

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST



2019

BIBLE STUDY AND HOME CELL GUIDE

*Compiled by
National Discipleship & Leadership Development Committee*

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FOREWORD

The **Five-Year Vision** of The Church of Pentecost for the period 2018-2023, is 'Possessing the Nations: Equipping the Church to Transform Every Sphere of Society with Kingdom Values and Principles'. From this, the sub-theme carved for this year, **2019** is '*I Will Build My Church*' (Matt 16: 18).

It is important to note that guidance into understanding scripture and the vision of the Church is very essential. This comes out clearly in the narrative of Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch who, though deeply engrossed in reading of the Scriptures had very little or no understanding of the subject of the passage. But after Philip had guided him through the scripture, the Eunuch took a personal decision, without any form of coercion, to be baptised in water (Ac 8:29-36). This scenario strongly attests to the fact that guidance into understanding is a key factor to appreciate the word of God for what it is, obey and apply it to daily life. Thus, one of the ways that help us to understand Scripture and apply it to contemporary issues is by discussing it, guided by relevant questions and a facilitator.

Essentially, what the National Discipleship and Leadership Development Committee (NDLDC) has done this year in keeping abreast of previous practice, is to build bridges between the Word of God, the theme for the year and contemporary issues that require the

voice of the Church. Thus, you will find some practical issues on the thematic areas of the Five-Year Vision and theme for this year, which are systematically and comprehensively dealt with in the pages of this Bible study guide.

Also, the inductive approach to the discussions is engaging and therefore, enhances lively discussion and healthy exchange of ideas. In particular, these ideas make significant contribution concerning how to build a strong church that can influence all spheres of society with kingdom values and principles. Don't sit aloof. Get involved and offer your opinions guided by scripture. Your success story shared during discussions will certainly encourage someone in the group. At the same time, your questions also could be the key to unlocking the doors of strongholds in the minds of fellow believers in the Bible study or home cell group.

Truly, this manual provides for us a great opportunity to be intentional in equipping the members and leaders of the Church for national transformation with kingdom values and principles. The National Discipleship and Leadership Development Committee is therefore highly commended for the painstaking and meticulous efforts expended in producing this study manual.

The Berean church was described as noble due to the attention they paid to searching the scriptures. I pray the same shall be said of our Church that members are diligent in studying and applying the Scriptures to daily

life. I trust that as we all live by this noble expectation, we shall be equipped to pursue the transformation we desire in the nations of the world in keeping with the Great Commission.

God bless you.

*Eric Kwabena Nyamekye (Apostle)
Chairman, The Church of Pentecost.*

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I will Build My Church (Matt 16:18) is the theme chosen by the Chairman and the Executive Council for the year 2019. The theme which initiates the five-year vision of the current Executive Council and consequently The Church of Pentecost, is **'Possessing the Nations: Equipping the Church to Transform Every Sphere of Society with Kingdom Values and Principles'**. As done every year, the Bible Study and Home Cell Ministry which is the Church's structure for discipleship and pastoral care will provide the avenue for a systematic study on the theme in small relational groups. In this year's study outlines, some thematic scripts have been developed to deal with some key areas of our doctrine and practices as a Church. Such thematic scripts are explained in the following:

The need for the Church to make a difference in the communities in which she ministers and the world as a whole to reflect her presence calls for intentional look at how to reflect what we believe in our daily lifestyles. This imperative calls for a conscious effort from time to time to revisit, revise, reaffirm and reinforce *what we believe* and how to *demonstrate what we believe*. This has become so important in this pluralistic world where anything is accepted and the difference between the Kingdom of God and darkness is gradually being compromised. Accordingly, aspects of the practical life of the Christian, right from the home to the marketplace

have been included in our studies this year for our necessary attention, reflection and action. These include: *Serving with Distinction, Family Devotions, Biblical Basis of Christian Marriage, Discipleship in the Local Church and Worship as a Lifestyle*, among others. It is expected that officers and members of the Church will pay particular attention to these practical Christian lifestyle issues to give appropriate meaning to the exhortation in 2 Timothy 2:15: *Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (MKJV)*.

As in previous years, the vision to take up a contemporary issue of global significance and publicise it, has also been catered for in the study manual. This year's study will focus on Creation Care (caring for our environment in the recognition that it is God's handiwork). The extensive coverage is expected to encourage both officers and members to appreciate the issues, challenges and how we can individually and collectively address the issue of caring for our Father's property. Examples of these entries are *Land Pollution: A Challenge to Practical Christianity, Consequences of Pollution, Possessing the Nation by Obeying Environmental Laws, Ensuring High Quality Structures, Pollution and Sanitation: Holding One Another Responsible, Personal Commitment to Addressing Sanitation and Pollution Challenges*, and others.

The call for Christians to make a difference in all spheres of society has been reinforced with a character study on Daniel, a man who made a difference in the workplace.

Some topics on the study are *The Steadfastness of Daniel*, *The God-factor at the Workplace*, *Serving with Distinction*, *Persecution at the Workplace*, *Keeping Godly Company at the Workplace* and *Influencing a Nation through Education*. It is hoped that these studies will challenge us to transform the workplace with kingdom values.

We continue our focus on the tenets of the Church this year by looking at *Marriage and Family Life* – the new addition to the tenets of the Church. Topics such as *Godly Parenting*, *A Father's Legacy*, *Mothers Are Role Models*, *Obedience to Parents: Jesus Our Example*, *Unnatural Relationships: The LGBT Community*, *Leaving and Cleaving*, *Fulfilling Your Spouse's Sexual Needs*, *Assisted Reproductive Services (ARS)*, *Handling Marital Conflicts*, *Interfaith Marriages*, etc. have been treated.

In keeping with the desire of leadership to deepen internal harmony at the inter-personal and group levels, entries that inform and guide right conduct have been provided. These include topics like *Care for the Needy*, *Leaders of God's Flock*, *Generosity as Exemplified by the Church*, *Interceding for One Another*, *Alleviating Human Suffering*, *A Righteous Act and the Church as a Community of Believers*.

Furthermore, some topics have been featured for special days on the Church's calendar. These include *Spiritual Empowerment for Missions*, *Searching the Scriptures*, *Honouring Our Officers*, *Remembering Our Heroes of Faith*, *Buried with Christ*, *Raised with Him* and *The Birth of Jesus*.

These lessons both highlight the theme for the year and serve as drivers to the entire Church to keep abreast of it through various activities slated for the year.

In view of this, Bible study on Sunday morning in small *permanent groups*, and at *permanent places* in the church building with *permanent leaders* will continue, except for the Lord's Supper Sunday. For each week, *Review Questions* have been outlined to assess what the members learnt the previous week and how they applied it to their lives during the week.

In the light of the vision direction of the Church, all Home Cell Groups have a mandatory meeting *once a month*, named *Home Cells Day*. It is slated for the Sunday before Communion Week. However, Home Cell Groups have the liberty to continue to meet weekly. In this regard, the new arrangement for home cell meetings are:

The *first (1st) week* is designated *Family Day* (i.e. every Lord's Supper Day). On this day, families (husband, wife, children and dependants) would meet in their various homes to pray together and discuss issues of interest.

The head of the family is expected to provide direction for the meeting. However, there are extra scripts for those who intend to use them. A young person who does not stay with their parents may join another family for the family day as a way of being nurtured in a family set up.

The *optional second (2nd) week* is designated (*Cell Social Impact*) purposely to facilitate and focus on how the cell system can impact society, and what programmes the individual cells can put in place for this impact. Some of the *optional third (3rd) weeks* are set aside for *Pastoral Care Groupings/Follow up and Visitations*. On this day, members could discuss the sermon heard during the day's church service, reflect on how to apply lessons and pray. They could then meet their pastoral care leader or use the time for visitation. The *fourth (4th) week (and in some cases the 5th week) is a compulsory Cell Day*. On this day, it is expected that all members will attend Cell meetings. Accordingly study outlines have been provided on the theme for the year, a contemporary issue or marriage and family life. Preparatory meetings, spearheaded by the district minister, should be organised regularly, at least every two weeks. This enhances understanding of the material as leaders share different perspectives on the text. It also provides the opportunity for the minister to assess the effectiveness of the cell and study groups. The emphasis of the study should be on how to apply lessons gleaned from the text to daily life.

Thus, the Cell Leader should study the outline prayerfully and diligently ahead of the class. We trust that we will be nourished by the study of God's word as we endeavour to live the Christ-like life and possess the nations.

The production of this guide has been made possible by the selfless service of some distinguished persons. The immediate-past Chairman, Apostle Prof. Opoku Onyinah (Rtd.) is appreciated for his interest, investment and direction provided in developing this committee during his tenure.

As a Committee, we appreciate deeply the direction and support of the Chairman, Apostle Eric Kwabena Nyamekye, the General Secretary, Apostle A.N.Y. Kumi-Larbi, the International Missions Director, Apostle Emmanuel Gyesi-Addo and the entire Executive Council members. The Committee applauds the immediate-past Deputy Coordinator of the NDLDC, Apostle John Appiah Aidoo and other reviewed members of the NDLDC: Apostles Dr. Emmanuel Anim, Dr Benjamin Ali, Matthew Larbi-Wetty and Pastor Franklin Agbovi Hushie for their meritorious services during their respective terms on the committee.

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Members of the National Discipleship and Leadership Development Committee are also highly commended for providing direction and painstakingly editing the final version of the scripts and ensuring its production. They are:

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Apostle William Boakye Agyarko	Member
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Pastor Dr. Joseph Quayesi-Amakye	Member

Pastor Joseph Owusu Boateng

Member

It is our sincere prayer that these little loaves of bread and fishes will be multiplied by the Lord to facilitate the rapid transformation of members who will in turn make impact in every sphere of society.

Samuel Kojo Gakpetor (Apostle)

National Coordinator, NDLC

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BIBLE STUDY

WEEK 2
PLANNING FOR THE YEAR

Review of the Year (5 Minutes)

- a. How did you plan to achieve your goals in the previous year?
- b. What caused your failure or success in achieving your set goals in the previous year?

Main Text: Luke 14:28-32

Memory Verse: *Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? – Luke 14:28*

Introduction

Planning can be defined as a set of intended actions for accomplishing important objectives. It sets the stage for the other management functions like organising, leading and controlling.

Entering into a New Year comes with the common cliché of ‘new year resolutions’. Many people including Christians, however, forget about these resolutions after a short period into the New Year. Without a well thought out plan for our lives, we may leave our lives to chance. Also, we may not be ready when opportunities come our way because we have not prepared for those opportunities.

Jesus Christ teaches us today to consider carefully our intended actions before taking steps to implement them. This study will focus on how we can turn our objectives for the year into very good plans.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why should planning be an essential part of our lives? Verses 28-29.
2. What are some of the factors you will consider in planning? Verses 31-32.
3. What are some of the factors that hinder us from planning?
4. What happens if we fail to plan?
5. How would you ensure that you achieve your resolutions?

Conclusion

Our study today reveals the need to have plans for our lives. In the parable, Jesus intimated that, without planning, we may be ridiculed or become unfruitful. Planning should not be done in isolation. As we learnt from our main text, series of consultations are needed for a successful plan. First, we need to consult God and then knowledgeable people in what we want to do. Others are mature Christians, family (e.g. spouses, parents, and children) and relevant literature.

A good plan has a clear vision, objectives, actions or steps to be taken and timelines. In addition, we must have people who will hold us accountable to the objectives of our life plans. We need to take bold steps to plan for the year ahead, for it is said, 'if you fail to plan, you plan to fail'. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WEEK 3
**WE CARE DAY-
CARING FOR THE NEEDY**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. Tell us two of your plans for the New Year; the objective, time and action to take to achieve them.

Main Text: 1Timothy 5:3-11

Memory Verse: *Therefore, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.* Galatians 6: 10.

Introduction

Christians are enjoined to help the needy in society and to keep in mind that there is the need to support and care for them. We can find them in our homes as family members and also among us in the local assemblies. Some may be widows, orphans, physically challenged and mentally impaired. Often times, these people are limited in their ability to provide adequately for their needs. It is in this light that, The Church of Pentecost (the CoP) sets aside one Sunday annually to give offering in kind and in cash to support and care for the needy among us. This practice reveals the CoP's belief that 'charity begins at home'. In today's reflection we look at caring for the needy, especially widows in the Church.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the three kinds of widows Paul talks about? Verses 4, 5, 11.
2. How should children support their widowed parents? Verse 4
3. Widows are expected to live godly lives. Discuss in the light of Verses 5-10
4. Aside widows, identify other groups in the local church who need assistance?
5. In what ways can we support those who are really in need among us?
6. What should be the attitude of needy persons who receive support from the Church?

Conclusion

Paul gives three categories of widows in the local church. These are those above 60 years who may be in need, those above 60 years who might not be in need because they have children and grandchildren who are capable of helping them, and younger widows. Paul advocates that the church should help only widows who are really in need according to the criteria in verses 9 and 10. Similarly, in our local congregations, the Church should assess the needs of widows and other vulnerable people in order to determine the kind of support that may be needed by each of them. The Church as well as individual members can support

the needy with money, accommodation, a form of livelihood, clothing, etc. Those who receive these kinds of support should be grateful and remain loyal to Christ and the Church.

WEEK 4
SUPPORTING OUR LEADERS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. In a sentence, tell us what you learnt from the previous lesson.
- b. How did you apply the lesson you learnt the previous week?

Main Text: 1 Samuel 10:23-27

Memory Verse: *When Saul returned to home at Gibeah, a band of men whose hearts the Lord had touched became his constant companions – 1 Samuel 10:26, The Living Bible.*

Introduction

Leadership is a very important tool for the development of any group of people. God has instituted leadership and authority to help humanity grow and ensure order in the affairs of men. At the 43rd session of the General Council meetings the Lord gave The Church of Pentecost a new leadership to steer her affairs for the next five years. This leadership requires our unflinching support in diverse ways. Our passage today tells us how Saul was called and presented to the people as their king. Some were happy that he had become king while others were displeased. Our study today focuses on the need to support the new Executive Council of the Church to fulfil their mandate.

Questions for Discussion

1. How was Saul described in verse 23?
2. How will you describe the people's response to the new king? Verse 24.
3. What kind of support did Saul receive from the people? Verse 25.
4. How did Saul react to those who despised him? Verse 27.
5. In what ways can we support the new leadership of the Church?

Conclusion

At times leadership tends to be 'a lonely road.' Leaders are mostly held responsible for the outcome of their decisions. However, leaders who have the support of their followers are able to accomplish more than those who do not. It is said that some leaders spend much time, energy and resources dealing with perceived opposition. This energy could have been used to work for the progress of the group or organisation. Having welcomed the new leadership of the Church into office, we should buy into their vision and support them to take the Church where God is leading us.

We should never be like the troublemakers who despised Saul and questioned his leadership abilities. Whenever we have challenges in understanding some policies and practices of the Church, we can always

go to them for clarifications or consult our immediate leaders (area heads, pastors, elders, deacons and deaconesses).

WEEK 6
BIBLE WEEK
SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous study?
- b. What would you do to support our leaders?

Main Text: Acts 17:10-15.

Memory Verse: *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...* 2 Timothy 3: 16.

