

The ministry of the body

In this case the body in question is the church, often called the body of Christ on earth. In the New Testament there is much teaching on this subject. St Paul takes the human body as an example to show how the body of Christ – the true church on earth- should function. Let us for the moment use St Paul's likening of this body to the human body, and take it to its logical conclusion.

If you were to wake up one morning and find that one of the parts of your body had stopped working and you could no longer move it, many people would go to their doctor asking him to heal them, as they are sick. Unless everyone in the church performs the functions designated to them by God, then what is being presented to the world is a sick body.

How can the church of Jesus Christ reflect the glory of God and manifest and demonstrate the power of God to heal and deliver people from demonic possession when the body itself is sick? It is no wonder therefore that there does not seem to be so many miraculous signs around in our church meetings as there were in the days of the apostles.

St Paul wrote, "When Christ ascended on high He gave gifts to men (and women) some to be Prophets, Pastors, Evangelists, Teachers and Apostles". He did not write that in every church there will be an Evangelist, a prophet, a teacher or a pastor, because he knew that God would raise up several people in all the churches to function in these ways, so that they were ready to train others in these gifting through their own experience.

Unless people have freedom to do what God has anointed them to do, the church will never reach its true potential. Some pastors are no good at being teachers and preachers, and they should leave these things to somebody who is anointed by God to do them. There are many other gifts also, some of which we looked at earlier, none are more important than the other, all have equal status in the eyes of God.

The greatest amongst us is the one who serves. If a person is not willing to serve the body in all other ways, like putting chairs out, greeting the congregation and making tea and coffee then that person should not be in leadership of any kind until he has learned to humble himself with the humility that Christ had. This is serving by example, so very important for any church.

If you want to know what God has called you to do, seek His face, ask Him, then ask others if they think God is calling you to that. After this, work towards it and pray about it continually, do not allow the subject to be dropped and wait for God to suddenly bring it about, in most cases it will never happen that way. If God has called you to be an International Evangelist then you will not go from never have spoken to an audience about Jesus to addressing huge crowds overnight, do you see what I mean by working and praying towards the goal?

During a major conference a few years ago, one of the leaders and organisers stood up and asked for volunteers to clean the showers and the toilets, saying that God would greatly bless them if they did this. Of all the people who avoided cleaning the showers and toilets during the conference were the leaders. That is not what is meant by humility. You should never ask anyone to do for you anything you would not be willing to do yourself. One of the greatest obstacles to the will of God being fulfilled in any church there are those who are doing jobs

that God has never called them to undertake, but obstruct through pride the people God is raising up to fulfil those functions.

As a result the true word of God is very rarely heard in the church today, so often instead of seeking the face of the Lord in great earnestness to find out what God wants to say on that particular occasion, many just pick a subject every week or so that they think they could do an interesting talk on. Often it has nothing to do with what God wants to say to His people, often because nobody has taken the time and trouble to ask him.

The only time you can steer a bicycle or any other form of transport is when it is moving. Some people dare not begin to move out in public intercession, prophecy, words of knowledge or the interpretation of a tongue because they are afraid to get it wrong. There are people who have been prophesying for more than twenty years who will tell you that every time they open their mouth to prophesy, there is the risk of them getting it wrong.

God is a God of grace, is there anyone who gets it right the whole of the time? I doubt it, but the gift begins to develop and the accuracy usually becomes greater the more we dare to step out in these gifts. Sometimes, we only grow in something by learning from our mistakes. Be patient with each other, if there is any guidance to be given, it should be given in a spirit of encouragement not condemnation. A person must only be silenced as a last resort, if he or she has consistently ignored any attempt to help the person to function better. If your heart and motive is right, God will bless you in deed in these things.