

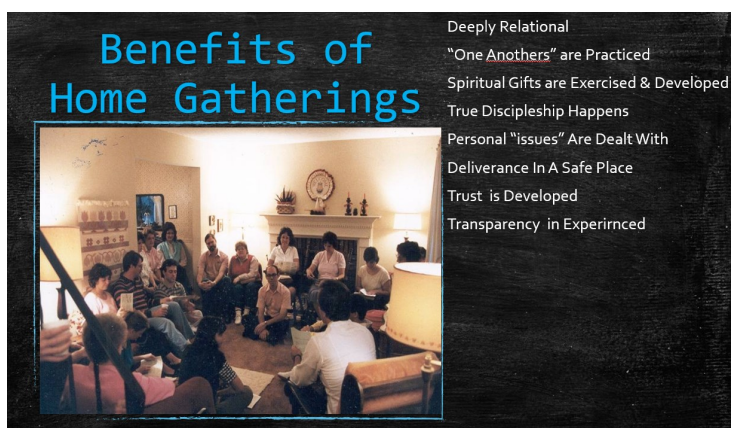
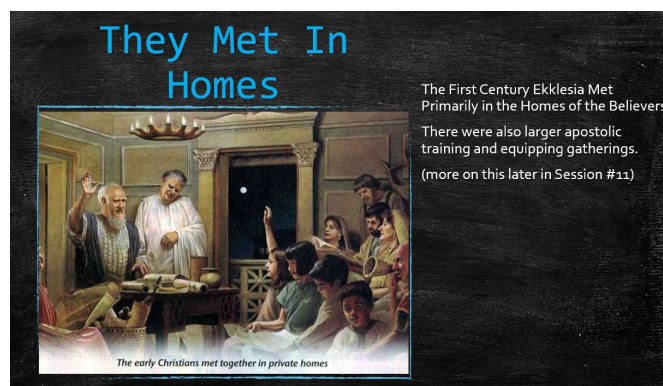
Chapter 8



The Meeting of the Ekklesia Part 2

In this chapter, we are dealing with a second section on the Meeting of the Ekklesia. We'll have one more chapter after this one on the meeting of the Ekklesia. We wanted to take our time dealing with the meeting because it is so different from meeting in the auditorium, and we wanted to take the time to go through some details. In this chapter, we will discuss what happens in an Ekklesia meeting.

In the last chapter, we discussed that believers met primarily in homes. There were a few meetings in other places, and we mentioned them in the previous chapter. They were Apostolic training centers. One was Solomon's Portico or Porch, and the other was later in the book of Acts. Paul rented a Hall called Tiberius Hall. We are going to deal with the aspect of the training later on in another chapter. We will talk about the fivefold ministry and the ministry of equipping because that is what Paul was doing. He was equipping the saints to go out and start home congregations all over that part of Asia. This is what it says in Acts chapter 20. In this chapter, we will stay focused on what goes on in the living room. What happens in the small group meetings that we call the home congregation? Believers met primarily in homes, and we talked last week about several benefits in



the home congregation that are missing or absent in the auditorium model.

The first one is that Home Gatherings are profoundly relational. Believers get to know one another. They familiarize themselves with each other deeply. They get to know their issues, and a

love relationship develops between the people. I'll never forget that we held a home congregation several years ago. We called it a house church in our home up in the mountains in Colorado.

We weren't meeting one Sunday, so Diana and I decided to visit this huge independent charismatic church in Colorado Springs. We went down the mountain and visited the church, which was super. There were probably between 8 and 10,000 people there that Sunday and the worship team was spectacular. The worship leader had songs on the radio that week that he had written; it was just dynamite. The songs had killer guitar playing and great drumming. The music was just amazing. The pastor preached a sermon, he went through verse by verse, expounding on the scripture, and it was very good. He was an orator. It was an excellent sermon; everything was polished and neat. We walked out of the building to our car when it was all over. I turned to Diana and said, "Well, honey, what did you think of the worship service this morning"? She was quiet for a while, contemplating her answer, and then said, "Well, once you've experienced more, everything else is less." That quote from my wife has stuck with me for many years because it was true. While we had a polished worship service, and everything was great, some things were missing. One of them was fellowship.

Someone shook our hand at the door and welcomed us, but after that, I don't think anyone even spoke to us the whole time we were there. We watched the show on the platform. In the living room, it is just the opposite. There is no show on the platform, and it is deeply relational. You really get to know one another and become deeply connected.

You get to practice all the one anothers. We are going to talk about that more today. There are over 50 one anothers in the New Testament, and we are commanded that we are supposed to do them. These are not just suggestions. We were told to love one another, bear one another's burdens, and accept one another. There are a lot of them. And they get neglected when we meet in the auditorium. Doing the one anothers is missing in action in the auditorium. In the home congregation, we practice the one anothers. All the spiritual gifts are exercised and developed.