Introduction

The Bible is the inspired Word of God; it is useful for teaching, correcting and training in righteousness. Unfortunately, false teachings and half-truths are being taught with references to the Bible. Many believe these teachings because they are ignorant of what the Bible teaches and accept the falsehood in such deceptive but sweet sounding doctrines. The church in Berea provides a very good example on how a person or community should respond to biblical teachings from the pulpit, television and social media platforms.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did the Bereans receive the Word of God? Verse 11.
2. How were the Bereans different from the Thessalonians? Verses 11, 13.

3. What was the outcome of the Bereans' attitude towards the Word of God? Verse 12.
4. How can Bible studies in the local church help to deal with the problem of false teachings?
5. How would you develop the attitude of searching the scriptures as the Bereans did?

Conclusion

The Bereans were Jewish residents of Berea in Macedonia to whom Paul and Silas preached during Paul's second missionary journey. Unlike the Thessalonians, they gladly received the message and proceeded to search the scriptures to find out the truth in the teachings. As a result, many Jews and Greek men and women in Berea were led to faith in Christ Jesus.

The Bible study groups exist in the local church to build the habit of studying and examining the scriptures together. This enables members to grow together in the knowledge of the Lord as people share their experiences regarding their application of the Word of God. It also equips us to defend the faith in the face of countless attacks from sections of society on sound Christian doctrine. For Bible studies to be effective, members should be punctual at church meetings to have ample time for discussions. Also, Bible study leaders must prepare adequately and prayerfully before leading the classes. In addition, members must on their own, cultivate the discipline of studying and searching the scriptures daily.

WEEK 7

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What do you remember in the previous lesson?
- b. How would you apply it to your life?

Main Text: Matthew 16:13-19.

Memory Verse: *And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.* – Matthew 16:18.

Introduction

The theme for The Church of Pentecost this year is “*I Will Build my Church*”. It is clear from today’s passage that Jesus is the builder of the church and that the church belongs to Him. We sometimes misconstrue the church as the building in which believers come together to worship. However, since Jesus did not put up or own any physical structure or building, it is important for us to identify what He built and owned so that we can properly understand what the church is.

In His earthly ministry, Jesus called out people to follow Him and He built them up into His own likeness. When the Jewish leaders listened to Peter and John and saw the courage and wisdom with which they spoke, ‘they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus’ (Acts 4:13). It is therefore obvious that

the church Jesus continues to build today is you and I.
We are the church.

Questions for Discussion

1. What answer did Peter give to Jesus' question? Verse 16.
2. How did Jesus respond to Peter's answer? Verses 17-19.
3. How do you understand the statement 'On this rock I will build my church'? Verse 18.
4. What then is the church?
5. How does Hebrews 10:25 relate to our understanding of the church as an assembly?

Conclusion

Through divine revelation, Peter was able to confess that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus then declared that the revelation Peter received is the rock upon which He would build His church. The root meaning of the word 'church' as used here comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* which means 'called out ones' or 'an assembly'. In His ministry therefore, Jesus devoted His life to calling and training people to represent Him on earth by living according to principles and values of His Father's Kingdom. Even though writing one's name in the church register is important for administrative purposes, what makes one a part of Jesus' church is accepting Him as one's Lord and

personal Saviour and living by the principles and values He taught. In addition the concept of assembling people to worship God as Christians is indispensable in the Church – hence, the need for every believer to value the importance of fellowship in the Church.

WEEK 8

**UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH
AS AN ORGANISATION**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Summarise what you learnt from the previous lesson.
- b. What is the root meaning of the word 'church'?

Main Text: Matthew 16:13-19

Memory Verse: *I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.* – Matthew 16:18

Introduction

We discussed in our previous studies that the meaning of the Greek word *ekklesia* is 'an assembly' or, by extension, 'called-out ones' in Christ. The Hebrew equivalence of this word in the Old Testament is used in two contexts: *qahal* for 'an assembly', and *edah* for 'an organisation'. The term *qahal* was originally used in the Old Testament in reference to the assembling of people for various purposes ranging from religion, politics, to battles.

As an organisation, The CoP runs a centralised system of administration under the oversight of an Executive Council which sees to the day to day running of the Church. Among other things, all designated funds from the local, district and area levels are channelled

into a central fund from which salaries, allowances, medical bills, etc. of ministers and other staff as well as various grants are paid. The fund also takes care of development of infrastructure, evangelism and church planting in other parts of the world.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean to say that Jesus is the owner of the church? Matthew 16: 18.
2. What was Jesus referring to as the 'gates of hell'? Matthew 16: 18.
3. What is the role of leaders in building the church? Matthew 16: 19, Ephesians 4: 11-12.
4. Explain the difference between the church as an organisation and the church as 'called-out ones' in Christ.
5. How do you contribute towards the development of the Church as an organization?

Conclusion

The church is made up of believers of all races, nationalities, and generations with Christ as the Head. Jesus' statement, 'I will build My Church' implies that the church is established by Him. With Christ in the centre of the church, it will always triumph over challenges and obstacles that may confront it. The church is both an organisation and a community of believers that must have a positive expression of its faith

to the world. The administrative structure of the CoP is expressed at area, district and local levels. Each of these levels has its administrative structure and headed by area heads, district pastors and presiding elders respectively. Similarly, the Church operates through five ministries in charge of Evangelism, Women, Men, Youth and Children. Each is headed by a national director with its executives from the national to the local level.

WEEK 10

MISSIONS DAY – SPIRITUAL EMPOWERMENT FOR MISSIONS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How did the previous lesson impact your involvement in the Church?

Main Text: Acts 1:4-8

Memory Verse: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* – Acts 1:8

Introduction

God's mission is to extend His heavenly kingdom on earth by saving humanity. It encompasses His redemptive plan towards His creation. Throughout history, God uses men to accomplish His mission on earth. It is in this vein that The Church of Pentecost (the CoP), founded by Rev. James McKeown, also plays her role as a missionary body throughout the world. Once in a year, the Church celebrates MISSIONS DAY to pray for missionaries, reflect on God's mission on earth, and raise funds towards the missions work, among others. We use this opportunity to appreciate the sacrifices, dedication and commitments of our hardworking missionaries in the various mission fields.

We also pray that the good Lord grant them increased anointing for greater impact. In this study, we examine Acts 1:4-8 under the topic, 'Spiritual empowerment for Missions.'

Questions for Discussion

1. According to Jesus, what is the promise of the Father? Verses 4, 5
2. What is the purpose of the power given by the Holy Spirit? Verse 8.
3. How do you understand this expression: 'You shall be my witnesses'? Verse 8.
4. How does verse 8 relate to the scope of missions in the CoP?
5. In what ways can each of us be actively involved in the Church's missions agenda?

Conclusion

In this study, we are called to be witnesses of Christ in our homes, the marketplace, nation and the world. This means actively participating in God's mission of saving the world. At the individual level, we participate in God's mission by fulfilling our role as salt and light to those around us. We also pray for God's power for missionaries; encouraging missionaries with our gifts and our phone calls. Additionally, members of the Church are to participate in missionary activities at the local, district and area levels. Indeed every believer has been empowered by the Holy Spirit for missions.

WEEK 11

**THE CHURCH AS AN
EXPRESSION OF GOD'S KINGDOM**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How would you apply what you learnt from the previous lesson?

Main Text: Luke 17:20-21

Memory Verse: *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.* – Colossians 1:13.

Introduction

The Gospels clearly reveal that the focus of Jesus' ministry has been on the Kingdom of God. He made it very clear that Christians have an eternal home with the Father (Jn. 14:3-4). In today's passage, the Pharisees wanted to know when the Kingdom of God would come. In response, Jesus explained to them that the Kingdom of God had already come. This response shows that Jesus himself is the embodiment of God's Kingdom. Wherever Jesus is present, the Kingdom of God is there. Our memory verse further explains that as Christians, we have been brought into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Church, made up of people called to follow Jesus, must therefore fashion their lives around the principles of God's Kingdom as demonstrated in Christ Jesus.

Questions for Discussion

1. What question did the Pharisees ask Jesus? Verse 20.
2. Discuss Jesus' response to their question. Verses 20-21.
3. How do you understand Jesus' statement that 'the kingdom of God is in your midst'? Verse 21.
4. Identify some values of God's Kingdom. Matthew 5: 1-12.
5. In what ways do you think the Church can express the values of God's Kingdom?

Conclusion

It is important to recognise that it is not all who claim to be Christians or gather in the name of Christ who represent the Kingdom of God. Jesus expects that those who represent His Kingdom must first have repented of their sins (Matt 3:2) and committed themselves to preach the Good news of the Kingdom (Matt 24:14). For the church to represent the Kingdom of God, individual members are expected to practically live as Kingdom people. Thus, they must love, forgive, support others and live in clean environments. People who have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light must also seek to confront the deeds of darkness through advocacy.

It must be noted that, every kingdom represents the glory of the king who rules in that Kingdom. It therefore stands that, the church as the Kingdom of God is responsible to reveal God's glory in all things. For it is by this that the entire society will see that the Kingdom of God has come. Members will do well to read through Matthew 5 for more values of God's Kingdom before the next meeting.

WEEK 12

THE CHURCH: SALT OF THE EARTH, LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. From your reading of Matthew 5, mention some of the kingdom values you identified.

Main Text: Matthew 5:13-16.

Memory Verse: *In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.* – Matthew 5:16.

Introduction

In Jesus' teachings, He uses different illustrations to communicate to His followers. In today's passage, we see three different imageries used to describe the church. These include, salt, light and a city on a hill. Our discussion will concentrate on the imageries of salt and light. These two descriptions place much responsibilities on the church to impact the world positively. One of the uses of salt is for preservation while light is needed to expel darkness. To describe the church therefore as salt of the earth implies that, it is the duty of the church to preserve society from decay and corruption. Similarly, the church as light of the world has the responsibility to fight and overcome evil or expel darkness in the world. This is what is expected of every church, including The Church of Pentecost.

Questions for Discussion

1. With what three imageries did Jesus compare His listeners? Verses 13, 14.
2. Discuss what salt and light are used for.
3. What is the purpose of the church as the salt of the earth? Verse 16.
4. Discuss some practical things the church must do in society as the light of the world.
5. As a Christian, what can you do in order to preserve your saltiness and also hold your light high?

Conclusion

The Scripture under discussion describes the Church as the salt of the earth and light of the world. The presence of the Church as salt is important for preserving society from moral evil such as homosexuality, corruption, destruction of water bodies and other natural resources. If the Church keeps quiet over such social vices, it loses its usefulness. The presence of the Church should expel the darkness of oppression, injustice, discrimination, tribalism and every evil.

If the Church remains silent while such evil activities continue to thrive, then it can be said to have lost its usefulness. It is for this reason that the five-year theme of The Church of Pentecost is “Possessing the Nations: Equipping the Church to Transform Every Sphere of Society with Kingdom Values and Principles.” Therefore the Church should take her rightful place as salt of the earth and light of the world and confront evil in society.

WEEK 13
**OFFICERS APPRECIATION DAY –
HONOURING OUR OFFICERS**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Summarise what you learnt from the previous lesson.
- b. How are you applying the lessons to your life?

Main Text: Romans 16:1-16.

Memory Verse: *They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.* – Romans 16:4.

Introduction

Since the inception of The Church of Pentecost (The CoP), officers have committed their lives and resources to enable the church fulfil her mandate of reaching out and discipling people in accordance with the charge of the Great Commission. Similarly, the early Church thrived on the strong support of a team of committed leaders who stood by the apostles at all times. They partnered them to embark on their missionary journeys, plant and establish churches, and discipled the believers. In our passage for reflection, Paul takes time to acknowledge the great work of these gallant soldiers. The success story of The CoP can best be told by recognising the selfless sacrifices of our unpaid

officers. The celebration of Officers Appreciation Day should awaken us to honour our dedicated officers.

Questions for Discussion

1. Identify some of the fellow workers who played diverse roles in Paul's ministry.
2. In what ways were these people helpful to Paul? Verses 2, 4, 6, 10.
3. What did Paul request from the church for these people? Verse 2.
4. How do officers contribute to the growth and development of the local assembly?
5. How can you honour the officers in your local assembly or district?

Conclusion

Paul acknowledges a tall list of people who really helped him in his missionary work. In appreciating these helpers, he asked the church to receive them in a worthy manner and to give them the necessary help. These people were very helpful to him in diverse ways; from risking their lives for him to hosting household churches (home cells). We, like Paul, must appreciate our presbyters. This we can do by speaking well of them, encouraging them, praying for them, visiting them, and giving them gifts of appreciation.

WEEK 15
**EASTER –
BURIED WITH CHRIST, RAISED WITH HIM**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in the previous study?
- b. What did you do to appreciate our officers?

Main Text: Romans 6:1-11

Memory Verse: *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.* – Romans 6:4

Introduction

The death and resurrection of Christ is at the centre of God's mission to save humanity. Christians are to reflect on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In The Church of Pentecost (CoP), the first week of every month is dedicated for this reflection culminating in communion service. Again, the CoP celebrates Easter with conventions to further reflect Christ's finished work, deepen spiritual life and to share this message with the unsaved. In today's study, we remind ourselves of the implications of the vicarious death of Christ to every Christian.

Questions for Discussion

1. What problem was Paul addressing in this passage?
Verse 1.

2. What do the following mean?
 - a. To be united with Christ in His death? Verses 2, 3.
 - b. To be raised with Christ? Verses 4, 5.
3. Discuss the statement, 'For we know ... that anyone who has died has been freed from sin.' Romans 6: 6, 7.
4. How should the celebration of Easter encourage you to stay dead to sin but alive to God in Christ?

Conclusion

Paul wrote this passage to admonish us not to abuse grace as license to sin. He reminds us that, we have been baptized into Christ; baptized into His death; dead to sin; and united with Christ on the cross. Thus, just as Christ died to condemn sin, we in Christ have also put our sinful nature to death. Again, we have resurrected with Christ to a new way of living; we no longer live by the power of the flesh but by the power of God's Spirit, which raised Christ from death. Grace is therefore God's power to overcome sin and not a license to sin. Through a fervent prayer life, setting boundaries, running from sin and walking with godly people, a Christian can exert dominion over sin in this corrupt world.

WEEK 17

THE STEADFASTNESS OF DANIEL

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What was the previous lesson about?
- b. What effect did the lesson have on your life?

Main Text: Daniel 1:1-12

Memory Verse: *But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank. – Daniel 1:8*

Introduction

The meaning of the name, Daniel, is 'God is Judge'. He was given the name Belteshazzar (Let Bel protect him) when he, together with several Hebrew young men, were taken captive to Babylon after the siege of Jerusalem. As a young man in a foreign land, he faced many challenges but in all, he demonstrated qualities which brought glory to God. Some of these qualities will be discussed in subsequent Bible study lessons. Today, we shall discuss how he remained steadfast not to defile himself when he was offered food from King Nebuchadnezzar's table.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did Daniel end up in the kingdom of Babylon?
Verses 1-4.

2. Why did Daniel decide not to accept food from the king's table? Verses 5, 8.
3. Identify some of the challenges he was likely to face as a result of this decision? Verse 10.
4. What was the outcome of Daniel's steadfastness?
5. How can Christians remain steadfast in the midst of corruption in society?

Conclusion

Steadfastness is the quality of remaining faithful, firm, resolute and true to your convictions. Steadfast Christians are convinced about what they believe and thus refuse to act against their convictions. Daniel was taken captive and sent to a foreign land to be trained for service in the king's palace. In the Babylonian culture, food served on the king's table was first sacrificed to idols. Hence, Daniel stood by his convictions that eating food from the king's table which is sacrificed to idols will defile him. He opted to feed on vegetables and water for ten days. Often, we are presented with choices that will make us comfortable but at the same time, cause us to sin against God. Like Daniel, we must be firm, faithful and resolute to remain true to our convictions as Christians.

