

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Today's topic is: A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM EPHESIANS 4-6.

(S) **SHARING FROM EPHESIANS 4 – 6**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Ephesians 4 - 6. Now we will use our notes to share from each chapter and discuss some difficult passages.

Sharing quiet times from Ephesians chapter 4.

We want to share from Ephesians 4:1-16 about **the six goals of the Christian Church**.

In Ephesians 4:1-16 the emphasis is on maintaining the unity of the Church with a great diversity.

First goal. The Christian Church should live out the Christian life.

Ephesians 4:1-3 says, "Live a life worthy of the calling you have received." The life which is worthy of God's calling is characterised by the following seven virtues: humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, love, unity and peace. The Christian church should help Christians to live out these seven virtues among their family, friends and society.

Second goal. The Christian Church should maintain the unity of the Church.

The unity of the Church is described in Ephesians 4:4-6 through seven words of unity, which are arranged in three groups as follows.

One. There is "one body, one Spirit, one hope". The Church is the one Body of Jesus Christ, indwelt by one Holy Spirit, who guarantees one wonderful future, which all Christians will share.

Two. There is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism". The Church has one Lord Jesus Christ, in whom Christians believe and in whose name they have been baptised.

Three. There is "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all". The Church has one God, who is the Father of all who believe in Christ. He exercises control over all these Christians, works out his plan through Jesus Christ and dwells in all of them through the Holy Spirit. The unity of the Christian Church arises from the unity of God. The unity of the Church is demonstrated by Christians all over the world, because they worship the same God of the Bible, they have the same Saviour of their sins, they have the same Holy Spirit, who dwells in them, and they have the same faith, the same love and the same hope!

Third goal. The Christian Church should give room in their midst for diversity.

In Ephesians 4:7-11, the emphasis is on the diversity of the Church. Christ gave *grace to each Christian* (7)! This grace consists of grace that saves, grace that builds and grace that equips. Christ gives *grace that saves* to each Christian so that they may belong to the Body of Christ. The grace that saves consists of rebirth and faith that believes the gospel (2:8). Christ gives *grace that builds* to each Christian so that they may grow and bear fruit. The grace that builds consists of the fruit of the Spirit and things like comfort, encouragement and strength. He also gives *grace that equips* to very many Christians so that they may serve in and outside the Body of Christ. The grace that equips consists of people with a great variety of spiritual gifts. Just as the human body consists of very many different parts, so the Body of Christ, the Christian Church, consists of many different Christians. The diversity in the Church consists of a diversity of spiritual gifts, a diversity of services and a diversity of ways in which God calls and uses his people (1 Cor 12:4-7). All this great diversity of Christ's grace is needed to build up the Church (11-12).

There is a great diversity of gifts of the Spirit among the members of the one Body. The list in verse 11 is not intended to be complete. Other spiritual gifts are mentioned in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28-30. This diversity of Christ's grace in the Body of Christ promotes the unity of the Body, because every member uses what he has received to serve others and he needs the services of others himself.

(T) Fourth goal. The Christian Church should build up the relationships among Christians.

In Ephesians 4:12-13, the emphasis is on *the unity in the relationships in the Church*. Every Christian should be engaged in building relationships and fulfil his so-called "one another responsibilities" to others. For example, Christians should carry one another's burdens, encourage one another, teach and admonish one another, etc.

The unity of our Christian relationships is not based on organisation, but on inward faith and knowledge. All genuine Christians have the same *Christian faith*, that is, we all believe in the same truth. All genuine Christians know Christ

personally and fellowship with him. Thus, the relationships among the Christians should be based on knowing and fellowshiping with Jesus Christ, on the teachings of the Bible and on doing what the Bible says.

Fifth goal. The Christian Church should disciple the new Christians to maturity in Christ.

In Ephesians 4:13-14, the emphasis is on *the maturity of Christians in the Church*. It says, "Until we all ... become mature ... to the measure of the fullness of Christ." The way to help Christians to grow to maturity is to make them disciples of Jesus Christ. Especially mature Christians should help the young Christians to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, to develop Christian attitudes, habits and character, and to practise what they learn. The measure of Christian maturity is Christlikeness. Ephesians 4:14-15 teaches that some visible results of Christian maturity are *stability* in the teachings of the Bible, *truth* in beliefs, words and deeds, and *love* in all relationships.

Sixth goal. The Christian Church should equip all Christians to some work of service.

