) Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2, Acts 2:42,46, Heb 10:24-25),

It is good practice to hold a breaking of bread service once a week. Indeed every brother and sister should be eager to remember Christ's death and resurrection in the bread and wine each week. The service can take place more frequently if desired and it can also take place on other days of the week.

Teaching Children

Parents are given the prime responsibility for teaching their children about God. This pattern was set in the Old Testament (Deut 6:7, Prov 22:6) where parents were instructed to teach their children both inside and outside the home.

Parents need to ensure that Bible reading, discussion and teaching regularly occurs in the home with their children present. Parents also teach their children by the way they live and therefore need to make sure they practice what they teach in their daily life.

There is a general responsibility with each generation to pass on their faith to the next generation (Ps 78:1-8). The ecclesia can take an active role in this by running a Sunday School (ages up to 16 years). They can also assist the youth by running activities for young people over 16 years.

Youth activities must include the teaching of the basic Bible beliefs, so that they are ready for baptism if they choose to do so.

All parental and ecclesial teaching to the young should provide the opportunity for them to be baptised when they are ready to commit their lives to Jesus.

Order within the Ecclesia

The ecclesia must be organised so that it maintains order. The Corinthian ecclesia was rebuked for disorganised worship where many spoke at once. They were told that people should speak one at a time (1 Cor 14:30), and that the meetings should be run "*in a fitting and orderly way*" (1 Cor 14:40). This advice was for all meetings (1 Cor 14:33 and 1:2).

Brothers are to run these meetings, pray and teach. Sisters are not permitted to teach in the ecclesia (1 Cor 14:33-35, 1 Tim 2:11-15). Sisters are not permitted to pray in the ecclesia (1 Cor 14:34-35, 1 Tim 2:11-15). It is our practice for sisters to wear a head covering during the breaking of bread service and formal meetings of the ecclesia (1 Cor 11:4-5).

To ensure that no member of an ecclesia is forgotten, it is good practice to keep a register of members. The register can also include a page/pages to record visitors. **(See Appendix 1&2)**

If a member is not present for a certain amount of time, it is a loving act to make contact with them to check that the brother or sister is well and to find out whether there is any way in which the ecclesia can help.

Just as shepherds count sheep to ensure none are missing, so the ecclesia must ensure that it does not lose its members. In particular, the ecclesia needs to ensure that widows and those in need are well and have clothing and sufficient food to eat.

The ecclesia should keep and update a list of 'lost sheep' and do their utmost to recover them. **(See Appendix 3)**

The elders (**remember this means shepherds**) have a special responsibility for the care of the ecclesia. A practical way of carrying out this responsibility is to hold regular elders meetings to discuss the spiritual and natural welfare of all the members. Actions can then be taken to ensure that these needs are met.

The elders should discuss whether the running of the ecclesia is meeting all the needs of its members.

For example, if there is a sick brother or sister who cannot get to the ecclesia, then regular visits need to be made to comfort them and provide an opportunity to break bread with them.

If a widow's house is falling down, a group from the ecclesia should go and assist with the repairs.

If youth are returning home after being away studying then the ecclesia should set up youth classes so they can continue learning about the Bible.

If only a few brothers in the ecclesia are able to exhort, then these brothers should train other brothers to assist in this activity.

Elders should call general meetings of the whole ecclesia - perhaps once a quarter - to discuss ecclesial arrangements and allow all members to be involved in the decision-making process.

The ecclesia should consider having a rota of duties for the different activities of the ecclesia. This is so that the tasks can be shared and so no member takes on too much responsibility. All members should be asked and encouraged to participate.

If there are other ecclesias nearby then an ecclesia can consider having visiting exhorting brothers sometimes.

Sisters have an important role within the ecclesia. The following are some of the ways that sisters can get involved in the ecclesia:

- Welcoming and ensuring the needs of visitors are met
- Teaching in the Sunday School
- Teaching to non-believers
- Visiting and caring for the sick and needy
- Ensuring members of the ecclesia have food and clothing.
- Singing and being in a ecclesial choir
- Keeping the register
- Teaching their own children
- Setting a good example to husbands and non-believers
- Assisting her husband in the work of the ecclesia
- Other roles of service as requested by the ecclesia
- Running a sisters class to help sisters learn the Bible
- Older sisters should teach younger sisters (Titus 2:3-4)
- If no brothers are present at a service of the ecclesia, the service should still take place and sisters can pray, exhort and lead the service

Ecclesias should ensure that all their members are encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills so that they can undertake the various tasks within the ecclesia.