We place a chair in the middle of the living room and have everyone pray over the person in the chair. We call this place the mercy seat. Important ministry happens when the mercy seat is used. This is one example of everyone using their gifts in the Ekklesia. Deep relationships are nurtured. True disciples are made. Personal issues are dealt with. Hang-ups that are holding back someone's growth and development are overcome. Things buried deep inside people's hearts, and souls are laid out on the table and dealt with lovingly in the living room. Deliverance happens. Trust is developed, and there is proper transparency when people share their lives. Ekklesia is sharing life together. The life of Christ among us, in the group. Those are all benefits that are missing in the auditorium model of doing church but are present and active in the home congregation.

Let's look deeper into what happened when the Ekklesia met in the book of acts. What went on? This was Jesus' intention for the Ekklesia. We need to pattern our meetings after this, Because Jesus said, "follow me." He meant that we should do what he did. So, let's look at it. We will discover three things: The first thing we notice is that they all participated. It was not about a show on the



platform. In the church service today, everyone is trained to be passive.

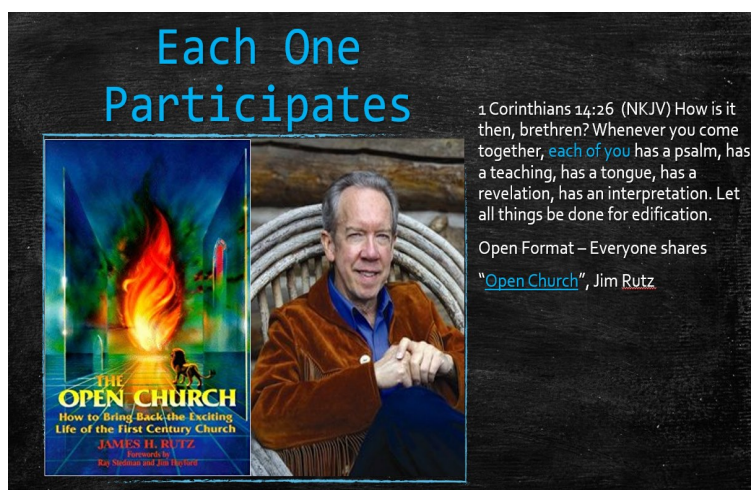
They are trained to sit and watch the show. That is not how it was in the New Testament. Everyone participated. The second one is that everyone got to prophesy. Anyone who had a word from the Lord got to share it. It wasn't just one man on the platform who could hear from God. Everyone

can hear from God. And everyone can share a word with others in the group. The third one is that everyone ministered to one another. All the one anothers were put into place in the New Testament. We are going to see how that works.

Did everyone participate? It says they did in first Corinthians 14:26. The scripture says, “How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each has a psalm, a teaching, a tongue, a revelation, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.” That doesn't mean that all of you have to bring a song. Or do all of you have to do teaching in a single meeting? Or do all of you have to pray in tongues in a single meeting? Or all of you have to give a tongue for the congregation. That's not what it means. It just means that everyone participates. Everyone gets to share. For example, not all of us can sing in our fellowship here where we live. So, it might not be that everyone sings a song because some can't sing very well, while others can. In the Ekklesia, the same things are not done every time the group gets together. The Holy Spirit leads, and everyone gets to participate. It's an open format where everyone shares. I don't know if you have ever been to a karaoke night at a club or comedy club where they have an open mic night. It is kind of like that open mic night at the comedy club.

Everyone is allowed to speak; everyone is entitled to share. This concept was first brought into the Christian world by Jim Rutz. He was head of an organization called Open Christianity and wrote a book called Open Church. The subtitle was, *how to bring back the exciting life of the 1st-century church*. Jim's goal was to transform every church in America into an open format instead of having a pastor up on the platform doing all the preaching and teaching. He wanted everyone to be able to

share life together. He passed away a few years ago. He didn't see this happen. I am sure he is looking down from heaven now and is really excited to see what's going on. He passed away before the revelation of Ekklesia became widespread. He was a good brother of mine. He attended the house church that met in our living room in Colorado. I had the joy and privilege of traveling with Jim to do several seminars around the United States where we trained people.



His book is no longer in print, but in some used bookstores or outlets, you can find it. I encourage you to get it as supplemental reading if you can find it. Go ahead and get it because everyone in the house church movement would consider Jim to be one of the fathers of that movement. I loved Jim dearly.