WEEK 19
PUC DAY
INFLUENCING A NATION
THROUGH EDUCATION

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What do you remember about the previous lesson?
- b. How did you apply it to your life?

Main Text: Daniel 1:3-8; 12, 13, 18-20

Memory Verse: *Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.* – Acts 7:22

Introduction

Education can be defined as the transfer of knowledge, morals and attitudes from one person to another, and usually from one generation to the next. Education is an ongoing process. A nation that does not value education does not value progress. In the Old Testament times, education was largely informal. Through education, many countries have experienced positive changes in national economy. In view of this, The Church of Pentecost has established Pentecost University College which is a Christian institution of higher learning. It exists to complement government's effort in training citizens for the country's development. Today's study looks at how through education, a nation could be influenced and the impact PUC has had on Ghana.

Questions for Discussions

1. How did the young men react to the negative aspects of the educational environment? Verses 8, 12, 13
2. Would you say the young men selected to study lived up to expectation? Verses 18-20
3. What are some of the negative effects of our educational system today?
4. Discuss some expected benefits the establishment of PUC can have on individuals and the nation at large.

Conclusion

For Daniel and his friends, education in Babylon did not only mean acquiring knowledge. It also meant receiving new names and learning a new language. As part of their training, their diet too had to be changed until after three years. They, however, requested to be placed on a special diet over the period. On the other hand, they faithfully submitted to that which did not interfere with their belief in God.

They stood for their faith in God and the Lord rewarded them accordingly. They were found ten times better than all the others and influenced the Babylonian government. This tells us that, while we receive education we are to remain steadfast in God. The PUC runs undergraduate and post graduates courses and

exists to empower students to serve humanity in the fear of God. To this end it also offers scholarships to deserving students, amply supported by the Church through annual fund-raising activities.

WEEK 20

SERVING WITH DISTINCTION

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What new thing did you learn about PUC in our previous lesson?
- b. How has the lesson influenced your care for children's education?

Main Text: Daniel 6:1-6

Memory Verse: *Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.* – Daniel 6:3

Introduction

To serve with distinction is to work with a touch of excellence, diligence, carefulness, watchfulness and faithfulness. It is God's will that Christians exhibit these qualities at the workplace to bring glory to His name and also cause men to see the transformation the Gospel brings to society. Today, we shall continue our study of Daniel with focus on the attitude of the Christian at the workplace.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who was Daniel in the kingdom of Persia? Verses 1, 2.

2. What was the king's reaction to Daniel's work ethic? Verse 3.
3. What are some of the negative work ethics exhibited at our workplaces?
4. Discuss the qualities of Daniel as a governor in Babylon. Verse 3.
5. How should Christians handle positions of influence in society?

Conclusion

Daniel was one of the three governors appointed to oversee the work of the 120 regional governors in the Persian Empire. Remarkably, he distinguished himself above all his fellow governors, for which reason, he earned the king's admiration and trust. According to the scriptures, he was faithful and no fault was found in him. As Christians we should not separate our faith from our work ethics.

The kingdom values and principles taught by Christ should be demonstrated at the workplace as a testimony to the transformational power of the Gospel. Thus, Christians should avoid negative work ethics such as laziness, negligence, gossip, stealing from the workplace, and taking bribes. Serving with distinction also demands that Christian employees do not deceive employers with lies and lame excuses such as feigned sickness, or bereavement of distant relations to avoid work.

On the other hand, Christian employers should also treat their workers fairly. Normally, one spends more time at the workplace than at the church premises. This implies that ultimately, all sectors of the economy would come under the reign of Christ when Christians in position of influence serve with distinction like Daniel did.

WEEK 21

PERSECUTION AT THE WORKPLACE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How would you apply it to your life?

Main Text: Daniel 6:1-10, 16-20

Memory Verse: *Consider it pure joy my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.*

– James 1:2-3

Introduction

It is established that, majority of Christian workforce spend much of their time in the market or workplace than in any other location. Thus, while the local church is the place for equipping Christians, the marketplace provides the environment for Christian virtues to be demonstrated. However, Christians who are honest, diligent, faithful and loyal at the workplace may come under various forms of suffering. This is often motivated by hatred, jealousy and the desire by other persons to persist in wrong doing. In the previous lesson, we noted how Daniel distinguished himself as one of the three governors in Persia. Today, we shall discuss the persecution he went through when his work colleagues plotted evil against him.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did the work mates of Daniel plot evil against him? Verse 3.
2. How did they plot against Daniel? Verses 5, 6.
3. Why do people plan evil against their work mates who do the right thing?
4. Should one stop doing the right thing at the work place when persecution arises? Give reasons.
5. What lessons can you draw from the outcome of Daniel's persecution?

Conclusion

Daniel's work colleagues heard of the king's plan to promote him above them. For this reason they sought a way by which they could make Daniel look bad in the eyes of the king. By their plan, Daniel was finally thrown into the lion's den, but God saved him. Christians who do not partake in wrong doing at the workplace may face persecutions of various forms. Some even lose their jobs or lives for doing the right thing or excelling at their given tasks. However, we should not be afraid to be 'salt' at the workplace since that is where we can influence people. Like Daniel, God can choose to save us. Nonetheless, if for one reason or the other we suffer loss for our good behaviour, we should count it all joy.

WEEK 23
**MEN'S MINISTRY WEEK –
A FATHER'S LEGACY**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous study?
- b. How did you apply it to your life?

Main Text: 1 Chronicles 28:2-14

Memory Verse: *A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.* – Proverbs 13:22

Introduction

Today is observed as father's day. Accordingly, we wish all fathers a Happy Fathers' Day on this special occasion. Some of the functions of the Men's Ministry in The Church of Pentecost is to provide leadership and develop responsible men who will function well in the church, home and the state. These aims could be achieved when men leave useful legacies, that go beyond generations yet unborn. King David had been restrained by God from building the Temple. The project was to be undertaken by his son and successor, Solomon. Rather than being discouraged by God's directive, David purposed to leave a legacy for his son. He made the architectural designs for the Temple and made personal commitments of gold and silver towards it. He also encouraged others to follow in his steps. In

today's study, we shall learn about the importance of fathers leaving useful legacies for their children and its implications for Christians.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who was to build the Temple for God? Verse 6.
2. Why was Solomon advised to follow all the commandments of God? Verses 8-9.
3. How can we be outstanding in our professions? Verses 8-9.
4. What happens if fathers fail to leave useful legacies to succeeding generations?
5. In what significant ways can fathers leave useful legacies for their children, the church and society?

Conclusion

It is obvious that the provisions David made for Solomon made the building of the Temple easier and faster for him. Though he was not to build the Temple, David made a significant contribution towards its construction. In the CoP, our gallant soldiers such as Rev. James McKeown, Aps. F S Safo, Prophet M K Yeboah Aps. Dr Michael K Ntummy, and our immediate past Chairman, Aps. Prof. Opoku Onyinah are examples of men who have left useful legacies for their families, the church and society. They demonstrated this through exemplary spiritual leadership, receiving inspirational songs, developing infrastructure, serving Ghana as

statesmen and the international Christian community. Practically, all men can leave useful legacies irrespective of their positions in society. Thus, no matter our status in life, our very devotional lives, financial and spiritual contributions in the body of Christ, meeting the needs of others are useful legacies that could impact generations.

WEEK 24

LAND POLLUTION: A CHALLENGE TO PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What was the previous lesson about?
- b. Tell us what you learnt from our previous discussion.

Main Text: Matthew 13:24-30

Memory Verse: *But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. – Matthew 13:23 (NKJV)*

Introduction

Land pollution is basically the introduction of harmful substances into the soil. This situation is caused by the use of some agro-chemicals, dumping of old electronic gadgets, uncontrolled piling of garbage at landfills and indiscriminate disposal of untreated liquid waste. This reduces the soil quality and inhibits the development of plant life. Often, chemicals introduced into the soil are incorporated into the tissues of plants; the chemicals are then passed on to animals that eat the plants and ultimately into human tissues. In today's study we shall discuss the parable of the tares and how it applies to pollution in our day.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who sowed the good seed in the field? Verse 24.
2. What could be the effect of the tares sowed among the wheat? Verse 25.
3. How can we liken tares to pollutants in our day?
4. What should be our attitude in the way we apply chemicals and dump waste on land?

Conclusion

Tares are very harmful and poisonous plants that grow among wheat everywhere in Palestine and look like wheat while growing. The coexistence of tares with wheat may look harmless from the onset. However, if they are allowed to mingle with the wheat used in making bread, they cause dizziness. In our study today, the tares could represent pollution. It implies that whatever we do today to pollute the land can be likened to sowing tares among wheat. The slightest chemical we misapply to the earth or the waste we recklessly bury in the ground are environmental hazards that will affect us and subsequent generations. Let us keep the pollutants out of God's beautiful creation.

WEEK 25

CONSEQUENCES OF POLLUTION

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson on land pollution?
- b. How would you apply it daily?

Main Text: Ezekiel 34:17-19.

Memory Verse: *Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?* – Ezekiel 34:18

Introduction

Everything we do has an effect – whether good or bad. We reap what we sow. God has created a very nice environment to sustain our lives. He has given us water and air. It is our responsibility to ensure that our environment is always clean to keep us healthy and to reflect God's beauty. If we pollute the environment, it is obvious that, we will reap bad consequences. In this study, we examine an illustration of pollution God used when He rebuked the shepherds of Israel.

Questions for Discussion

1. What illustrations did God use to address pollution of the environment? Verse 18.

2. What was the effect of the pollution they were causing? Verse 19.
3. In what ways do we see the effects of pollution in our communities?
4. How can we reduce these effects of pollution in our environment?

Conclusion

In rebuking the shepherds of Israel, God used pollution to illustrate some of their evil activities. He likened some of their bad activities to land and water pollution. He saw them as sheep that fed on good pasture and trampled the rest with their feet. Their conduct was also like that of sheep that drank from very clean water and muddied the rest, leaving other innocent flock to suffer. Similarly, we also pollute our environment through activities we engage in, leaving future generations to suffer the negative consequences. For instance, some pollute the water bodies through illegal mining activities. People who drink from these polluted water sources suffer many unhealthy conditions. To stop these effects, we must refrain from activities that pollute the land, water and air. We must always also think about the effects of our activities on the health of other people.

WEEK 26

POSSESSING THE NATION BY OBEYING ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. What act of pollution did you avoid?

Main Text: Isaiah 24:4-6

Memory Verse: *If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.* – Proverbs 28:9

Introduction

Standards and laws are very important for maintaining excellence in all things. These principles are put in place to ensure things are done in ways that promote the well-being of citizens and protect the environment. Laws must cover how things are supposed to be done, results expected, punishment for breaking the laws and if possible, rewards for those who comply with the laws. There are many laws that cover environmental sustainability in every country. In Ghana, these laws are enshrined in the Environmental Protection Act. The environment will be sustained when the laws are enforced and obeyed to the letter.

In the Five-year vision of the Church of Pentecost, we envisage to transform every sphere of society through the application of God's kingdom principles. To achieve this, we must, among other things, abide by societal

laws, and in this case environmental laws. By this we will set a good example for others to follow. In our lesson today, we will examine some effects of breaking environmental laws.

Questions for Discussion

1. How is the earth defiled by its inhabitants? Verse 5.
2. What are the effects of environmental pollution? Verse 6.
3. What are some of the laws governing environmental protection in our country?
4. Generally, why are these laws not complied with?
5. In what ways are you personally committed to environmental protection laws?

Conclusion

The earth dries up, languishes and withers because its inhabitants have defiled it by disregarding laws instituted to sustain the earth. As a result, a curse consumes the earth and its inhabitants are burnt up in many ways. Some of the laws protecting the environment address proper disposal of waste and proper siting of buildings, and prohibition of open defaecation and illegal mining, etc. For these laws to work, law enforcement agencies such as the police must enforce them without fear or favour. Further, citizens, mainly Christians, must set good examples in compliance as 'salt of the earth and light of the world

in possessing the nation for Christ'. Also, the judiciary must be seen to dispense justice without fear or favour when people fall foul of the law.

WEEK 28

MOTHERS ARE ROLE MODELS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. What example would you set regarding obeying environmental law?

Main Text: Exodus 1:8-22.

Memory Verse: *Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.*— Proverbs 31: 28.

Introduction

Today is Mothers' Day and we wish them, Happy Mothers' Day! As we celebrate our mothers on this special day, we sincerely appreciate their contributions to the development of society as role models. One of the core values of the Women's Ministry states: 'Reflecting the love and heart of Jesus Christ'. This requires total obedience to God in all circumstances as was demonstrated in the lives of Shiphrah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives. They had the choice either to kill every Hebrew son at birth or spare their lives. Today's discussion focuses on the choice of these women and the outcome of their actions. We can derive lessons from their behaviour and be examples for others to emulate.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was Pharaoh's command to the midwives? Verses 15,16.

2. Why was the command to kill male babies given? Verse 9-12.
3. How did the midwives respond to this command? Verse 17.
4. What was the outcome of their actions? Verse 20-25.
5. In what ways can we appreciate our mothers as role models?

Conclusion

In our study we learnt that the Hebrew midwives were blessed with their own families for their fear of God. Some of our women leaders of blessed memory became role models by impacting lives in their generation. They left shining examples for the present generation to follow. For example, Mrs Sophia McKeown led the women to produce the first women's syllabus – 'The Hidden Treasure'. Mrs Christiana Obo supported the church financially while Mrs Eunice Addison's prophetic songs inspire the church. Similarly, Mrs Esme Siriboe's work touched lives beyond the church and Mrs Perpetual Owusu encouraged the holding of teenage classes. One does not need to have a special title in the church to be a role model. In your own little way, let your light shine through your good deeds. You can be a role model by using your gifts and talents to build the church of God. Children should appreciate their mothers and emulate their good examples as role models

WEEK 29

**ENSURING BUILDING OF HIGH
QUALITY STRUCTURES**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from our previous study?
- b. How did you appreciate your mother?

Main Text: Matthew 7:24-27

Memory Verse: *Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.* – Matthew 7: 24 (NKJV)

Introduction

As a practical demonstration of our commitment to take good care of the environment, Christians are to ensure that their church buildings and houses are well sited to avoid environmental hazards including loss of human lives. This calls for processing the appropriate documents for permits. On the other hand, quality materials must be used in right proportion to ensure that solid and durable buildings are put up, which can stand the test of time. In view of this, artisans and contractors particularly Christians, should not use inferior materials aimed at maximising their profit margins. Owners and supervisors of projects must also ensure they enforce structural integrity. We should go beyond the confines of the church to also teach these values to others.

Questions for Discussion

1. Identify the two groups of builders mentioned in the main text. Verses 24, 26.
2. What environmental challenges did the builders encounter? Verses 25, 27.
3. How does this lesson relate to the siting of buildings and use of quality building materials for houses and roads?
4. What are the causes of siting buildings at wrong places?
5. What steps will you take to ensure that your building is of high quality standard, and is sited at an approved place?