Elders should train others to take on that shepherding role (2 Tim 2:2). In the same way, servants of the ecclesia should train others to do their roles. A strong ecclesia is a learning ecclesia.

When preaching, it is good practice to have two believers accompany each other on preaching activities, in the same way that Jesus sent out his preachers two at a time. When this is done, an experienced preacher should take out a less experienced preacher, so they can learn how to preach.

Finance

The ecclesia should take up a collection to collect funds for ecclesial needs. All collections are voluntary and are gifts to God. Members must remember that God loves cheerful givers (2 Cor 9:7) and that those who give generously will reap generously (2 Cor 9:6). If they sow (ie give) little, then they will reap(that is receive) little. Remember the widow who put in her two mites (Mark 12:42-43).

The following are some of the ways in which the funds could be used by the ecclesia;

- Purchasing bread and wine for the breaking of bread service
- Food and clothing for the poor
- Running preaching and youth events and Sunday School
- Maintenance of the ecclesial meeting place
- Chairs and furniture for the ecclesia

It is important that money collected is checked by two people and recorded in a book (this could be in the register). Whenever money is spent, this must also be recorded in the book. This is so that there are no arguments over money, which can be very divisive (2 Cor 8:20).

The way in which the money is used should be ideally agreed by all the ecclesia. If this is not possible, then the ecclesia should agree on how this decision is made. The ecclesia must be very careful in this matter to avoid disagreements (Acts 24:16, 1 Cor 10:32, 2 Cor 6:3).

When ecclesial funds are used this must be recorded and witnessed so that any money which is spent is known by the whole ecclesia. These records can be checked by independent brothers and sisters to ensure that money has been appropriately handled. **(See Appendix 5)**

Those chosen to handle money must be those who are not greedy for money. In fact, many roles within the ecclesia should only go to those who are not tempted by the love of money. If we love God, we should not love money as well (Matt 6:24).

Brothers and Sisters who Sin

When a brother or sister sins, it is important that sin is recognised as sin by the sinner. This is necessary if there is to be repentance by the sinner. Sin takes them away from God (Is 59:2, Ps 5:4-6). It is the duty of the ecclesia to ensure that a sinner is restored (Gal 6:1-2, Jam 5:15, 20) by bringing the sinner to repentance (2 Cor 7:10, 2 Pet 3: 9).

When we make these important judgments there must be two or three witnesses. These witnesses must be truthful witnesses and we must be impartial in our judgement (Ex 23:1-9, Deut 1:16-17).

If elders sin they can cause much damage to the ecclesia. They can give the ecclesia a bad name and bring dishonour to God. Dishonouring God's holy name is unacceptable. These people are no longer 'a good example to the flock' and so should cease from being an elder.

Some sins are regarded as so serious that consideration should be given to withdrawing fellowship from the brother or sister who is committing them. The purpose of this is not to get rid of them, but to bring them to repentance.

Examples of this are incest (1 Cor 5), brothers deliberately not working (2 Thess 3:6-15), divisive people (Titus 3:10, Rom 16:17-18) and false teachers (2 John 1:7-11, 2 Pet 2).

What is common to all these examples is that their sin can spread beyond the sinner, be copied by other brothers and sisters and totally corrupt the ecclesia. In such cases it is best not to meet together with the brother or sister concerned so that no-one else is tempted to sin in this way. The elders should ensure that the appropriate action is taken.

The ecclesia must be protected from dangerous brothers or sisters. The disciples were warned about those who come "*in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves*" (Matt 7:15) and would damage the flock. The Ephesian ecclesia was warned that this would happen to them (Acts 20:29-31).

In some passages the ecclesia is instructed to "*hand them over to satan*" (1 Cor 5:5, 1 Tim 1:20). This means to exclude them from fellowship and leave them to the ways in the world (that is natural human nature) until they repent.