In the home congregation, everyone participates. That same verse in The Passion Translation says, “Beloved friends, what does all this imply? When you conduct your meetings, you should always let everything be done to build up the Ekklesia family. Whether you share a song of praise, a teaching, a divine revelation,

Each One Participates



1 Corinthians 14:26 (TPT) Beloved friends, what does all this imply? When you conduct your meetings, you should always let everything be done to build up the church Ekklesia family. Whether you share a song of praise, a teaching, a divine revelation, or a tongue and interpretation, **let each one** contribute what strengthens the others.

tion, or a tongue and interpretation, let each one contribute what strengthens the others.” Again, you see, there is no question of

what this is saying. It says that when you conduct your meetings, each one gets to contribute every time you come together. It might be that you have a song. It might be that you have a word from the Lord. It might be that you had a dream that week, a vision, or an encounter with an angel. Perhaps you got to witness to someone, to lay hands on someone, and they were healed when you prayed for them. Or maybe you were able to cast devils out of someone. If things like these happen, you need to share them.

In the traditional church model in the auditorium, everyone expects to get something out of the meeting. That is not how it was with the early believers. That is not how it is supposed to be. It is supposed to be that we go to the meeting with something to contribute. We should be okay with getting something out of the meeting. Go to the junction with something to give rather than to receive something. People say, "Well, I didn't get much out of the service today; I didn't get much out of the sermon today." That is the opposite of what we are supposed to be looking for. We are supposed to go to the meeting with something to contribute, something to give. The passage in the NIV says, "What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each has a hymn, a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the Ekklesia may be built up." If all of this has to be done so that the Ekklesia, Body of Christ, may be built up, what would be the result of **not** doing these things?

Each One Participates



1 Corinthians 14:26 (NIV) What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, **each of you** has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the Ekklesia church may be built up.

I contend that the spiritual weakness and the infirmity of the church in America are due to this. The church meeting is a one-person show; the people cannot exercise their gifts and minister to one another. The word says everything must be done so the Ekklesia may be built up. If everyone is not sharing, people are not being built up. If all these things are not happening when believers come together, one has a hymn, a word of instruction, revelation, tongue, or interpretation. If this is not happening, the body is not being built up. This is why the church is so weak. This spiritual weakness renders it incapable of changing the culture and ministering to the world around it. This is the result of not ministering to one another.

The last translation of this passage that we will look at is in the NLT. This translation says, “ Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet, one will sing, another will teach, and another will tell some special revelation God has given. One will speak in tongues; another will interpret what is

Each One Participates



1 Corinthians 14:26 (NLT) Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you.

said. Everything that is done must strengthen all of you.” What happens is that when everyone shares, everyone gets to receive what is being shared. This is a give-and-

take. If I share, others are blessed. When other people share, I am blessed. All are strengthened and built up in the Lord when everyone participates.

Everyone could prophesy in the New Testament gathering in the Book of Acts. On this woman's T-shirt, we see a quote from Acts Chapter 2, a quote from the prophet Joel, who prophesied that in the last days, the Holy Spirit would be poured out in such a way that your sons and daughters would prophesy. It says that you will **all** prophesy.

All Can Prophesy



1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:3 NKJV But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men

1 Corinthians 14:31 NKJV For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

I Corinthians 14:1 is an excellent chapter about the prophetic word. The first verse says, "Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, but **especially** that you may prophesy." I have had Christian friends in the evangelical world say that I do much talking about gifts and that they are open to receiving the gifts. They throw their head back, look up at heaven, and say, "I'm open, Lord. I'm open to any spiritual gift you want to give to me. I'm open. I'll receive it. Anyone you want to give." And I say to them, but is that what this verse says? I do not believe that being open and desiring are the same. When you are available, it means that you are kind of neutral.

Desiring means you are going after it. You are earnestly, eagerly seeking spiritual gifts. That is what the word desire means. It almost means lusting after it. It is from the Greek word "*zaloute*." This word means that you want it. You need it. You can't go on without the spiritual gifts. That's how desperate you are for the gifts. The word encourages us to go beyond just desiring the spiritual gift; it is like we will kick it up another notch, especially that you may prophesy. The desire needs to be stronger than you may prophesy because we need to hear from the Lord.

In the Roman Ekklesia, they had a courier who would bring messages from the emperor down to the local leadership. They did this to know what the emperor wanted them to do. They would be responsible for implementing the wishes and desires, the lifestyle, the laws, the precepts, and the principles of the emperor. They would implement them. This Courier would bring these mandates to them. In a sense, the gift of prophecy is like that Courier. We need to earnestly desire the gift of prophecy to prophesy and hear from the King. If we are to be implementing His will when we pray: "Let your Kingdom come, and you will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We need to know what his will is. We learn God's will by hearing from Him. We need to hear from Him to know what he wants us to do and what to implement.