Conclusion

The desire to make profit at the expense of quality standards brings untold hardships upon humankind. People who engage in such acts may appear 'smart' and sometimes have the courage to describe those who want to maintain integrity and quality standards as dull and unprofitable. Examples of acts of greed and selfishness that devastate the environment are illegal mining, the use of wrong fishing methods, illegal felling of trees, open defecation, and siting of buildings in unapproved places. Jesus points out clearly the importance of proper siting of a building. As we pursue doctrinal maturity and ministerial excellence, we should also commit ourselves to responsible infrastructural development and waste management so that we do not inadvertently endanger our lives and those of others.

WEEK 30

PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING SANITATION AND POLLUTION CHALLENGES

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. From the previous discussion, what are some of the greedy acts that destroy the environment?

Main Text: Genesis 2:15, Acts 17: 26.

Memory Verse: *Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.* – 1 Corinthians 4:2.

Introduction

In the beginning when God created Adam, He put him in the Garden of Eden to take care of it. This, among other things, implies ensuring a sanitary environment devoid of pollution. Just as Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden to have personal responsibility for it, so also has God placed us in our various environments to do same. We must not blame one another if there are sanitation problems. We all contribute to the mess in several ways. In this lesson, we shall consider some practical ways we can personally be responsible for good sanitation in our environments.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was Adam's responsibility concerning his environment?
2. How would Adam's responsibility prevent the pollution of his environment?
3. Like Adam, what are the areas in our environment that require good personal sanitation practices?
4. What can you do as an individual to personally promote sanitation wherever you find yourself?

Conclusion

God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to take care of it. As descendants of Adam, we also have our own 'gardens' (environments) in which God has placed us (Acts 17: 26). These are our homes, communities, churches and workplaces. In our homes, we must ensure safe waste disposal and also avoid throwing garbage into gutters. Also, after festive activities such as weddings and funerals, persons responsible must ensure that they clean-up the waste. Members of households must practise personal hygiene such as hand-washing with soap under running-water, cleaning their washrooms and washing dishes right after use. Further, excessive noise-making should be avoided. Pets and domesticated animals must be properly kept, fed, vaccinated and cleaned.

As a church, we must use refuse bins, purchase lands at the right place, undertake community clean-up exercises and educate members to avoid means of livelihood that damage the environment. Lastly, at the marketplace, we must ensure we clean up after trading and in the office, we must cut down on the use of consumables such as plastics, paper, etc. If we all put our hands on deck in our own small personal ways, together, we shall succeed in this sanitation 'crusade'.

WEEK 32

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did we learn in our previous study?
- b. How would you apply it in your home and workplace?

Main Text: Acts 11:19-26.

Memory Verse: *We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.* – 1 Thessalonians 2:8,

Introduction

Generally, a disciple is someone who believes in the ideas and principles of a famous person and tries to emulate him. In the Christian sense, disciples are those growing to be like Christ. Thus, they open their whole lives and subject themselves to learning to grow spiritually toward Christ-like maturity. Disciple-making is the goal of the Great Commission and thus, the main task of the local church. In today's study, we shall discuss how the local church provides opportunities for the transformation of new converts into the likeness of Christ.

Questions for Discussion

1. What happened when the believers shared the Gospel with the Greeks? Verses 20-21.
2. Describe how the new converts were discipled. Verses 22-26.

3. Explain why the believers were called 'Christians' in Antioch.
4. What are the challenges to discipleship in the local church?
5. Identify some discipleship structures in the CoP and show how they can be made more effective.

Conclusion

The church in Antioch started as persecuted believers fled from Jerusalem and settled in the metropolis of present-day Syria, and preached the Gospel. When the Gentiles in Antioch believed on the Lord Jesus, the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas and Paul to them. They stayed with the believers for a year and spent time teaching them the ways of the Lord. The converts in Antioch were available to be taught while the teachers passionately shared their lives with them.

As a result, the lives of the converts were transformed as they demonstrated Christ-like behaviour. This earned them the name 'Christians'. The structures in the Church such as Bible studies, home cells, pastoral Care group system and ministries should be strengthened. Members must make themselves available to be taught and apply the lessons to their lives. More so, mature believers should be willing to associate closely with converts to help them grow onto Christlikeness. The local church must strengthen the aspects of teaching, give opportunity to the youth for practical ministry and accountability in these structures.

WEEK 33
**PENTSOS DAY –
ALLEVIATING HUMAN
SUFFERING, A RIGHTEOUS ACT**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How would you apply what you learnt?

Main Text: Matthew 25:34-40.

Memory Verse: *The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. – Matthew 25:40*

Introduction

The church has a responsibility towards the socio-economic development of the country. It is in the light of this that Pentecost Social Services (PENTSOS) was established. Its core mandate includes: Disaster prevention, relief services, economic empowerment, and provision of health services. Others are provision of welfare service to members and educational support schemes for the general good of society.

Currently, the CoP has a university, seminary, hospitals and clinics, basic and senior high schools as well as other charitable facilities all over the nation to help meet socio-economic needs. PENTSOS week is observed annually to reflect on the Church's socio-economic impact nationwide.

The week is meant for praying, carrying out social activities and giving towards the Church's social obligations. In this study, we examine a scriptural passage that emphasises our corporate contribution towards the development of society.

Questions for Discussion

1. Identify the needy situations that Jesus touched on.
2. How did the righteous respond to the social needs they encountered? Verses 35, 36.
3. What do you understand by Jesus' statement: 'Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'? Verse 40.
4. In what ways can Church members respond to welfare issues in their communities?
5. How can we make PENTSOS relevant to our community as a local church?

Conclusion

From today's passage, we have learnt that Jesus expects the righteous (Christians) to be sensitive to the social needs of humanity. Some of the ways of addressing these needs include feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, clothing the naked, and sheltering the homeless. It is obvious from the study that, love evidenced as compassion and kindness is a key mark of the righteous.

When we demonstrate such love to the needy, we do it for the Lord Jesus and demonstrate that we are truly his followers. The CoP is involved in these areas at various levels through the work of PENTSOS. As individual members, we can also do these in our own small ways in our communities. We can give items and money towards PENTSOS activities.

WEEK 34

UNNATURAL RELATIONSHIPS: THE LGBT COMMUNITY

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What new thing did you learn from the previous study?
- b. How would you apply what you learnt?

Main Text: Genesis 19:4-13

Memory Verse: *Homosexuality is absolutely forbidden, for it is an enormous sin.* – Leviticus 18:22, The Living Bible (TLB)

Introduction

There are many unnatural sexual relationships in our contemporary world. These have been in existence since time immemorial but have taken up new trends and increasing forms lately. Some of these are Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders (LGBTs). A lesbian is a female who practises sex with another female while a gay is a male who practises sex with another male. A bisexual is a person who practises sex with both sexes. A transgender is someone who expresses their preferred gender identity in many different ways. This is done either through dresses, behaviour or even having a surgery to change their sex to fit their preferred gender.

Formerly, the LGBT community used to hide their identity due to stigmatisation.

However, currently, it has come under an organised umbrella like an institutionalised system. Varied reasons such as peer pressure and economic hardship have been identified as the reason for people's involvement in the LGBT community. Our study today is focused on empowering church members to handle the upsurge of this phenomenon.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did the men of Sodom surround the house of Lot? Verse 5.
2. Why were the angels sent to destroy the city? Verses 11, 13.
3. Why do people engage in LGBT practices?
4. How can we help people involved in the practice to be liberated?
5. What can we do to prevent the practice of LGBT in our country?

Conclusion

The LGBT community has no regard for age. Innocent children are made to participate in this perverse act (Gen 19:4). It is a well-structured organisation that has no respect for God's word against these practices. The men of Sodom are a real example of the LGBT community today. They marched to Lot's house just

to have sex with unknown men. Lot, knowing that this was extremely evil, decided to offer his two daughters who were virgins to them but, the men refused.

Wherever LGBT issues spring up in the scriptures, judgement follows strongly (Rom 1:24-27, 1 Cor 6:9,10). Those in the LGBT community are plagued with all kinds of diseases. Just as God frowns on these acts as stated in Leviticus 18: 22, so are believers admonished to do. The Church of Pentecost does not accept or condone any of the practices of the LGBT community as these are not biblically accepted. The Church does not approve of LGBT activities and will continue training children and adults alike to know God's stance on this canker and denounce it. However, we shall consciously reach out to the LGBT community with the Gospel just as we do to other sinners.

WEEK 36

**CHILDREN'S DAY –
OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS:
JESUS, OUR EXAMPLE**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the lesson on LGBT?
- b. How relevant was the lesson to you?

Main Text: Luke 2:41-51.

Memory Verse: *Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.* – Luke 2:51

Introduction

The celebration of Children's Day on The Church of Pentecost calendar shows the importance that leadership of the Church places on children. It remains an undeniable fact that the future of the Church depends on how our children are intentionally disciplined and trained today. Current statistics in the Church show a growing trend of increasing child membership. This should prompt us to devote more attention to children. This lesson will seek to examine the life of the boy Jesus as a perfect example worthy of emulation by children.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was the prevailing custom during the days of the boy Jesus? Verses 41, 42.

2. How did Jesus' parents react when they found Him in the Temple? Verse 48.
3. What would you have done if you were in the shoes of Jesus' parents?
4. What did Jesus do when he returned to Nazareth with His parents? Verse 51.
5. How can we encourage our children to emulate Jesus' example?

Conclusion

Every year, the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. When He was twelve years, they took Him along. However, after the feast, He was mistakenly left behind because His parents assumed He was with them. After a three-day search they found Him in the Temple sitting with the teachers, asking questions and listening to them. Obviously, His parents were astonished and worried but Jesus returned and remained obedient to them. We can encourage our children to be obedient by setting good examples in word and in deed for them to follow. In addition, we can bring them to the Lord's presence, pray for them and guide them consciously in God's Word.

WEEK 37

BIBLICAL BASIS OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the last study?
- b. How would you apply it to your life?

Main Text: Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25

Memory Verse: *The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.* – Genesis 2:25

Introduction

Christian marriage is a union instituted and ordained by God between a biological male and female. This is instituted and ordained by God for a lifelong relationship where one man is husband and one woman is a wife. He gives them power to procreate and multiply after their own kind on the earth (Gen 1:28). Christian marriage is considered a gift of God and sacred, hence, it must be approached with all dignity and reverence. Christian marriage requires that couples are united, transparent and committed to each other; to be faithful to each other, perform their roles and live together till they are separated by death.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is God's purpose for the institution of marriage? Genesis 2:18, 24.
2. What are some features of Christian marriage?
3. How do you understand the phrase 'they were naked but not ashamed'? Genesis 2:25
4. How is Christian marriage different from non-Christian marriages?
5. In what ways can we make the Word of God central to our marriage?

Conclusion

It is obvious from the study that Christian couples grow in Christlikeness through the life of the marriage. This is because Christ is the centre of the marriage, which provides the main difference between a Christian marriage and a non-Christian one. Couples in Christian marriages are supposed to be selfless, united, transparent and committed to each other. They are to obey God and adhere to biblical roles in marriage (Eph 5:21-26). Husbands and wives in this marriage should be honest and keep no secret between themselves. This attitude reduces conflicts in marriage and creates joy. Children and close relations are influenced by these godly attitudes.

WEEK 38

LEAVING AND CLEAVING

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. From our previous lesson, what did you learn about Christian marriage?

Main Text: Genesis 2: 18-24

Memory Verse: *Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.* – Genesis 2:24 (KJV)

Introduction

In the marriage union, God expects husband and wife to leave their previous relationships and intentionally connect in all aspects to the spouse they are married to. This process enables married couples to build an intimate relationship to become one flesh. However, some couples have not achieved this even after several years of living together. They have not left totally their family of origin, friendships, past romantic and opposite-sex relationships, etc. to cleave to their spouses. They are still dependent on the comfort, and security of their parents' authority or some other person to whom they have very strong ties. This brings about conflicts and unhappy moments in some Christian marriages leading to lack of intimacy, trust and unity.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does 'leaving and cleaving' mean? Verse 24.
2. Why should couples leave other relationships and cleave to each other? Verse 24.
3. Identify some factors that prevent couples from leaving?
4. What happens if couples place their union above other relationships?
5. Identify some practical ways husbands and wives cleave to each other?

Conclusion

We have understood from the discussions that 'leaving and cleaving' is reshaping one's relationships with parents, siblings, friends and loved ones to having our marriage as the highest priority of relationship to our spouses. It is recognising that our marriage has created a new family which must have priority over our previous relationships. This does not mean husbands and wives are not to visit or care for their families, but this should not be at the expense of the marriage. In leaving and cleaving, couples should be transparent, spend time together, share ideas and develop an intimate relationship, thus becoming one flesh (Gen 2:25).

Christians must note that to 'leave and cleave' in the marriage bond is also a picture of the union God wants us to have with Him (Deut 13:4, Eph. 5: 30-32).

WEEK 39

FAMILY DEVOTIONS – THE CHURCH IN THE HOME

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. How did you understand ‘Leaving and Cleaving’ in our previous lesson?
- b. How relevant was the lesson to you?

Main Text: Acts 10:1-2, 24, 44-48

Memory Verse: *The following day, he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. – Acts 10:24*

Introduction

Family devotions is a time of praise, prayer, Bible reading and exhortation exclusive to husband and wife, or parents and children and other members of the household. It is time set aside to build up each individual and establish a sense of unity and direction within families. Family devotions is vital for moving the spiritual lives beyond the church walls and into an active, thriving faith. It is one of the critical ways of building and raising Christian families. The time also enables children to use prayer, God’s Word, and spiritual songs to guide their decision-making, life goals, and their interpersonal relationships. Family devotions enables one to seek the Lord daily through

His word and prayers at home. Our study today is to encourage the observance of family devotions.

Questions for Discussion

1. How is family devotions organised? Verse 24.
2. What is the importance of family devotions?
3. What are the challenges in organising effective family devotions?
4. How can family devotions be encouraged?
5. How can you make family devotions more effective at home?

Conclusion

Family devotions is an intentional exercise organised to build cordial relationships within the family and offer opportunities to meditate on the Word of God and pray. It is a way by which families deepen their relationships with God and with one another. During family devotions, parents encourage and teach their children about the importance of studying the Word of God and engaging in prayers. The children, in turn, emulate the shining examples of their parents. The household of Cornelius is an example of such families.

According to our study, Cornelius called members of his household and friends to be part of the devotions. This created a firm foundation for the family's spiritual growth. As Christians, we must not absent ourselves from family devotions in spite of our busy schedules.

Family Devotions also serves as a good atmosphere for members of the family to develop Christian values and handle other family issues. To make family devotions more effective, we must set time and draw a schedule to involve all the members of the family.

WEEK 41

GPCC WEEK / OUTREACH DAY THE CHURCH EXISTS TO EVANGELISE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Provide a summary of our previous lesson.
- b. How would you apply it in your home?

Main Text: Acts 8:1-8

Memory Verse: *He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation'. – Mark 16:15*

Introduction

Evangelism is the heartbeat of the Church in fulfilling the Great Commission. The local church as a missionary agency ordained by God exists to evangelise. It is the basic unit of the church where sound Christian doctrines and practices are taught to members. In the light of this, the purpose of the Church is to proclaim earnestly the Gospel of Christ to the world for the salvation of lost souls. Jesus Christ commissioned the apostles to evangelise the world (Mk 16:15). In carrying out this task, the early church moved out to evangelise.