The ecclesia must not give up on these sinners. They are lost sheep that must be recovered if that is possible and they have demonstrated that they have repented.

These brothers and sisters should remain on the ecclesial register under a category called 'Lost Sheep' so that they do not get forgotten. The elders should take the lead in retrieving the lost.

Matthew 18 gives a model on how to approach a sinner to bring them to repentance (Matt 18:15-17).

Firstly, this should be attempted by an individual and should be done gently, remembering that we are all tempted (Gal 6:1).

If this does not work, then two or three should try.

If this does not work, then the ecclesia should try.

If it is not possible to change the sinner, then they should be treated "*as you would a pagan or a tax collector*" (Matt 18:17). This means that fellowship with them is stopped until they repent.

Different Ecclesial Situations

When God calls someone to the faith, they are called into fellowship with their fellow believers. There may be an ecclesia near them where they can fellowship with their brothers and sisters. However, the nearest ecclesia may be a long distance away. The following sections deal with the different situations that can occur.

Living in Isolation from other brothers and sisters

A believer may live too far from an ecclesia to meet with them regularly. Where possible, they should make an attempt to travel there as frequently as they are able. They were baptised into a fellowship of believers, not into isolation. It is also harder to stand in faith when one is isolated from believers than if one is part of an ecclesia. Even occasional visits to the ecclesia is better than no visits.

The ecclesia should do what they can to keep in touch with those in isolation and visit them where possible. They should try to stay in touch by email, text, phone call or WhatsApp as available.

The isolated brother or sister should be included on an ecclesial register, usually that of the nearest ecclesia. This is often called the 'supplementary register' which is a list of believers who cannot regularly get to the ecclesia. **(See Appendix 3)** They are included in the register so they are not forgotten.

Elders of the nearest ecclesia should ensure this list is kept up to date and those in isolation are always kept in mind. If the isolated believer is not close to an ecclesia, then the area elders, the country elders or CBM Linkman should keep a list of these isolated brothers and sisters.

If a believer is isolated, then they need to stand in faith on their own. They need to read the Bible daily and learn by themselves. Where they are able to access materials such as Bible lessons, books, exhortations or talks, then this should be done.

If the believer has a wife then the husband should teach her and set an example. If the believer has a husband, then the wife should try and win them over by her behaviour (1 Pet 3:1-2).

Bible reading should be done in the home so that all the family - including any children - can learn together and prayer should also be a regular feature of their life. The believer must break bread and drink wine in memory of the death and resurrection of Jesus. They must offer a prayer of thanks for the bread and another for the wine. They can include additional items in their service as they consider appropriate.

If a believer cannot practically care for their fellow believers they can certainly pray for them. They also have a responsibility to help the needy in their family and community.

They should preach the gospel so that others lives can be saved. If God allows, others will come to the faith and the believer will no longer remain in isolation.

The small ecclesia

Where God has placed a small group of believers in the same location, they must meet together in fellowship as God's family in that place. They must come together to break bread and drink wine. They have a responsibility to help each other spiritually and care for one another.

They should encourage one another when they meet together by reading and discussing the Bible. Ideally this is in addition to the breaking of bread. They can help one another by preaching together to others.

The believers must continue to read the Bible and pray in their homes, in addition to doing this when they meet together. They must continue to teach their wives and children in their homes and for wives to try and win their husbands by their godly behaviour.

A small ecclesia has limited capability to run meetings and events. If the Lord wills, their preaching and teaching will enable others to come to the faith and the ecclesia will grow.

The ecclesia should adapt its activities so that it best meets the needs of its members. If it can concentrate on preaching then this is the best way to grow.

A small ecclesia is able to meet in homes and has the advantage of its members being a close-knit family. It is better able to understand the needs of all its members and to care for them individually.

A collection should be made to cover essential expenses and they should keep a register.

The larger ecclesia

The main difference between a small ecclesia and a large ecclesia is that a large ecclesia can be more active. As it has more brothers and sisters with more capabilities, so that it is easier to run more activities. The larger numbers will allow the sharing out of the tasks so that individuals are not over burdened.

