

Home Church Leaders Course Contents

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Home Church Leaders Course

1. The Home, the Foundation of the New Testament Church

• Introduction

“So, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” - Act 2:46

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus Christ.” - Act 5:42

The western church has long ago forgotten the importance of the home as the vehicle that the Lord chose to establish and build His Church. The home has always been central to the spreading of the gospel and the building up of the church through teaching and discipleship.

It was in an upper room of a home that Jesus taught on and instituted the principles and ordinances of the New Covenant (**John Chapters 13-17**). It was again in an upper room of a home that the 120 disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and the Church began in earnest (**Acts 2:1-4**). It was in the home of Cornelius the Roman centurion that the gospel was first preached to the gentiles (**Acts chapter 10**). When Peter had been arrested for preaching the gospel, the believers met in the home of Mary the mother of John to pray for his release (**Acts 12:5-12**).

For the first four hundred years of the Churches existence, believers almost always assembled in private homes. The Bible only records one exception to this norm (**Acts 19:9-10**).

From the epistles of Paul we learn that the Church grew in the homes of believers. The Bible records these home churches by name as a testament to His purpose;

- *“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers, ... Likewise greet the church that is in their house.” – Romans 16:3-5*

- *“The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.”
- 1 Corinthians 16:19*

- *“Greet the brothers who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church in his house.” – Colossians 4:15*

“So we, being many are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” – **Romans 12:5**

*And He is the Head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” - **Colossians 1:18***

The Church is made up of every soul who has been born again through God given repentance (**Romans 2:4**) and faith in Jesus (**Romans 5:1-2**) by the Holy Spirit (**John 3:3-8**). Every soul desires to worship the Lord and give Him praise and thanks-giving for their salvation (**Philippians 3:3**) Each soul cannot be independent or exist in isolation to the rest of the Church which is the Body of the Lord Jesus. We are all dependent on each other (**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**) and the Lord requires us to live in community with other believers (**Acts 4:32**) and in so doing we express the character of the Church, the Body of the Lord Jesus.

We the Church have been instructed by the Lord to;

1. Abide in Him (**John 15:1-8**)
2. Worship the Father and the Son (**John 4:23-24; 1 Peter 2:5**)
3. Preach the Gospel (**Mark 16:15**)
4. Make disciples of all nations through teaching (**Matthew 28:18-20**)
5. Love one another as Jesus has loved us (**John 13:34-35**)
6. Pray for, exhort and support one another (**Romans 12:9-16**)
7. Pray for the Lord’s will to be done (**Matthew 6:9-10**)
8. Provide for the widows (**1 Timothy 5:3-16**)
9. Care for the orphans and the poor (**James 1:27**)
10. Give to the poor (**James 2:15-16; Galatians 2:1**)
11. Feed and tend the sheep of God (**John 21:15-17**)

The question we need to ask is can we comply with these instructions through our Sunday worship services? Is it possible for a pastor to effectively shepherd the souls in a church without the assistance of the laity? Is the Sunday worship service the correct vehicle to feed the poor, exhort one another, build strong Christian relationships or make disciples?

• Expressing the ministry of the Church through Home Church.

We can conclude that the Sunday Worship Service is inadequate in fulfilling the biblical requirements and institutions of the Church. In contrast to Sunday Service, Home Church is ideal for meeting these institutions and requirements. Let us examine how.

1. Discipleship

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

(KJV)

The Great Commission (**Matthew 28:18-20**) is to make disciples

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and not converts. Many have been converted to Christ through evangelism but very few of that number have become disciples. A disciple is a convert who is under instruction. True discipleship must be interactive. The disciple must be allowed and encouraged to ask questions concerning his faith. He must be disciplined in an environment that allows this interaction. The disciples spiritual progress must be assessed from time to time which cannot be done on a Sunday but can be done through questions and answers in a relaxed environment such as a home.

“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” - Philipians 4:9

“Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.” – 1 Corinthians 11:1

Discipleship is caught and not taught i.e. Christians need role models who are more mature in the Lord so that they can learn from them how to pray, worship, study, witness and conduct themselves, to name just a few areas. Home Church allows young Christians to draw close to other mature believers and to develop close, meaningful relationships which are unlikely to form in any other environment.

2. Worship

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” – John 4:23

“Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for its pleasant, and praise is beautiful.” – Psalm 147:1

Sunday service is made up of believers, enquirers, those doing “their duty” and those forced to be in Church by parents or spouses (unfortunately). But Home Church is for those who want to worship the Lord, be part of His Body and grow in Him. Therefore the Home Church is not restricted in their worship by those not wanting to participate and as a result, the Holy Spirit is able to move freely and in power. Worship becomes unrestricted and free, touching the very heart of the Father. If you decide to spend the time in worship only, no one will be offended, unlike a Sunday service.