In Ephesians 4:11-12, the emphasis is on *the equipping of Christians to works of service*. Especially those Christians who have spiritual gifts of equipping others should equip the other Christians to do at least one task within the Church. Some of them may be leaders in the Church and others may be gifted trainers. Ephesians 4:11-12 says that people like missionaries, preachers, evangelists, pastors and teachers should prepare or equip God's people for works of service. The Christians are equipped to do the many different kinds of services in the local church as well as in the Church world-wide. Christians are equipped to do evangelism, make disciples, to preach, to teach, to counsel, to serve, to give, to care, etc. No member of the Christian Church should just passively attend Church. The goal should be to equip every member in the Church to do at least one service, no matter how small it may be. Every member should eventually function in the task that Christ has assigned to him (Mk 13:34). Equipping every Christian can make the Christian Church a very influential group of people on earth! In this way, they can be involved in telling everyone in the world about Jesus Christ. They can be involved in building up healthy families and societies. They can make a positive contribution to schools and hospitals. They can give the world good books and newspapers to read. Every Christian can be God's instrument in the establishment of God's kingdom, that is, God's sovereign rule in the hearts and lives of people on earth!

Sharing quiet times from Ephesians chapter 5.

(S) We want to share from Ephesians 5:22-33 about marriage.

First. Marriage is God's idea and institution.

Marriage is not simply a culturally determined institution. It is a part of God's teachings how human beings *should* behave with respect to marriage in all human cultures and in every age! Paul's teaching about the married person's responsibilities in Ephesians 5:22-33 is God's teaching how married people *should* behave towards one another! Because these teachings are not limited anywhere in the Bible, *they are normative everywhere in the world and for every period of human history!*

In Genesis 1 and 2, God sees man's need for a life partner and he took the initiative to create a woman for man. God also took the initiative to institute the marriage relationship. Already *before* the man and woman fell into sin, God established the marriage relationship as a relationship involving three important aspects. The man and the woman must leave their parents; their relationship of unity may only be between *one* man and *one* woman; and their relationship of sex may only be inside their marriage. But also *after* the man and the woman fell into sin, God maintained this marriage institution. Both the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19 and the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5 repeat God's marriage institution as an institution that must continue on earth in every culture and in every age. Although through the years cultures in the world have changed God marriage institution, God still calls all people and all cultures to return to his original marriage institution!

Second. Marriage is monogamous.

Although we read about important people in the Old Testament who had more than one wife, the Bible clearly teaches that this practice was against God's institution of marriage in the beginning. Polygamy in the Old Testament only caused problems like jealousy, discrimination and idolatry. God never changed his original plan. In Ephesians 5:31 we read that "a man should be united to *his wife*". God does not say *his wives* in the plural! Jesus repeats this command and says in Matthew 19:5 that "the *two* will become one flesh". He excludes all other people from the unity of the marriage relationship, especially from the sexual unity of the marriage relationship. God forbids having more than one wife (polygamy). He forbids having a concubine. He forbids adultery. And he forbids flirting with any other woman.

Third. Marriage is a relationship that should be established publicly.

The three indispensable elements of marriage are: to publicly leave your parents, to be united to one another and to become one flesh. A couple prepares to leave their parents by announcing their plan to get married and by preparing for the marriage ceremony. At their marriage ceremony, they should actually leave the authority of their parents, they should leave their emotional and financial dependence on their parents, and if possible they should leave their parents to live in their own room or house somewhere else. At the marriage ceremony, the families, the Christian brothers and

sisters and other friends witness that these two people promise publicly to be married to one another for their whole life, to love one another, to be faithful to one another and to help one another in their whole life.

(T) Fourth. A Christian marriage is a proclamation of Christ to the world.

A Christian marriage is a visible demonstration of the relationship between Jesus Christ and his Church. When people in the world observe a good Christian marriage, they learn more and more about Jesus Christ and the people of Jesus Christ. They not only hear about God's love for them, they see it illustrated in the marriage relationship. They not only hear about the joy of a growing relationship with the living God, they see an example of such joy in the marriage relationship. They not only hear about submission to Jesus Christ, they see such submission visibly modelled in the marriage relationship, etc. The marriage relationship is a powerful witness to the reality and attraction of a relationship with Jesus Christ! Every Christian marriage can become a missionary endeavour, especially when the Christian home is open and people can "come and see" (Jn 1:39) how that Christian family functions.

Fifth. A Christian marriage has definite responsibilities.

God created the man and the woman and he also instituted the marriage relationship. Therefore, God also has the right to determine the responsibilities of the husband and the wife towards one another. He knows how his creatures function the best. Only when a husband and wife obey these God-given responsibilities, can they have a wonderful marriage.