With more members there are more spiritual and other needs. The need for a register is particularly important because of the difficulty of keeping track of all the members. The collection becomes more important because of the many activities to be supported.

The larger ecclesia will often have outgrown the ability to meet in a home and will need to find alternative accommodation.

The larger ecclesia will have the following activities:

- A breaking of bread service
- A meeting to read and learn about the Bible (Bible class)
- A Sunday School
- Youth activities
- Regular preaching activities
- Classes for non-baptised to learn the faith
- Elders (shepherds) meetings
- Ecclesial meetings to discuss ecclesial arrangements
- Visits to the needy
- Getting together to repair and maintain the meeting place

Many of these ecclesial activities can be considered as spiritual training and development for its members.

The breaking of bread service helps us to re-focus our eyes on Jesus so that we can follow more closely in his footsteps.

Bible classes trains us to become familiar with all aspects of the Bible and the overriding need to put what we learn into practice.

Sunday School and Youth activities train the young in God's ways.

Preaching activities and classes for the non-baptised train us all in the basic teachings of the Bible.

A larger ecclesia helps its membership to develop spiritually by providing many opportunities to work together and support each other.

A larger ecclesia has the benefit of a greater number of elders. These have oversight and responsibility for the spiritual development of the ecclesia. As shepherds they work together to ensure the flock is healthy and united.

The members of the ecclesia are able to go to the elders for spiritual advice and guidance.

There is a suggestion as to how a larger ecclesia might run its weekly programme in **Appendix 6**.

If the ecclesia grows further it can consider having some of the following activities:

- More frequent visits to the needy
- Sisters classes
- Additional events for the youth and Sunday School
- Training classes for speakers
- Training of elders
- Prayer meetings
- Preaching visits to nearby areas

The ecclesia must be adaptable to change. If numbers increase, it can do more. If numbers decrease it should consider doing less.

Without change, the ecclesia will not be functioning in the best way for the spiritual benefit of its membership.

If numbers increase without change, then large ecclesias may become weak by only running a breaking of bread service and neglecting many of the activities of which they are capable. They will not train other members carry out the varied ecclesial duties and will mean that the same people are performing all the duties. This can lead to those doing the duties becoming overwhelmed or assuming that they are now in control.

There will also be many members who are doing nothing and become lazy. This does not help all members of the ecclesia to grow in love for one another and become more like Christ.

If numbers decrease without change, then those performing the duties work harder until they become overburdened and keeping the ecclesia going becomes unsustainable.

The elders of the ecclesia should be reviewing the ecclesia needs on a regular basis and promoting the right change for the spirituality of its members.

Where the ecclesial elders believe that change is required, they should call the ecclesia together to discuss the situation so that ecclesial arrangements going forward can be mutually agreed.

An alternative to growing the ecclesia is to establish another ecclesia in a new area. This should be considered if there is a group of capable members who live close to one another in a different location.

Groups of Ecclesias

There are advantages in grouping ecclesias into areas within a country. This was done in Bible times when God established the twelve tribes. Each tribe had their own area and made decisions for their area. Each tribe had its own elders (shepherds) representing them (Deut 5:23, 31:28).

The CBM sets up areas within countries when there are a sufficient number of ecclesias in an area. This is done by the ecclesias appointing experienced elders from the area to represent them and serve them. If an ecclesia in an area has difficulties and needs help, then Area elders are able to support that ecclesia.

The Area elders must keep a list of ecclesias and of those believers who are in isolation within the area who are not being looked after by any ecclesia.

They should ensure that when one member moves to another area that they are transferred to another ecclesia. They do this by letting the traveller and the new ecclesia know about each other. The giving and receiving ecclesias must then update their own ecclesial register.

Area elders (shepherds) meetings are held and written up as 'Minutes' and distributed to the individual ecclesias in the area and to the Linkman.

Where there are a number of Areas within a country, then the area elders will come together for country meetings (sometimes called an 'Annual General Meeting' or AGM. Some countries run an equivalent meeting called a Council Meeting. This allows the transfer of information and joint decision making and helps with any NGO registration within a country.

The role of area elders and country elders is, like the role of the ecclesial elders, one of service.