Questions for Discussion

1. What happened to the church in Jerusalem? Verse 1.
2. What signs accompanied the preaching of the Gospel? Verse 3-8.

3. In what ways did the persecution of the church in Jerusalem help to fulfil Acts 1:8?
4. What can we learn from Philip who escaped from persecution in Jerusalem to Samaria but still preached the Gospel?
5. How can the local church encourage the preaching of the Gospel?

Conclusion

God expects us to preach the Gospel in season and out of season. Despite the persecutions the early Christians faced, they were strengthened to preach the gospel in fulfilment of their God-given assignment. Philip, in all the troubles, went down to Samaria and proclaimed Christ there with signs and wonders following the word he preached. The power of the Holy Spirit at work in the life of Philip helped him to move the Gospel from Jerusalem to Samaria as was promised by our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8).

The local church should be sensitive to the reality of lost souls and embark on all forms of evangelism, especially personal evangelism and other forms like sports, video evangelism, dawn broadcast, rallies and crusades to fulfil our God-given mandate. Practically, the local church could schedule some of the Sunday morning services to include visitations and personal evangelism. Members should be taught to evangelise in the market places, offices, streets among others.

WEEK 42
**PENSIONS DAY –
REMEMBERING OUR HEROES OF FAITH**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How would you apply it?

Main Text: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Memory Verse: *Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.* – Hebrews 13:7

Introduction

Everything that has a beginning has an end. There is a time to start occupational life – school or work – and a time to retire, enjoy the fruit of your labour and serve as ‘life consultant’ for younger ones. In the CoP, a day is set aside every year to reflect on the work of our forebears who have kept the faith, worked hard and are now on retirement. Such moments of reflection are good for us since they inspire us and re-energise us to fight the good fight of faith. During such times, we pray for the retirees, visit them, and bless them with material goods – in cash and in kind – to encourage them. In this study, we shall look at the life of the apostle Paul who was ‘retiring’.

Questions for Discussion

1. At what time in life and ministry was Paul when he wrote this passage? Verse 6.
2. To what three activities did Paul liken the Christian life and ministry? Verse 7.
3. What is the reward for faithfully completing the Christian journey? Verse 8.
4. What does Paul's statement in verses 7 and 8 mean to you today as a Christian?
5. In what practical ways do you relate to any retired minister you know?

Conclusion

Paul was finishing his Christian race which he also likened to fighting the good fight or keeping the faith. In store for him upon 'retirement', is the crown of righteousness which the Lord Jesus will give to him and to all who faithfully complete their Christian journey. As a church, we have lots of retired ministers among us. As long as they are around, we must continue to pray for them, visit them, learn from their experiences and also support them with material blessings either in cash or in kind.

WEEK 43

**FULFILLING YOUR SPOUSE'S
SEXUAL NEEDS**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. In a sentence, tell us what you remember from the previous lesson.
- b. How did you apply it?

Main Text: 1 Corinthians 7:1-6

Memory Verse: *The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.* – 1 Corinthians 7:3

Introduction

In marriage, couples promise to be faithful to each other for life. They also make a commitment to meet each other's sexual needs by being sexually available and responsive. The emotional need for sex in marriage should be exclusively met only by the other marriage partner. There are situations where sexual needs are not met in some marriages. Such situations create significant conflict between the affected couples. Today's passage teaches us how we can as Christians, meet the sexual needs of our spouses as part of a fulfilling marriage.

Questions for Discussion

1. What duties are couples advised to fulfil in marriage? Verse 3.
2. Why should couples not keep their bodies from each other? Verse 4.
3. Under what circumstance could couples abstain from sex and for how long? Verse 5.
4. What other factors make couples keep their bodies from each other?
5. How can these challenges (in question 4) be overcome?

Conclusion

One area which can easily ruin any marriage is denial of sexual needs of a spouse. Couples are advised not to withhold their bodies from each other. This is because each person's body does not belong to them. Sex in marriage is meant to achieve real happiness and pleasure. This brings joy and promotes unity in marriage. It also acts as an expression of leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh. These define the very essence of marriage. Paul encouraged couples to meet each partner's sexual needs. There are always hitches in marriage when a husband or wife is being denied sex.

Some avoid sex due to conflicts that ensue in marriage. Paul made it clear that aside fasting and prayer, which couples must agree upon, denying each other could cause Satan to ruin the marriage. Couples are therefore, advised to appreciate the sacredness of sex in marriage and fulfil their mutual duties as much as they agree. However, couples must treat sex in marriage with dignity and decency to glorify God.

LOCAL CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What was our previous lesson about?
- b. How important was the lesson to you?

Main Text: Acts 6:1-7

Memory Verse: *Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility to them.* – Acts 6:3.

Introduction

Administration involves planning, organising and supervising the activities of an organisation to achieve its goals. The local church as an organisation needs to plan, organise, create teams, supervise and provide the motivations needed to fulfil the Great Commission. Without proper administration, the local church lacks structures, management and direction. Thus, it is likely to engage in activities which do not contribute to fulfilling its mission. In the CoP, the local presbytery manages the local assembly on behalf of the district. It takes decisions on the day-to-day running of the local assembly, guided by the administrative regulations of the CoP. Thus, there is the need to depend on God for Spirit-led decisions. Moreover, innovation is necessary in dealing with the challenges of contemporary times as was experienced by the early church.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did the apostles address the complaints of the Grecian Jews? Verses 1-4.
2. How did the decision of the apostles help the church to fulfil its main purpose? Verse 7.
3. What is local church administration?
4. What are the administrative structures in the local church?
5. How can local church administration be more effective?

Conclusion

In the early Church, the apostles in Jerusalem committed themselves both to the ministry and the administration of the Church. Their Spirit-led decisions and management enabled the early Church to stand the test of time. Entrusted with the task of making disciples, the apostles saw the need to assign certain responsibilities to specific groups of people. This can be likened to creating teams in our day. Thus, the essence of administration is to plan, provide direction, organise people, assign roles and respond to problems with practical solutions. The local presbytery need our support, prayer and cooperation to enable them administer the affairs of the local church. Also, periodic training of presbyters, cell and ministry leaders will make them more effective in their administrative duties.

WEEK 46

LEADERS OF GOD'S FLOCK

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Summarise what you learnt last week.
- b. What is the essence of church administration according to last week's lessons?

Main Text: 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Memory Verse: *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.* — 1 Peter 5:2.

Introduction

The flock being referred to in this passage represent members of the church. It is also clear from the reading that the flock belong to God. The leader should, therefore, be diligent in taking care of the flock. In the context of The Church of Pentecost, our leaders include apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, elders, deacons and deaconesses. Others are ministry leaders, home cell and Bible studies leaders, various committee leaders and all who play leadership roles in the Church. Each leader of a unit has a great responsibility to take care of God's flock in sincere love for the Lord. When the flock is well fed with the right spiritual food, the result becomes evident in the church, at home, on the streets and at their workplaces.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean to shepherd God's flock? Verse 2.
2. What should be the attitude of the leader towards God's flock? Verses 2, 3.
3. A flock that is well cared for has great impact on society. Discuss.
4. What fruit should society expect from the flock if leaders take good care of them?
5. Practically, how can leaders be encouraged to do their work as good shepherds?

Conclusion

In the passage, it is clear that leaders of God's flock should carry out this responsibility willingly and not out of compulsion. We also see that Christian leadership should be carried out devoid of pursuing dishonest gain. The leaders must be eager to serve, without lording it over those they lead. When this is done well, those leaders will be rewarded with the crown of glory that will never fade. It is also true, as indicated in the parable of the talents that, any leader who fails to follow these simple leadership principles, will face eternal punishment (Matt 25:26).

WEEK 47

ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE SERVICES (ARS)

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How would you apply it to your life?

Main Text: Genesis 16:1-6.

Memory Verse: *He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the LORD.* – Psalm 113:9.

Introduction

Generally, couples expect signs of pregnancy in the early stages of their marriage. Their families and society also watch in anticipation. The moment pregnancy delays, anxiety sets in for affected couples and some begin to seek various forms of assistance including Assisted Reproductive Services (ARS).

This is a prototype practice of what prevailed in biblical times when mistresses offered their maids to their husbands to raise children for them. Today, ARS is a technology used to achieve pregnancy and to assist infertile couples to have children. In an aspect of ARS, the woman may have to rely on another woman's womb for a baby, or the man may have to rely on another man's sperm for a baby. The Church of Pentecost is not against ARS but discourages this aspect of the service (Refer to Ministers Handbook, pp. 60-63).

In our study for today, we would take a critical look at how issues of infertility were dealt with in biblical times, and draw inferences from them as a Church.

Questions for Discussion

1. What action did Sarah take to have children? Verse 2.
2. What was the consequence of Sarah's actions on her family? Verses 4-6.
3. Discuss the implication of Sarah's actions in the light of Christian values?
4. How do you think the Church, families and the society at large should handle couples with delayed conception?
5. What do you think of ARS as an alternative solution to couples in need of a child?

Conclusion

Those who have never experienced delayed childbirth may not understand its frustration. Abraham's wife was so desperate to have a child when pregnancy delayed. She therefore, arranged for her maid to sleep with her husband. Painfully, when the maidservant conceived, she despised her mistress. This led to bitter conflict in Abraham's household. It should be noted that extramarital sex as in the case of Abraham's affair with the maid is not acceptable in Christianity. ARS may not necessarily be bad. However, the aspect where

a couple may have to rely either on another woman's womb or another man's sperm has serious ethical and psychological implications. Needy couples may seek ARS provided the eggs and sperms come from the couples themselves, since God's ideal plan for procreation is limited to the couple joined together as one flesh. Believers are encouraged to seek God's face (Gen 25:21) when experiencing delayed conception. Also, the family and society should support such couples in a responsible manner. This is because Sarah eventually became pregnant through divine intervention after many years of marriage. We can learn from the consequences of Sarah's action that patience is needed during delayed conception.

WEEK 49

**GENEROSITY EXEMPLIFIED
IN THE CHURCH**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the last study?
- b. How relevant was the study to you?

Main Text: Acts 4:32-37.

Memory Verse: *Therefore, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people especially to those who belong to the family of believers.* – Galatians 6:10

Introduction

‘Generosity’ is a very important subject that deserves the church’s close attention. Merriam Webster’s Dictionary defines it as ‘desire to do good to others’. This means that the church should portray a life characterised by good deeds, compassion, charity and acts of kindness. In today’s passage, we observed that the early Christians had all things in common. They sold their properties and possessions to share the proceeds with other Christians who were in need.

Questions for Discussion

1. What made the early believers share everything they had? Verse 32.
2. What were the acts of generosity demonstrated by the early believers? Verses 34-35.

3. Explain the phrase, 'there were no needy persons among them'. Verse 34.
4. How can we demonstrate acts of generosity in our local assemblies?
5. What challenges must we overcome in the church to exemplify the generosity of the early church?

Conclusion

The early Church was able to share their possessions and properties as a result of the unity among them. Many of the disciples sold their lands and houses and brought the proceeds in support of one another. There was 'no needy person among them' because none of these Christians felt that what they had was their own. As a result, they were able to give and share to alleviate poverty among them. They would not let a brother or sister suffer when others had more than enough.

This act of generosity created an atmosphere where God released His power and great grace upon the believers. We should adopt the attitude that everything we have comes from God and we are only sharing what belongs to God. This is a good example for us today to emulate since it can enhance church unity and help us win more souls for Christ. Without unity, the Church cannot survive. We should avoid selfishness and greed to be able to give generously to one another.

WEEK 50
**CHRISTMAS –
GOOD NEWS – THE BIRTH OF JESUS**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How would you apply it to your life?

Main Text: Luke 1:26-35; Matthew 1:18-21.

Memory Verse: *She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.* – Matthew 1:21.

Introduction

Christmas is celebrated annually to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. The occasion is marked with several activities, ranging from entertainment to spirituality. Traders and other business firms record reasonable sales during this season. Many people travel to visit family members and other tourist sites. For some, Christmas is an annual culture for merry-making; for others it is time to empty goods from their shops. However, for believers, it is a moment to thank God for sending His Son to save us from sin and draw strength from Jesus to live victoriously. We also use this occasion to reach out to those living in sin and remind them that Jesus still saves.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did the angel describe Jesus to Mary? Luke 1:32, 33.
2. How was Mary assured of being the one to give birth to Jesus? Luke 1:35.
3. How did Joseph and Mary respond to God's revelation about the birth of Christ? Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:38.
4. How should the Christmas season affect our lives as believers?
5. Some people abuse Christmas celebrations out of ignorance. What can Christians do to correct this misconduct?

Conclusion

When we know who someone really is and the legacy they left behind, it informs us to celebrate them well. Gabriel revealed to Mary the personality of the one she was going to conceive – the Son of the Most High who has an eternal Kingdom. Joseph, on the other hand, knew Jesus was no ordinary Man. The coming of Jesus served as a means by which Mary and Joseph had encounters with Gabriel. As believers, the season should mark the deepening of our relationship with God, and the propagation of the gospel to the world.

WORSHIP AS A LIFESTYLE

Review of Previous Lesson

- a. How important was the previous lesson to you?
- b. How prepared are you to make the birth of Jesus significant to others?

Main Text: John 4:20-26

Memory Verse: *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.* – Romans 12:1

Introduction

Worship in the church consists of prayer, teaching and obeying God's word, singing, adoration, giving an offering and observing the Lord's Supper. Therefore, anything that goes on in the Church and outside the Church should be an act of worship as far as it honours the Lord. It is important to understand that our focus is not the Church in worship but the lifestyles of individuals and the body of believers. Biblical worship is a way of life, not just singing.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was the concern of the Samaritan woman regarding worship? Verse 20.
2. What does it mean to worship in spirit and truth? Verse 24.

3. From the passage, what do we learn about worship from Jesus? Verses 20-24.
4. What does it mean to 'offer our bodies as living sacrifices' to God? Romans 12:1.
5. How can I worship God in my daily life?

Conclusion

The Samaritan woman raised the issue about the correct place of worship. We can infer from Jesus' response that, the location of worship is not as important as the attitude of worshippers. When Jesus said, 'salvation is from the Jews', He meant that only through the Jewish Messiah would the whole world find salvation. One of the Hebrew terms for worship is *shachah*, which means 'to bow down in reverence' as a gesture of respect or submission. To worship is to ascribe ultimate value to a person, an object or a deity. Jesus Christ told us to worship God in spirit and in truth.

To 'worship God in spirit' means acknowledging God's presence everywhere and living to honour and obey Him at all times. To 'worship God in truth' means living according to God's Word and being sincere in our ways. True worship is based on the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit prays for us and teaches us the words of Christ and tells us we are loved by God (Rom 5:5). 'God is spirit' means He is not a physical being limited to one place. He is present everywhere and He can be worshipped anywhere at any time.

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HOME CELL

WEEK 1
FAMILY DAY

WEEK 3
PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 4

SHARING IN THE VISION OF LEADERSHIP

Main Text: 2 Samuel 23:8-19

Memory Verse: *'Do all that you have in mind', his armour-bearer said. 'Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul'. – 1 Samuel 14:7*

Introduction

Leadership is about vision casting and leading people to accomplish the plans in the vision. Interestingly, no leader can fulfil their vision alone. It takes the unwavering support, dedication, commitment and loyalty of followers to accomplish a vision.