3. Preaching the Gospel

“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” –

1 Timothy 4:16

The greatest witnessing tool that we have, is our conduct. (*Who you are speaks so loudly that people cannot always hear what you are saying.*) When unbelievers observe the consistent conduct of Christians in an informal environment they are more open to hearing the gospel. Through prayer, the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the believers conduct in the Home Church, unbelievers will be moved more readily to receive the gospel.

4. Love one another

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” – John 13:34-35

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Leaders are taught to wait on the Lord and seek Him for His will for the meetings. Material is only given should it be requested by the Home Church leader. Programs are never encouraged.

The Holy Spirit is encouraged to guide the evening into what ever He wants to do.

Home Church leaders are not given reports and administration to do. They are appointed because they are mature believers who are able to take on the responsibility of looking after other Christians. Only if they feel unable to handle a particular situation will they call for the elders of the church to assist.

In conclusion Cell Church does not build strong leaders who shepherd strong and growing Christians. It is program driven, restricting the Holy Spirit and often insipid merely babysitting believers until the next Sunday service where the Elders can sow into them again.

4. What are the Qualifications of a Home Church Leader

- **Mature Christian**

Romans 12:1-18 (Read)

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul lists the attitudes and the attributes of a mature Christian. It is these attitudes and attributes that anyone desiring any form of spiritual service should display. It is interesting to note that these are not the qualifications for elders but for the laity.

Let us examine some of these attitudes and attributes more closely.

- **Calling**

“But now God has set the members, each one of them in the body, just He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be?” – 1 Corinthians 12:18-19

As with any spiritual service, we do not choose where we want to be used. It is God who places us in the ministry He has called us to. You will be prompted, in your spirit, by the Holy Spirit to become a Home Church Leader. If it sounds like a good idea but there is no leading in your spirit, it is either not the right time or it is not in Gods will for you. Do not be disheartened, there are many other areas of service where the Lord is wanting to use you.

- **Servanthood**

Matthew 20:25-28 (Read)

The word leadership is foreign to the New Testament vocabulary. The Church is made up of servants not leaders. The Church does not require leadership training but rather servanthood training. Anyone who wants to occupy an office of ministry must be a servant. If we are unwilling to serve the least in the Church we are not qualified for Home Church Leadership. Home Church Leaders must be servants. *“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” - John 13:14-15 (KJV)*

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• **Be able to teach**

“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men (anthropos), who shall be able to teach others also.” - **2 Timothy 2:2**

Home Church leaders must be able to teach the Word of God. They must have a sound understanding of the foundational teachings of Christianity and be anointed of God to share these with others.

At the same time they must take heed of the warning from **James 3:1**, that teachers will receive a stricter judgement from God. In light of the above they must be mature enough not to teach on those things that they are not sure of.

Anyone who feels called into the full time ministry should first be a Home Church leader for a season of testing and training before he is released.

• **Hospitable**

“Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.” – **1 Peter 4:9**

The single most important attribute that the Home Church leader requires is that of hospitality. Hospitality is not a spiritual gift but an attitude of heart. People must be made to feel welcome in your home and not feel as though they are imposing on you and your family. People thrive in an atmosphere of love and acceptance. The Home Church leader must be able to create that atmosphere in his home.

• **Shepherd**

“...Jesus said to him, “Feed My lambs...Tend My sheep...Feed My sheep...” – **John 21:15-18**

A Home Church leader must have a shepherds heart. Every Christian is called to love the brethren but we do not all have the heart of the shepherd. The shepherd is willing to go after the backslider, be patient with difficult brethren and be willing to go out of his way to be of service to the Body. The heart of a shepherd is the greatest attribute of a Home Church leader.

• **Communion**

“So, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” - **Act 2:46**

Read **1 Corinthians 11:17-32**

Communion is the most misunderstood institution of the Church. It is a covenant reminder that allows us to examine our standing in Christ on a daily basis whilst worshipfully remembering His wonderful salvation. Instead of it becoming a habit it should be looked forward to regularly as an act of worship.

The early Church took communion on a very regular basis. In fact the bible implies that they observed communion every time they met. I personally believe that we should partake of communion on a regular basis. This is just not possible to do it properly on a Sunday because we have unbelievers with us who are not permitted to partake (**1Corinthians 11:27-30**). Added to this is that the logistics of having communion in the Home are much simpler than at “Sunday

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