Area and country elders also fulfil the role of a shepherd caring for their flock. It is not the role of head man or chief and humility is a key quality of the people taking on this role.

Just as an ecclesial elder is accountable to God for the affairs of the ecclesia, so area and county elders are accountable to God for the affairs of their area and country.

CBM Linkman

The Christadelphian Bible Mission (CBM) exists to promote the understanding of Bible truth throughout the world. It seeks to spread the gospel message to as many as possible so that their lives can be saved. In this way, people across the world will give glory to God.

CBM works in many different countries and as God gives the increase it appoints Linkmen to work with believers in those countries.

The Linkman, like every elder, is a shepherd who serves the flock in the country which he works with. He is accountable to God for the affairs of that country.

The following are typical ways that the Linkman works with a country:

- Encouraging preaching (eg through correspondence and other means)
- Promoting Bible reading and the provision of Bibles
- Providing spiritual guidance
- Promoting the support of widows and needy
- Providing spiritual materials to help preach and grow spiritual understanding

- Promoting translations into local languages
- Promoting praise to God through hymn books and other means
- Undertaking visits to facilitate these activities
- Providing a communication route for issues and concerns
- Providing disaster support (famine, locusts, flooding, etc)
- Promoting the establishment of ecclesias and Areas
- Promoting training and development within country so that they become independent
- Training elders (shepherds) within country
- Supporting Christadelphian projects within country
- Promoting NGO registration as required
- Training other potential linkmen

The CBM works in partnership with countries to support their spiritual growth.

In a number of countries, in order for CBM to be registered as an NGO, the CBM within the country is required to have a constitution. This should be drawn up in conjunction with the requirements of the country with the help of example constitutions in use in other countries.

A final message

The ecclesia is made up of a group of people who meet together regularly and devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

The ecclesia is made up of the people in it. In fact, the people **are** the ecclesia.

This means that every member of the ecclesia, every brother and sister in the ecclesia is important.

This means that the spirituality and faith of the ecclesia is dependent on the members.

This means that **you** are important to the spirituality and faith of your ecclesia.

If you are an elder, you have an even larger impact on your ecclesia. The way you behave and the guidance you give will have a great impact on what others do and how the ecclesia runs. It is very important that you possess the qualities an elder is required to have and that you continually develop these qualities.

We have said that the ecclesia is the people. This does not mean the ecclesia is ours to do as we please. The ecclesia belongs to God and He has given us clear guidance on how He wishes each ecclesia to behave.

God has designed the ecclesia as the best way for believers to live the Christian life. He has called every member of your ecclesia so that you can work together in love to His honour and glory. By living in community we are shaped and transformed to become more and more like Christ.

An ecclesia needs to be nourished by God's word, full of love for one another and able to carry out its various activities in an appropriate manner in order to meet God's requirements.

We all have a responsibility to ensure that our ecclesia is a place of unity, faith, hope and love. If we do this it will also be a place of encouragement, joy and peace - a place of true refreshment.

An ecclesia like this will be pleasing to God and bring glory to His name.

You must play your part in making sure that your ecclesia is this positive spiritual place. You do this by growing into Christ and demonstrating the qualities that the Apostle Paul exhorts us all to display in Colossians 3:12-14.

'Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.'

If we all behave in this way then our ecclesia will be a real haven from the world - a positive spiritual place.

If our ecclesias are like this then these words written to the Thessalonian ecclesia could also be written to us:

"We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 1:3)

Dear brother, dear sister, may God be with you as you endeavour to grow into Christ and live in harmony with your fellow brothers and sisters in your ecclesia, your area and your country.

We finish with the words of Hebrews 10:24-25 which summarise God's message to us on how to ensure our ecclesia is the spiritual place He designed it to be.