As read in our main text today, David had a great team of valiant men who risked their lives to ensure his health and success as their leader. Similarly, our new Chairman, Apostle Eric Kwabena Nyamekye and the other Executive Council members need such tenacious support from us all. They can only accomplish the vision 2023 of the Church with the support of all of us. For this reason, we must share in their vision to ensure that we achieve great feats together to the glory of God.

Questions for Discussion

1. Identify some of the great achievements of David's key soldiers. Verse 8-12.
2. How did David's soldiers support him? Verse 16.

3. How did Jonathan's armour-bearer respond to his request? 1 Samuel 14:6,7.
4. How did David's mighty men ensure his success as their leader?
5. How can we share in the vision of the Executive Council members?

Conclusion

The vision of every leader is made possible by great men and women who support the leader. The outright support and passionate response from Jonathan's armour-bearer spurred Jonathan on to victory. In like manner, the bravery and courage of David's men led to the conquest of kingdoms and nations.

As we welcome our new Chairman into office, it is necessary for us to share in his vision. Like Jonathan's armour-bearer and David's valiant men, we should be committed to the vision of our leaders to ensure it is accomplished. We must, therefore, genuinely seek to understand the Chairman's vision (Possessing the Nations) and run with it. As we do so in our locals, districts, areas and nations, God will cause this vision to be accomplished.

WEEK 7
PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 8

IMPORTANCE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How did you apply the lesson in the home, school or workplace?

Main Text: Galatians 1:1-3.

Memory Verse: *Paul, an Apostle – sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead – and all the brothers and sisters with me, To the churches in Galatia. – Galatians 1:1, 2.*

Introduction

As established in our previous study, the church is the body of Christ. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in all denominations and all generations constitute the Church Universal. It is, however, important for us to also identify that each member of the body of Christ must belong to a local congregation and have fellowship with other believers on regular basis (Heb 10:25).

In today's passage, we see that Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia. He did not just write to the Church Universal or an individual member of the body of Christ, but to various local congregations in the province of Galatia. Also, the Bible refers to other local congregations such as the churches in the province of Asia (1 Cor 16:19), the churches in Syria and Cilicia (Ac 15:41), the church in Corinth (1 Cor 1:2), and the church of the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:1).

Questions for Discussion

1. Who were the recipients of the book of Galatians? Verses 1, 2.
2. How will you differentiate between the Church Universal and the churches in Galatia? Verse 2.
3. Why is it important to belong to a local congregation?
4. What should be your commitment to your local congregation?
5. How has your life been impacted as a member in your local assembly?

Conclusion

The local church is the regular gathering of believers at an identifiable place for the purpose of fellowship, studying of the Word of God, and prayer. The local church can meet in the church building, in a house, under a tree or at any convenient place, depending on the resources available. The most important thing is the genuineness of heart of the people who are meeting. It is good to have a decent place of worship, where the local church meets to glorify God. However, it is not the meeting place that makes up the local church. It is also important for us to recognise that a person can belong to a local congregation but may not belong to the Church Universal. Such a person lacks the genuine conversion experience. The pastor or presiding elder may know those who belong to the local congregation but may not know those who truly belong to Christ.

WEEK 10
CELL SOCIAL INPUT

WEEK 11

PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 13

**THE CHURCH AS A
COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How relevant was the lesson to you?

Main Text: Colossians 3:13, 14

Memory Verse: *I appeal to you brothers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.* – 1 Corinthians 1:10

Introduction

A community is a group of people with a common background, history, and a shared interest within society. The church is a community of believers and provides the ideal avenue for members to express their faith together without hindrance. Whereas the world is characterised by social barriers, Christ's work on the cross at Calvary has removed all walls of hostility for His church to exist in love and unity as a community.

To belong to the church community, every member is required to relate with one another in fellowship (Ac 2:42). Members must create a common ground to express their faith with other believers in peace and harmony (Ac 2:44, 46).

The expression of their faith as the body of Christ should have a positive impact on the larger community in which the church finds itself as it happened in the days of the early church (Ac 2:46, 47).

Questions for Discussion

1. How do you understand the concept of the church as a community of believers?
2. Why is it necessary for Christians to forgive one another of their wrongdoings? Verse 13.
3. In which ways can all of us have the same 'mind and thought'? 1 Corinthians 1:10.
4. To what extent should we demonstrate love in the church as a recipe for unity? Verse 14.
5. Suggest two virtues that can be practised in the church to make it a very strong community of believers.

Conclusion

The significant lesson in today's discussion is that the church must overcome the barriers of division in this world. The Church ought to address the ultimate idea of its unity as a community of believers for the world to emulate. Through Jesus Christ, God has brought together His people. God's will is that they 'shall be one flock' under one Shepherd (Jn 10:16) with the same mind. Ultimately, we have realised that the redemptive work of Christ has given us 'access to the Father by one Spirit' (Eph 2:18). Members of the church community must therefore, love one another and make every effort to live at peace with all men (Rom 12:18).

WEEK 14
FAMILY DAY

WEEK 17

THE GOD-FACTOR AT THE WORKPLACE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Summarize what you can recall from the previous lesson.
- b. What steps have you taken to implement what you learnt?

Main Text: Daniel 2:1-6, 17-20.

Memory Verse: *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* – Philippians 2:13.

Introduction

We shall continue our character study of Daniel and consider how God empowers the Christian to solve complex problems at the workplace. It is very important for Christians to espouse godliness at the workplace. In this vein, Christians should remain steadfast when difficult situations and complex issues arise at the workplace. We should be bold enough to deal with emerging complex issues with the wisdom and confidence that God provides. Daniel's supernatural interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is the subject of today's discussion.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was the difficulty in the king's request to Daniel and the wise men? Verses 1-6.

2. How did Daniel approach the issue and what was the result? Verses 17-20.
3. How different was Daniel's approach from that of the other wise men and magicians? Verses 10, 11, 17, 18.
4. What should Christians do when faced with similar issues?
5. What have you learnt from today's study?

Conclusion

King Nebuchadnezzar claimed to have forgotten his dream and requested the magicians and wise men in his service to tell him the dream and interpret it. This was humanly impossible. While others shied away from the challenge, Daniel trusted God and therefore, asked for time to seek His face for the required solution. Daniel could have easily given up on the situation but he was determined to seek God's help in finding solution to the problem. As a result, he brought glory to God and also distinguished himself as a worker with extraordinary and supernatural abilities. Such should be our testimonies as Christians at the workplace; that our God is able to help us deal with complex situations. We must depend on God to do exploits at our workplaces to bring glory to God. This may take the forms of Spirit-inspired directions, pieces of advice and innovations.

WEEK 20

PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 21
**KEEPING GODLY
COMPANY AT THE WORKPLACE**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Narrate briefly what you can recall from the last study.
- b. Explain briefly the effect the lesson had on your life.

Main Text: Daniel 2:14-19.

Memory Verse: *Do not be deceived. Bad company corrupts good morals.* – 1 Corinthians 15:33.

Introduction

Relationships at the workplace can be professional and, or personal. Professional relationships are solely for the purpose of getting the work done. Personal relationships on the other hand, involve spending time together, moving out to places of interest and discussing life issues together. It has been said that the friends one keeps is a reflection of who they are and want to be. The Christian is likely to meet people with different shades of character at the workplace. These include people who are lazy, negligent, greedy, insubordinate, alcoholics, gamblers, fornicators and adulterers. On the other hand, there are hardworking, competent, contented and morally upright workers.

Though we do not decide who gets employed at the workplace, we have to use our discretion to choose who to associate with closely. In our study today, we shall examine the character traits of Daniel's friends at the workplace.

Questions for Discussion

1. With whom did Daniel discuss the issue concerning the king's dream? Verse 16-17.
2. What common character traits did Daniel share with his friends? Daniel 1: 12, 17-20.
3. Who should the Christian consult for advice at the workplace?
4. For what purpose did Daniel discuss the issue with his friends? Verse 18.
5. What happened after the discussion? Verse 19.
6. How should Christians relate to workmates with bad character traits?

Conclusion

Daniel discussed the issue of the king's dream with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He further requested that they pray with him for God's intervention in the matter. There were other wise men in the king's service but Daniel chose to discuss the issue with his friends who were like minded both in character and faith. These friends joined Daniel in his decision not to defile himself with the king's food (Dan 1:13-15). They also refused to bow to the king's image even when they

were threatened with the fiery furnace. Such were the character traits of Daniel's close friends.

Christians are placed at the workplace for a purpose. We must be careful how we spend time and move out with workmates with bad character traits. Our mission as Christians should guide us in choosing whom to have personal relationships with at the workplace. Even if our good character traits do not have positive influence on our work colleagues, we should not be influenced by their negative attitudes, for bad company corrupts good morals (1 Cor. 15:33).

WEEK 24

PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 26

RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS – CHRISTIAN VIEW OF LAW ENFORCERS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous study?
- b. Briefly discuss the significance of the lesson to you.

Main Text: Romans 13:1-7 (cf. 1 Peter 2:13-17).

Memory Verse: *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.* – Romans 13:1.

Introduction

Our view of law enforcement agencies is very crucial. As Christians, we must have a godly view of these ‘servants of God’. Sometimes, we fail to see that persons mandated by the state to ensure the well-being of people are God’s servants. It is rather unfortunate that we sometimes allow partisan interests to cloud our Christian worldview. Painfully, some Christians who support political parties sometimes misconduct themselves as some unbelievers do. As Christians, we must keep a Christ-centred worldview of law enforcement agencies and personnel if we can indeed influence the nations with the values and principles of the Kingdom of God. In this study, we will consider the Christ-centred view of law enforcement personnel.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why must every person be subject to governing authorities? Verse 1.
2. What is the implication of resisting an official empowered by the state to enforce respect for the Law? Verse 2.
3. Law enforcers are God's servants. Discuss. Verses 3, 4.
4. What should be our primary motivation in embracing law enforcement? Verse 5.
5. As true ambassadors of Christ, how should we relate with law enforcement personnel? Verses 6, 7.

Conclusion

All people must be subject to governing authorities such as environmental law enforcers because they have been placed there by God. To rebel against them means rebelling against God and reaping the attendant consequences. Law enforcers should act as agents of God and eschew corruption. Also, they must avoid the abuse of authority in the performance of their duty. God has authorised them to reward those who are law-abiding and to punish law-breakers. They can do this effectively if they are seen to be law abiding citizens themselves.

As Christians, we must obey the laws of the land not because we fear punishment but in order to keep a clear conscience and to glorify Jesus. We pay tax to law enforcers to serve us for our own good. We must therefore, treat them with respect and honour. We must not be part of those who disrespect and resist these servants of God except when they are forcing us to deny allegiance to Christ.

WEEK 27
FAMILY DAY

WEEK 30

POLLUTION AND SANITATION: HOLDING ONE ANOTHER RESPONSIBLE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Mention two environmental laws you know.
- b. Name two activities you would undertake to protect the environment.

Main Text: 2 Thessalonians 3:11-15; Proverbs 25:26

Memory Verse: *If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.* – 2 Thessalonians 3:14

Introduction

Growth comes with taking personal responsibilities. We start as infants with no personal responsibilities whatsoever. As we progress through the various stages of childhood, we take up more responsibilities. Being responsible has its rewards whereas failure to do what is right has undesirable consequences. In many ways, the difference between a child and an adult is the willingness of the adult to take personal responsibility for their actions. As Paul said, 'When I became a man, I put childhood ways behind me' (1 Cor 13:11). In our study, we shall discuss how we can hold one another accountable in all things including sanitation and pollution in our nation.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does Paul describe those who do not take personal responsibilities in life? Verse 11.
2. What is Paul's advice to people who act irresponsibly in life? Verse 12.
3. What is Paul's encouragement to those who take personal responsibilities in life? Verse 13.
4. How should we handle those who act irresponsibly towards the environment?
5. In what ways can we hold one another accountable in matters of sanitation and pollution?

Conclusion

Paul describes those who do not take personal responsibilities as busybodies. He encourages them to be responsible by working. He also encourages those who are responsible not to grow weary and advises them to take note of fellow-brethren who are irresponsible. We must not treat such people as enemies but rather warn them. Regarding the issue of sanitation, we are to encourage one another to do the right thing. We must remind one another about issues of sanitation and how to take responsibility as Christians who are salt of the earth and light of the world.

WEEK 34

INTERFAITH MARRIAGE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous study?
- b. Explain how you implemented what you learnt during the last study.

Main Text: Deuteronomy 7:1-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14

Memory Verse: *You are not the same as those who do not believe. So do not join yourself to them. Good and bad do not belong together. Light and darkness cannot share together.*
– 2 Corinthians 6:14 (New Century Version, NCV).

Introduction

There are many religions in the world. Even among professing Christians there are sects. These sects are churches that have been formed to follow a specific practice or interpretation of the Bible often held together by one personality who promotes the doctrine. As Pentecostal believers, we are expected to espouse moral as well as doctrinal integrity. For this reason, we are not to be yoked in marriage to unbelievers, persons of other religions, and those who belong to Christian sects.

Interfaith marriage is a lifelong union between persons who profess and remain adherents to different faiths or religious beliefs. There are examples of Christians who have entered into such marriages. Others are being pressured to marry persons of different faiths.

The memory verse cautions believers not to join themselves with unbelievers in marriage. Today's study focuses on teaching believers to avoid interfaith marriage.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some of the different religious beliefs in our world today?
2. Why were the Israelites cautioned not to engage in interfaith marriages? Verses 3, 4, 6.
3. According to our memory verse, why are Christians not to marry unbelievers?
4. Why do some believers marry unbelievers?
5. In what ways can interfaith marriages be avoided by Christians?

Conclusion

God told the Israelites not to intermarry with the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, as they were of different faith. They were not to marry unbelievers since they do not share the same faith. This is because, they would turn away the hearts of God's people to serve the gods of their faith. Christians should not compromise their faith by marrying someone of a different faith.

As a chosen generation and a royal priesthood, we are to maintain our purity, holiness and be identified as God's own. Like the Israelites, Christians should endeavour

to maintain their status as God's children by marrying fellow Christians. They should be mindful of accepting marriage proposals from people of other religions or Christian sects. This is because such marriages tend to hinder the spiritual development of affected Christians as well as their children.

WEEK 35

FAMILY DAY –
BRINGING OUR CHILDREN TO JESUS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What lesson did you learn from interfaith marriages?
- b. How relevant is the lesson to you?

Main Text: Mark 10:13-16.

Memory Verse: *When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.* – Mark 10:14.

Introduction

During the days of Jesus, it was a practice for Jewish mothers to bring their children to a *rabbi* for blessing. For this reason, some mothers brought their children to Jesus for His blessing. From the text read, it appears the disciples were of the opinion that the little children were less important than whatever Jesus was doing. They were, therefore, considered not worthy of coming close to Jesus. Displeased with the disciples' action, Jesus welcomed the children because, the kingdom of God belongs to them as well. This is because, they have the kind of faith and trust needed to enter God's Kingdom. Today's lesson will focus on how Christ values children.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think the disciples tried to drive the children away? Verse 13.
2. How does Jesus' reaction to the disciples' attitude reveal His value for children? Verse 14.
3. How can we emulate how Jesus treated the children? Verse 16.
4. In what ways do we sometimes act like the disciples did against children?
5. How can an adult receive the Kingdom of God as a child?