God gives to both the husband and wife authority and responsibility, namely, to serve one another. But God has created the husband and the wife differently and has demanded that they express their God-given authority and responsibility in serving one another in different ways. He desires that the husband expresses his service by especially taking the initiative in the relationship. And he desires that the wife expresses her service by especially inviting her husband into a warm and strong relationship.

(S) I want to share about the God-given responsibilities of the Christian husband towards his wife.

First. The Christian husband must serve his wife by loving her.

To love his wife is to love her as Jesus Christ loves his people, the Church. To love her is to show unselfish interest in her, to wholeheartedly accept her and to help her to become her best. Love is the greatest unselfishness and the greatest not self-centredness thinkable. Love is self-sacrificial service. Love is to treat her with care and respect. Love is to faithfully live together with her for better or for worse and in health or in sickness.

Love is beautifully expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Love that is patient is the love that does not enforce itself on the other, but can wait. Love that is kind is the love that helps and that does not let a chance go by to do her good. Love that is not jealous is the love that generously gives her appreciation, credit and honour where she deserves it. Love that does not boast is the love that is modest about its own merits and accomplishments and does not try to impress her. Love that is not proud is the love that is humble about its own strengths and weaknesses in the relationship to her. Love that does not behave rudely is the love that shows good manners and tact towards her. Love that is not self-seeking is the love that unselfishly seeks her interests above its own. Love that is not easily angered is the love that meekly submits to the injury and hurts she sometimes may cause.

Second. The Christian husband must serve his wife by leading her.

To lead his wife is to lead her like Christ leads the Church. The husband should lead her like a shepherd leads his sheep: he should feed her, care for her, protect her and carry her through difficulties. The husband should lead her like a steward manages a great house or estate: he should take good care of her possessions, activities and interests, and guide her in God's ways. A husband should lead her like a servant: he should serve her especially in the areas where she needs him most.

(T) I want to share about the God-given responsibilities of the Christian wife towards the husband.

First. The Christian wife must serve her husband by loving him.

The Bible teaches that the Christian wife should dedicate herself to love her husband and her children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God (Tit 2:4-5). Love is to faithfully live together with him for better or for worse and in health or in sickness.

Second. The Christian wife must serve her husband by helping him.

The Bible teaches the Christian wife to submit to her husband (Eph 5:22-24; 1 Pet 3:1-6) and to respect her husband (Eph 5:33). She serves her husband by submitting to his leadership and by respecting his leadership.

To submit does not mean to submit to him like a slave, but to submit to him like a helper (cf. Gen 2:18). It is to voluntarily follow him by being the best possible team member of her husband's team. As a member of his team, she gives him every possible input, suggestions, ideas, help, support, etc. that she can possibly give. She discusses all important matters concerning their personal lives, their marriage, their family and their society with him. She makes

good decisions and choices together with him and discusses the consequences of their decisions. Only in the last resort, if there cannot be reasonable agreement between them, she should allow him to make the final decision and to be responsible for the consequences of his decision. Her submission is limited to what God requires of her and when a husband demands submission to what is wrong, she may gently resist him (cf. Acts 5:29).

To *respect* her husband is to state her point of view in a gentle way and then allow God to work it out in his own way. It is to carefully consider the husband's advice. It is to involve him in the making of her plans and to communicate the progress she is making. It is to voluntarily take the initiative to serve him without waiting for him to ask her. It is to patiently listen to him and to try to understand his problems and points of view.

When a man loves and leads his wife as Christ loves and leads his Church, it will not be difficult for his wife to respect him or to submit to his leadership in the family. The best place where children learn what love and respect and what leadership and submission really means is to observe the relationship of their Christian parents every day.

Sharing quiet times from Ephesians chapter 6.

(S) I want to share from Ephesians 6:1-4 about **the Christian family**. Ephesians 6:1 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." This means that *children* should *obey* their parents, not because their parents are Christians, but because they themselves are Christians. They should obey them, even when their parents are not considerate and not fair. They should obey them as long as they are 'children', that is, until they are 'adults', leave their parents or get married.

Ephesians 6:4 says, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children." Parents have the duty to *encourage* their children. This passage is also written in Colossians 3:21, "Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged." Although parents and children are not perfect, parents should not upset their children by breaking their spirit. They should continually encourage them.

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Divide Philippians 1-4 into seven passages. Every day have a quiet time from one passage. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share from your quiet times.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and build Christ's Church" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".