***"Let us consider how we may spur one another
on towards love and good deeds.
Let us not give up meeting together, as some are
in the habit of doing, but
let us encourage one another –
and all the more as you see the Day approaching"***

APPENDIX 1

ECCLESIAL REGISTER - MEMBERS ATTENDANCE RECORD

DATES: eg Jan/Feb 2021 (depending how many weeks you can fit to a page in the register)

KEY: Present ✓ Absent X At another ecclesia 0

| Name of Bro/Sis | 05/ 01 | 12/ 01 | 19/ 01 | 26/ 01 | 02/ 02 | 09/ 02 | 16/ 02 | 23/ 02 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Sis Bbbbbbb M | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | 0 |
| Bro Mmmmm Z | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | X | ✓ |
| Bro Aaaaaa W | 0 | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Sis Rrrrrrrr F | X | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | ✓ |
| Sis Jjjjjjj O | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bro Uuuuuuuuu L | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX 2

ECCLESIAL REGISTER - VISITORS TO THE ECCLESIA

| Date | Name of Bro/Sis | From | Contact Details |
|------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|
| 18/05/2020 | Sis Gggggg L | Pader | 0785 333333 |
| 19/07/2020 | Bro Wwww E | Lira | 0785 222222 |
| 25/09/2020 | Bro Uuuuuu C | Oyam | 0793 555555 |
| 01/11/2020 | Bro Dddddd A | Kitgum | 0786 000000 |
| 01/11/2020 | Bro Hhhh F | Kitgum | 0765 999999 |
| | | | |
| | | | |

APPENDIX 3

ECCLESIAL REGISTER - Lost Sheep

| Name | Date last seen | Contact Details | Other Notes |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sis Cccccc A | 15/04/19 | 0782 666666 | Gone to parents |
| Bro Mmmm P | 17/11/18 | Not known | Brother to sis Florence G |
| Bro Ppppp J | 10/03/13 | 0790 444444 | Moved to Zzzzzz |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

APPENDIX 4

ECCLESIAL REGISTER - Brothers & Sisters in Isolation

| Name | Location | Contact Details | Last seen/ visited |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bro Ww L | Place 1 | 0785 111111 | Mar 20 (V) |
| Bro Ssss R | Place 2 | 0792 333333 | Dec 19 (V) |
| Sis Nnnn C | Place 3 | 0736 777777 | Apr 20 (S) |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

APPENDIX 6

Possible weekly ecclesial programme for a large ecclesia

| Activity | When | Comments |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Sunday School | Sunday 9am | Have rota for teachers and syllabus for classes |
| Breaking of Bread | Sunday 10.30am | Ensure bread & wine is available Have rota for presiding & exhorting so the duties are shared |
| Preaching to unbelievers | Sunday 2pm | Preachers must ensure they know the Scriptures they are preaching |
| Visiting sick or those not seen on Sunday | Monday during day | This could be visiting in pairs. |
| Bible Class | Weds evening | Have a rota so that duties are shared |
| Youth activity | Friday evening | Includes games and Bible Time |
| Elders meeting | Friday evening | Once a month |
| Family event | Saturday afternoon | Meet to informally sing, pray, read, talk, play games, put on a short Bible play, etc. Clean/do small maintenance jobs on the hall. |

NB: REMEMBER TO HOLD AN ECCLESIAL MEETING AT LEAST EVERY 6 MONTHS - IF POSSIBLE EVERY QUARTER TO ENSURE THAT ALL MEMBERS ARE AWARE OF WHAT IS GOING ON

APPENDIX 7

Possible way CBM might organise a country

| Ecclesias | Areas | Country | Linkman |
|---|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Ecclesia 1 Ecclesia 2 Ecclesia 3 Ecclesia 4 Ecclesia 5 Ecclesia 6 | Area 1 Elders | | |
| Ecclesia 7 Ecclesia 8 Ecclesia 9 Ecclesia 10 Ecclesia 11 Ecclesia 12 Ecclesia 13 Ecclesia 14 | Area 2 Elders | Country Elders | Country Linkman |
| Ecclesia 15 Ecclesia 15 Ecclesia 17 Ecclesia 18 Ecclesia 19 Ecclesia 20 Ecclesia 21 | Area 3 Elders | | |

**Love is patient, love is kind. It
does not envy, it does not boast,
it is not proud.**

**It does not dishonour others,
it is not self-seeking, it is not
easily angered, it keeps no
record of wrongs.**

**Love does not delight in evil but
rejoices with the truth.**

**It always protects,
always trusts, always hopes,
always perseveres.**

Love never fails

1 Cor 13:4-8



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