Conclusion

God in His goodness and mercies is concerned about all people including children, and He blesses them. Today, the attitudes of some Christians tend to hinder their children from 'seeing the Lord'. Some leave their children at home to attend to house chores while they attend church services. To avoid this, churches should make adequate arrangements to accommodate children during church services. These arrangements should grant them opportunity to learn about Christ and worship freely. We must remind ourselves that the child today is the adult tomorrow. Their formative years need the blessing of Jesus Christ. As adults, we must continue to be humble and truthful in order to receive the Kingdom of God.

WEEK 39

GODLY PARENTING

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in our previous discussion?
- b. How do you apply the lesson in your life?

Main Text: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Memory Verse: *Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.* – Deuteronomy 6:7.

Introduction

Children are gifts from God. Thus, parents have a responsibility to nurture them to exhibit godly values and lifestyles. Godly parenting involves raising children in the fear of the Lord. This is not an easy task. It is especially so today as social norms are increasingly interfering with Christian virtues.

This challenge is worsened by the broadcast of unwholesome materials on the television, radio programmes and social media platforms. However, godly parenting remains a great privilege from God as children are a blessing and gift from Him. In order to keep the Israelites in remembrance of His love and care, God commanded them to train their children in a godly manner (Prov 22:6).

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is godly parenting important? Verses 2, 3.
2. What is the best means by which parents can raise godly offspring? Verses 7-9.
3. What are some of the challenges parents encounter in raising godly offspring in our generation?
4. How best could the challenges identified in (3) above be handled?
5. What contributions can you make personally towards godly parenting?

Conclusion

When God created man and woman in His image and likeness, He commanded them to be fruitful and multiply. This includes reproducing after their kind and bringing up their offspring in a godly manner. God expected them to exhibit His communicable attributes such as love, righteousness, holiness and truthfulness. God told the Israelites to continue to raise their children in a godly manner to make their families fear Him. This was not only in word, but also in practice. Godly parenting enables families to become agents of transformation in their immediate environments. As Christians take their children to church for spiritual nurturing, they must also teach them at home to continually remind them that God expects them to live a morally upright life in this perverse generation.

WEEK 43

HANDLING MARITAL CONFLICT

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What lesson did you derive from the previous study?
- b. How would you apply the lesson to your life?

Main Text: Genesis 16:1-6.

Memory Verse: *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.* – Ephesians 5:21.

Introduction

Conflict is common to all marriages. It is not only about the expression of divergent views but also issues handled poorly by the couple which damage the marriage relationship. Marital conflict surfaces when one or both persons are self-centred. It also stems out of unfulfilled expectations by one or both spouses. In situations where one of them wants to have something done in their way at the expense of the other, conflict often occurs. This brings misunderstandings, disagreements, and hurt feelings between husbands and wives. Today we shall discuss how Abraham and Sarah handled their marital conflict.

Questions for Discussion

1. What misunderstanding ensued between Abraham and Sarah? Verses 5, 6.

2. What are the causes of marital conflict?
3. How should marital conflict be handled?
4. What are the consequences of unresolved marital conflict?
5. How can marital conflict be avoided as much as possible?

Conclusion

From the discussions, we have identified some causes of marital conflict. These may border on finances, interference of in-laws and maidservants. Others are due to sex, time commitments, culture, and poor handling of misunderstandings. In the case of Abraham and Sarah, it was the pressure to have a child. The conflict heightened when Hagar began to despise Sarah after she became pregnant. Sarah blamed Abraham for causing the mess even though she gave the advice but Abraham did not fight back (Gen 16:6).

Conflict not handled rightly in marriage, can cause depression, unhappiness, bitterness and reduces marriage to an experience to be endured instead of being fulfilling. As Christians, we must accept our mistakes and resolve our differences amicably for a successful marriage. We must submit to one another in the fear of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 5:21).

WEEK 44
FAMILY DAY –
THE EFFECTS OF PREFERENTIAL
TREATMENT ON FAMILY UNITY

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Can you recall some of the causes of marital conflict discussed in the previous study?
- b. How relevant was the lesson to you?

Main Text: Genesis 37:3-4, 12-18.

Memory Verse: *Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him.* – Genesis 37:3.

Introduction

The practice of giving preferential treatment to a child at the expense of other children in the family is very common in our days among some parents. This partly explains why some family members grow up to be different from one another, despite sharing the same genetic inheritance and environment. God created children in His own image, hence, there is the need to treat them equally. This is because selective treatment of children breeds disunity and hatred among them. Today, we shall discuss the effects of preferential treatment on the family.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did Jacob treat Joseph differently? Verse 3.
2. In what ways are favourite children treated among their siblings? Verse 4.
3. What are some of the effects of preferential treatments on family unity?
4. How are some house-helpers or other dependants discriminated against in the home?
5. In what ways can we ensure that we treat all our children and other dependants fairly?

Conclusion

Preferential treatment given by parents to some of their children breeds disunity in the family. Birth order (first-and last-born children over middle children), child's personality and behaviour, and gender are some of the factors responsible for preferential treatment. Jacob's preference for Joseph at the expense of his other children is an example. Such practices create hatred and bitterness towards the favoured child or children. Christian parents should desist from giving preferential treatment to some children at the expense of the others to avoid discrimination. In situations where there are step-children, house-helpers, and other dependants, they should all be treated with love and equity in order to build family unity.

WEEK 47

INTERCEDING FOR ONE ANOTHER

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn last week?
- b. How important was the lesson to you?

Main Text: Ac 12:5-17.

Memory Verse: *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.* – James 5:16.

Introduction

One mark of a vibrant local church is regular and spontaneous intercession for the needs of members and the work of ministry. To intercede is to stand in the gap for someone in distress through prayer. Intercession is deliberate, sacrificial, and a sign of love for one another in the local church. The early church engaged constantly in corporate intercessory prayers. The specific instance of earnest prayer by the local church for Peter will be discussed today.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did the local church respond to the news of Peter's imprisonment? Verse 5.
2. What happened when the local church prayed for Peter? Verses 7–9.

3. What are some of the issues the local church needs to pray about?
4. Why is it difficult for some local churches to engage in regular intercessory prayers?
5. In what practical ways can intercessory prayers be enhanced in the church?

Conclusion

From the scriptures, we learnt that the local church prayed earnestly for Peter when they heard of his imprisonment by Herod. By the hand of God, Peter escaped miraculously from prison. The church in Acts 'continued steadfastly...in prayers' (Ac 2:42). We should do the same in our day. The local church could pray for the healing of the sick among them, deliverance from difficult situations and the progress of work in the church. The point is that corporate prayer should be a habit of the church. This is vital because if the church as a community is not emphasising or scheduling regular prayer, then the members will not regard it as a habit to be valued. Additionally, the members may move to other places for prayer. The healthy church is a church that prays. It does not just talk about prayer, teach about it or pray when there is a problem — it prays constantly!

WEEK 52

MAKING TIME FOR WEDDING CEREMONIES

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. How would you apply the lesson to your life?

Main Text: John 2:1-12.

Memory Verse: *Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.* – John 2:2 (NKJV)

Introduction

One of the most interesting aspects of marriage is the wedding ceremony with its accompanying festivities. Among the Jewish people, the ceremony concerned the whole community. On the wedding day, the couple and their respective families look forward to seeing friends and relatives around. They express their excitement when the occasion is well attended. However, it would be embarrassing to them when the celebration is poorly attended. Today's study is to encourage believers to make time for weddings and to renew the act of presenting gifts to the newly-weds, as much as we can.

Questions for discussion

1. Who attended the wedding celebration in Cana of Galilee? Verses 1, 2.

2. What was the result of Jesus' presence at the wedding of Cana? Verses 9-11.
3. Is there any indication that gifts were exchanged at the wedding ceremony? Verses 3, 7, 8.
4. How can we make the best moments out of the wedding invitations we receive?
5. What lessons can we learn from the role Mary played during the crises at the wedding?
6. How can we ensure moderate wedding celebrations in the Church?

Conclusion

Jesus' mission on earth was to seek and save the lost (Lk 19:10). However, He made time to honour a wedding invitation. He did well to attend with His mother, brothers and disciples. Jesus' presence at the wedding had both spiritual and physical benefits. Physically, He gave the best gift of the day, turning water into wine. This miracle caused His disciples to believe in Him. Jesus did not attend the ceremony for the fun of it; His glory was manifested. Mary, on the other hand, figured out a crucial crisis at the wedding and brought in Jesus to resolve the problem. We should do well to find solutions to problems at wedding ceremonies rather than resort to mockery and gossip. Additionally, prospective couples are encouraged to plan for moderate weddings.

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THE CHURCH AS A MODEL FOR SOCIETY

Main Text: 1 John 5:1-4

Memory Verse: *For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.* – 1 John 5:4 (ESV)

Introduction

The New Testament reveals what God wants His Church to be in terms of modelling His principles in the world. No one sees God physically, but the Church as His bride and community is called to demonstrate the nature of God and portray His beauty to the world. When people see the Church, they should have a mental picture of God and His kingdom.

As a model for society, whose power and image are derived from Christ, the Church remains an agent of transformation of society through its glorious ministry. For example, the victory in the sense of 1 John 5:4 implies that ungodly practices in the world, such as homosexuality, corruption, and other social vices must not have an expression in the Church, no matter the pressure mounted against it.

Questions for Discussion

1. What qualifies one to be a child of God? Verses 1, 2.
2. How do you understand the statement ‘those born of God have overcome the world’? Verse 4.

3. Faith in Christ is the victory of believers. Explain.
4. Explain who the Bible refers to as a person 'born of God' Verse 4.
5. Mention practical ways by which the Church, as a model for society, can fight moral decadence.

Conclusion

As an institution of victory, the Church has been divinely empowered to overcome all sorts of evil in society, both present and those to come in the future. We must all rise and build a Church that fulfils that mandate. The radiance of God's glory in it should be one that heals the moral decadence in the world (Matt 5:13) and restores humanity to their original glory (Rom 3:23).

The Church is a chosen and holy nation unto the Lord. It must stay awake and be the binding force that Jesus Christ empowers to transform the world. The implication is that, every believer should be a model by which others can emulate. Today, it has become obvious that the world is crumbling under the weight of corruption and other social vices, while many Christians are unfortunately compromising their faith to worldliness. Christ expects us as His ambassadors in the world, to impact positively our society with authentic godly principles such as integrity and holiness.

HANDLING POLYGAMOUS BELIEVERS IN THE CHURCH

Main Text: 1 Samuel 1:1-7

Memory verse: *But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.* – 1 Corinthians 7:2

Introduction

The practice of polygamy dates as far back as the days of Lamech (Gen 4:19) after the fall of humanity. The Bible also records several other instances of the practice (Gen 36:2; 1 Sam 1:2; 2 Sam 2:2;). Just like any other institution, marriage is guided by rules and regulations, which those who desire to enter into must comply with. The scriptures clearly explain that monogamy is the divine ideal for marriage (Gen 2:24). Today's lesson will seek to unravel the original plan God has for humankind concerning marriage and how The Church of Pentecost handles polygamous members.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did Elkanah treat his two wives? Verses 4, 5.
2. What conflict ensued between the two wives of Elkanah? Verse 6.
3. What was the aftermath of the conflict between Hannah and Peninah? Verse 7.
4. How do you understand the statement 'each man should have his own wife' (1 Cor 7:2)?

5. How can we avoid polygamous marriages in the church?

Conclusion

The Bible is clear on regulations regarding marriage. Thus, it is our duty to comply with God's plan for marriage. In the beginning, He instituted marriage as a union between one man and one woman. This proves that monogamy was the original practice of marriage just as Christ emphasised (Matt 19:4, 5). Polygamy is not an antidote for sexual immorality (1 Cor 7:2). It rather poses numerous family conflicts (1 Sam 1:4, 5; Gen 29:30). In The Church of Pentecost, converts who are polygamists are baptised but are not received into full membership of the Church until they renounce polygamy. They are also excluded from being given the right hand of fellowship, giving testimonies at church services or becoming officers of the church (Titus 1:6, 1 Tim 3:12). At their funerals, ministers may conduct the service but no tribute or testimonies are given on behalf of the Church at such funeral services. This is done to create room for God's original intent for marriage to be maintained.

THE PURPOSE OF THE ASCENSION GIFTS: EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

Main Text: Ephesians 4:11-16

Memory Verse: *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers.* – Ephesians 4:11

Introduction

One cannot talk about the kingdom of God without discussing the ministerial gifts (ascension gifts) given to men to expand the Kingdom of God. Some call them ascension gifts because, it was made manifest after Jesus Christ ascended on high (Eph 4:8). Ascension or ministerial gifts are gifts of people Jesus Christ gives to His church to enhance the ministry by equipping the believers of the faith. The five-fold ministries or offices that Jesus established after His ascension provide pastoral care for His church. Our lesson today will highlight these gifts, their relevance in equipping the saints and developing God's Kingdom.

Questions for Discussion

1. Name the five-fold ministerial gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11.
2. Why does Jesus Christ give ascension gifts to the church? Verse 12.

3. According to verses 13 and 14, what does God expect from the saints who have been given the ascension gifts?
4. How do you understand the statement 'no longer children tossed by the wind'? Verse 14.
5. Share your experiences on how you have been equipped by one of these gifts of men.

Conclusion

When Jesus ascended on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. These are the offices of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and the teacher. They are primarily responsible to 'equip the saints for the work of ministry; till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man'. God expects the fullness of Christ in the believer, hence, the giving of these gifts. In some respects, Christians are to be like children. They are to be docile, gentle, mild and free from ambition, pride and haughtiness (Matt 18:2-3). But children have other characteristics besides simplicity and meekness; this is what Paul is referring to. It is certain that the child is ignorant, weak and unsteady, tossed about in the nurse's arms. We are not to be influenced easily and led astray by others; rather we are to be firm through the equipping power of the gifts of ministry. Let us continue to submit to the leadership of the church so that we will reach the perfection Christ desires of us.

THE CHURCH IS HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH

Main Text: Philippians 2:14-16

Memory Verse: *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. – Ephesians 5:27 (KJV)*

Introduction

The word ‘blemish’ could mean a stain, mark or imperfection that disfigures the appearance of something or destroys a person’s reputation. The church is a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9) that is made up of faithful Christians who exemplify the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the Perfect One. God expects the church to be sanctified, holy and separated from sin. It is to be blameless and serve as a model of integrity. The church without blemish is, therefore, an embodiment of Jesus’ ministry and righteous living.

Even in the Old Testament, sacrifices offered to God were to be without spot or wrinkle (Ex 12:5; Deut 17:1) and that presupposes the kind of church that God established through the work of Christ on Calvary. In the same way, the church must be an epitome of righteousness and godliness in this depraved world.

Questions for Discussion

1. Explain in your own words why the church should be without blemish. Ephesians 5:27.
2. How do you explain the biblical teaching that Christians should be blameless in this 'crooked and depraved generation'? Verse 15.
3. In which way can we live a 'blameless and pure' lifestyle? Verse 15.
4. What benefit would the church get if it remains blameless? Philippians 2:16a.
5. Examine today's church in the light of the call for it to be blameless.

Conclusion

Instead of being blameless, today's church seems to be bedevilled with spots and wrinkles such as false teachings, corruption, carnality and materialism. These vices are contrary to the biblical standards enjoining believers to be blameless and live above reproach (Col 1:22). Building a church without blemish must be the responsibility of every Christian. We are the light of the world and under no circumstance should we allow darkness to surround and overwhelm us. Every Christian must be a role model for society.

THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

Main Text: Ephesians 1:18-23

Memory Verse: *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.* – Ephesians 1:22-23

Introduction

In our previous lesson, we discussed that the church is not the building in which we come together for worship. Rather, it is those of us who are called and are being built into Christ's likeness. Today's Scripture reading reveals that, to be called into the body of Christ is a call into an eternal hope. In Apostle Paul's prayer, he reveals that this hope is the riches of God's glorious inheritance for God's holy people. Paul also gave a hint that God has placed all things under Christ's feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church which is His body. This, therefore, emphasises the fact that the church is made up of people who genuinely believe in the Lordship of Christ, recognise Him as their head, obey Him and keep His teachings in all they do.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why does Paul want the eyes of the heart of his audience to be enlightened? Verse 18.
2. Who are included in the body of Christ?

3. What is our position as the body of Christ in relation to spiritual rulers, authorities, powers and dominions? Verse 21.
4. What should be your attitude towards your environment since Christ has been appointed head over everything for the church? Verse 22.
5. What practical lessons have you learnt from today's study?

Conclusion

Paul prays for the church in Ephesus, that the eyes of their heart may be enlightened so that they may know the hope to which they have been called. Since God appointed Christ as head of everything, we as the body of Christ are firmly protected from all rule, authority, power and dominion. On the other hand, as head of everything, Christ will hold us accountable for how we handle all things under Him, including our water bodies, trees, land and our immediate environments. Christ expects His body, the church, to be stewards of all the beautiful things God has created for us. It is also important for us to recognise that as the body of Christ, we are knitted together, belong together and function better in unity as one body.

FELLOWSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Main Text: Acts 2:42-47

Memory Verse: *By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.* – John 13:35

Introduction

Humans are social beings. Thus, everyone desires to belong to a group where the sense of oneness and bonding is strong. When people become Christians, they leave the ‘fellowship’ of sinners to become ‘fellows’ in the ‘ship’ of Christians. Thus, fellowship is not just for challenging times but needful for the survival of the Christian. In view of this, the Church is expected to intentionally promote fellowship with one another. The early Church was committed to expressing the love of God as they worshipped together and cared for one another.

Questions for Discussion

1. In what ways did the early Church spend their lives together? Verse 42
2. How were the needy among the believers supported? Verses 44, 45
3. How does fellowship affect church growth? Verse 47
4. What challenges militate against fellowship in the local church?

5. How can the local church bring about strong fellowship among members?

Conclusion

Fellowship as used in Acts 2:42 expresses the idea of being together for mutual interest. The early church demonstrated this quality. With one accord, they received, retained and acted on the teachings of the Apostles. More so, with great sensitivity, they provided support for the needy among them through sacrificial giving. Strong fellowship in the local church brings unity, retains converts in the church and influences outsiders towards faith in Christ Jesus.

We can build strong fellowship by strengthening the small groups in the church such as the cells, Bible study groups and ministries. This is because, it is difficult to foster strong fellowship in a crowd or large group. In addition, we can create opportunities for fellowship outside the church. This may take the form of profitable discussions on social media platforms, phone calls and visitation to homes of members. More importantly, church leaders must teach on the subject of Christian fellowship – purpose, method, practice and importance of biblical fellowship.

THE BIBLICAL ROLES IN MARRIAGE

Main Text: Ephesians 5:22-33

Memory Verse: *However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.* – Ephesians 5:33

Introduction

In our world today, there are fellowships, movements and groups with different ideologies, beliefs and practices which influence society, including Christians. These beliefs and practices have led to significant social changes in today's world about roles in marriage. This calls for the need for Christians to appreciate what the Bible says about the responsibilities God has assigned to husbands and wives at home. It is important for us to know and follow God's design for married couples even when it is contrary to what we are familiar with. Our lesson focuses on the mutual roles of husbands and wives.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the roles of wives in marriage? Verse 22.
2. What are the roles of husbands in marriage? Verse 25.
3. Identify some cultural or traditional factors preventing husbands and wives from honouring their roles.

4. How can married couples handle challenges raised in question 3?
5. What happens when husbands and wives perform their roles in marriage effectively?

Conclusion

In today's lesson, we have looked at the roles of husbands and wives in marriage. Husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. In addition, husbands are to provide leadership and serve as breadwinners, protectors, mentors and companions to the family. On the other hand, wives are to submit to the authority of their husbands as to the Lord.

They must support their husbands, take care of the household and avoid laziness (Prov 31:27). In situations where cultural and traditional practices conflict with biblical roles, husbands and wives must go for the latter. When couples perform their roles well, they experience joy and happiness in their marriages and become a positive influence for unbelieving couples. Husbands and wives should become vigilant to avoid falling into the traps of satan which come through false doctrines and teachings and tend to usurp the authority God has established in marriage.

THE BIBLICAL ROLES OF HUSBANDS

Main Text: Ephesians 5:25-30

Memory Verse: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.* – Ephesians 5:25

Introduction

Today's world has many fellowships, movements and groups with different ideologies, beliefs and practices which influence people including Christians. These beliefs and practices have led to both significant social changes in today's world about 'roles' in marriage. These have also brought the confusion and offensiveness of the subject on 'marital roles'. This calls for Christians to appreciate what the Bible says about their responsibilities at home. Today's study focuses on the biblical role of husbands.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church?
2. Come out with other roles of husbands in marriage
3. How do the role of husbands impact their families?
4. What cultural factors prevent husbands from fulfilling their roles in marriage?
5. In what possible ways should husbands handle these cultural challenges?

Conclusion

From today's discussions, we have known that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Thus, husbands are to lay down their lives for their wives in protection and support as Christ did for the church. They must express their love as a duty, in respect and principle rather than a feeling based on attraction. This must be from a sincere, pure, passionate, and constant affection just as they love their bodies. Husbands are to love their wives even when they get displeased with some of their actions.

In love, husbands must provide essential needs such as food, water and shelter for their families. They must train their children in love to fear the Lord (Prov 22:6), and serve as mentors and companions to them. Husbands must lead their families to Christ and ensure family unity to create joy and happiness. This will positively influence unbelieving singles and couples. Husbands should be vigilant to the manipulations of Satan from false doctrines, teachings, cultural or traditional beliefs and practices, which tend to water down the role of husbands in marriage. It is important for husbands to perform their biblical roles even when it is contrary to what they are accustomed to.

THE BIBLICAL ROLES OF WIVES

Main Text: Ephesians 5:21-24

Memory Verse: *Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.* – Ephesians 5:22

Introduction

There are misunderstandings in today's world concerning 'roles' of wives. These seem to mislead some Christians in their marriage; They come from emerging liberation groups with philosophies, theories and practices that seek to oppose the biblical roles of husbands and wives. It is important for Christians to understand what the Bible says about their responsibilities. Today's lesson discusses the roles of wives in marriage.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean for wives to submit to their husbands in all things?
2. What are some other roles of wives in marriage?
3. How do the roles of wives impact their families?
4. Identify some cultural or traditional factors that prevent wives from fulfilling their roles in marriage.
5. In what ways should wives handle these cultural or traditional challenges?

Conclusion

From our study, we have understood that wives are to submit to their own husbands as to the Lord since the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the Church. Wives must act under the authority of their husbands, as the Church acts under the authority of Christ. This does not mean wives must submit to committing acts of dishonesty and wrong-doing. They are to submit themselves under the eye of Christ. Wives should not submit to other peoples' husbands while they fight their own. Rather, they are to submit to their own husbands while relating kindly with others.

In submission, wives must manage the home and the family. They must support their husbands to train their children in the fear of the Lord (Prov 22:6). This creates family unity, joy and happiness which influence unbelieving singles and couples. Wives must avoid usurping the roles of husbands as this creates friction, disharmony and infighting. They must be watchful to the influences of Satan from false doctrines, teachings and cultural or traditional beliefs and practices which tend to weaken the role of wives in marriage. It is important for wives to perform their roles even when these are contrary to what they are familiar with.

UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE FROM THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Main Text: Genesis 24:1-4, 50-61

Memory Verse: *Here is Rebekah before; take her and go, and let her become the wife your master's son as the Lord has directed.* – Genesis 24:51

Introduction

For believers, marriage is not just a relationship between husband and wife, but also between spouses and God. Therefore, the procedure for contracting marriage is important. Traditional marriage forms the basis for all marriages. Some basic requirements and procedures are also followed in almost all cultures. Families of would-be couples are involved in the marriage contract. In the Christian context, much emphasis is placed on prayer and the leading of Holy Spirit. In today's study, we would look at the foundational procedure and requirements for contracting marriage.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who were those involved in the process of contracting marriage for Rebekah? Verses 50, 54, 58.
2. Why do you think Rebekah's family were eager to give her in marriage? Verses 50, 51.
3. What practice in contemporary marriage procedure is similar to the one in verse 52 to 54?

4. What are some measures families can put in place to make the marriage procedure simple?
5. In which area do you think the church and families can work on to make traditional marriage as easy as possible?

Conclusion

Marriage is a covenant relationship but has some laws governing it. Abraham's servants, Laban, Bethuel, Rebekah's mother and Rebekah herself were involved in Rebekah's traditional marriage process. Rebekah's parents gave her in marriage because they realised God had a hand in it. The family did well to see her off responsibly by pronouncing blessings on her and gave her other physical needs. Abraham's servants also paid for Rebekah's hand by giving precious things to her family. This is what we call 'dowry', and the practice is still common today in some cultures, particularly in Africa and Asia. It is given to honour the parents of the bride and not the 'selling price' of their daughter. Dowries may differ from one traditional setting to another. One of the best things the Church can offer would-be couples is to provide a serene atmosphere for godly guidance and counselling.

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR GUIDE

With this Bible Reading guide, you can go through the Bible verse by verse and Book by Book in one year. You also may start this plan any time and progress at your pace too.

Week	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	Genesis 1-3	Genesis 4-7	Genesis 8-11	Genesis 12-16	Genesis 17-19	Genesis 20-23	Genesis 24-25
	2	Genesis 26-28	Genesis 29-30	Genesis 31-33	Genesis 34-36	Genesis 37-39	Genesis 40-42
3		Genesis 46-47	Genesis 48-50	Exodus 1-4	Exodus 5-7	Exodus 8-10	Exodus 11-13
	4	Exodus 17-20	Exodus 21-23	Exodus 24-27	Exodus 28-30	Exodus 31-34	Exodus 35-37
5		Leviticus 1-4	Leviticus 5-7	Leviticus 8-11	Leviticus 12-14	Leviticus 15-17	Leviticus 18-20
6	Leviticus 24-25	Leviticus 26-27	Numbers 1-2	Numbers 3-4	Numbers 5-6	Numbers 7-8	Numbers 9-11
	7	Numbers 12-14	Numbers 15-17	Numbers 18-20	Numbers 21-23	Numbers 24-26	Numbers 27-30
8		Numbers 34-36	Deuteronomy 1-2	Deuteronomy 3-4	Deuteronomy 5-7	Deuteronomy 8-11	Deuteronomy 12-15
	9	Deuteronomy 20-23	Deuteronomy 24-27	Deuteronomy 28-29	Deuteronomy 30-31	Deuteronomy 32-34	Joshua 1-4
10	Joshua 8-10	Joshua 11-14	Joshua 15-18	Joshua 19-21	Joshua 22-24	Judges 1-3	Judges 4-5
	11	Judges 6-8	Judges 9-11	Judges 12-15	Judges 16-18	Judges 19-21	Ruth 1-4
12		1 Samuel 4-7	1 Samuel 8-10	1 Samuel 11-13	1 Samuel 14-15	1 Samuel 16-17	1 Samuel 18-20
	13	1 Samuel 25-27	1 Samuel 28-31	2 Samuel 1-3	2 Samuel 4-7	2 Samuel 8-11	2 Samuel 12-13
14		2 Samuel 16-18	2 Samuel 19-20	2 Samuel 21-22	2 Samuel 23-24	1 Kings 1-2	1 Kings 3-5
	15	1 Kings 8-9	1 Kings 10-12	1 Kings 13-15	1 Kings 16-18	1 Kings 19-20	1 Kings 21-22
16		2 Kings 4-5	2 Kings 6-8	2 Kings 9-11	2 Kings 12-14	2 Kings 15-17	2 Kings 18-20
	17	2 Kings 24-25	1 Chronicles 1-2	1 Chronicles 3-5	1 Chronicles 6-7	1 Chronicles 8-10	1 Chronicles 11-13
18		1 Chronicles 17-20	1 Chronicles 21-23	1 Chronicles 24-26	1 Chronicles 27-29	2 Chronicles 1-4	2 Chronicles 5-7
	19	2 Chronicles 12-16	2 Chronicles 17-19	2 Chronicles 20-22	2 Chronicles 23-25	2 Chronicles 26-29	2 Chronicles 30-32
20		2 Chronicles 35-36	Ezra 1-4	Ezra 5-7	Ezra 8-10	Nehemiah 1-4	Nehemiah 5-7
	21	Nehemiah 11-13	Esther 1-4	Esther 5-10	Job 1-4	Job 5-8	Job 9-12

22	Job 18-21	Job 22-26	Job 27-30	Job 31-34	Job 35-38	Job 39-42	Psalms 1-7
23	Psalms 8-14	Psalms 15-18	Psalms 19-24	Psalms 25-30	Psalms 31-34	Psalms 35-37	Psalms 38-42
24	Psalms 43-48	Psalms 49-54	Psalms 55-60	Psalms 61-67	Psalms 68-71	Psalms 72-75	Psalms 76-78
25	Psalms 79-84	Psalms 85-89	Psalms 90-95	Psalms 96-102	Psalms 103-105	Psalms 106-108	Psalms 109-115
26	Psalms 116-118	Psalms 119	Psalms 120-131	Psalms 132-138	Psalms 139-144	Psalms 145-150	Proverbs 1-3
27	Proverbs 4-7	Proverbs 8-10	Proverbs 11-13	Proverbs 14-16	Proverbs 17-19	Proverbs 20-22	Proverbs 23-25
28	Proverbs 26-28	Proverbs 29-31	Ecclesiastes 1-4	Ecclesiastes 5-8	Ecclesiastes 9-12	Song of Solomon 1-4	Song of Solomon 5-8
29	Isaiah 1-3	Isaiah 4-6	Isaiah 7-9	Isaiah 10-13	Isaiah 14-16	Isaiah 17-21	Isaiah 22-25
30	Isaiah 26-28	Isaiah 29-31	Isaiah 32-34	Isaiah 35-37	Isaiah 38-40	Isaiah 41-42	Isaiah 43-44
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39	Obadiah & Jonah	Micah 1-4	Micah 5-7	Nahum 1-3	Habakkuk 1-3	Zephaniah 1-3	Haggai 1-2
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43	Luke 2-3	Luke 4-5	Luke 6-7	Luke 8-9	Luke 10-11	Luke 12-13	Luke 14-16
44	Luke 17-18	Luke 19-20	Luke 21-22	Luke 23-24	John 1-3	John 4-5	John 6-7
45	John 8-9	John 10-11	John 12-13	John 14-15	John 16-17	John 18-19	John 20-21
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50	1 Thess. 1-3	1 Thess. 4-5	2 Thess. 1-3	1 Timothy 1-6	2 Timothy 1-4	Titus & Philemon	Hebrews 1-4
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52	2 John, 3 John & Jude	Revelation 1-3	Revelation 4-7	Revelation 8-12	Revelation 13-16	Revelation 17-19	Revelation 20-22

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