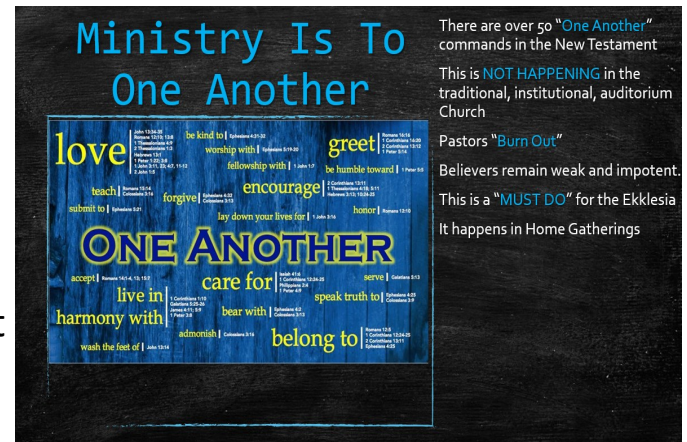
I Corinthians 14:3 says, “But he who prophesies speaks edification, exhortation, and comfort to men.” So, these three words are the description of what the New Testament prophetic word is all about. It is to bring edification, exhortation, and comfort to the body. Again, I'd say if the prophecy is not going on, it is no wonder that we are not being edified. We would all agree that we live in a world where almost everyone needs to hear some words of edification and comfort. We need these things desperately. These three words describe the prophetic ministry in the body of believers. In verse 31, It says, “For you can all prophesy one by one so that all may learn and all may be encouraged.” What part of the word all do you not understand? That's a joke. I'm teasing.

When it says, “You can all prophesy,” this is what it means. You can all prophesy. Look at the word “all” in this verse. Three times, all may prophesy, all may learn, and all may be encouraged. And again, if we don't have the first part, the prophesying, then the learning and the encouraging are gone. In other words, learning and encouraging depend upon the prophetic word coming forth. We need this in every meeting. We need people to hear from the Lord and give a prophetic word.

We have an advanced class available to take after boot camp. I encourage you to take the class, To Hear God's Voice, and to be able to minister in the prophetic. The class is called *“The Gifts, Grace, and Flow of the Holy Spirit”* In this class, we learn how to hear God's voice and minister to others with the prophetic word you hear. What a great class. I encourage you to take it. It is one of our advanced classes available to you after you finish boot camp.

The third word that we said that everyone did in the New Testament gathering was that they ministered to one another. Everyone ministers, all the people minister. It is not just one minister up on the platform. Everyone gets to minister, and they minister to one another.

There are over 50 One Another's in the New Testament, and they are commands. They are things that we are to be doing: Love one another, be kind to one another, worship with one another, fellowship with one another, greet one another, teach one another, submit to one another, forgive one another, encourage one another, lay down your lives for one another, honor one another, accept one another, care for one another, serve one another, live in harmony with one another, bear with one another, wash the feet of one another, admonish one another, and belong to one another. These are things that we are to be doing. They're not suggestions. They are commands for New Testament life, the life of the body. We are to be doing all 50 of them; they're woefully missing in the church. When we meet in the big box building, we might greet someone at the door, but the rest of the one anothers are thrown out the window because we are taught how to sit and watch the show on the platform, actually training people in complacency.



In the New Testament, there were no church memberships, none. First of all, there was no church. There was no church for 300 years after the time the writing of the New Testament came to an end. There was no church membership because everyone knew they belonged to the Kingdom. They were citizens of the Kingdom of God and belonged to one another. When you realize that you belong to one another, it changes your attitude toward others. It changes your behavior towards others when you know that you're all part of the same body. My right-hand doesn't do anything to harm my left hand because my right hand belongs to the same body. During the early church days, they knew they belonged to one another, so their goal was to help. If I am hammering a nail and the hammer misses and hits my left thumb, my right-hand drops it, grabs it, and comforts it. That's ministering to one another. That's how we are to be because we're all part of the same body. We belong to one another.

This is not happening in the traditional institutional auditorium church. If I had one note to play on my guitar, it would be this note that the congregation of believers in the church system does not minister to one another. It's been stripped from them, taken away from them by the platform ministry, and as a result, pastors often burn out. I can't tell you how many pastors I've ministered to over the years. We have many pastors in boot camp wanting to find a different model and way of doing things because they got burned out trying to do everything themselves. Pastors burn out, and at the same time, the believers themselves remain weak and impotent because they haven't been ministering to one another. They haven't been exercising their gifts.

It reminds me of what someone once said about a football game, that it reminded them of the church. And I said oh, how so? They explained that in a football game, there are eleven guys out there on the field who desperately need rest. Up in the bleachers are thousands of people watching who desperately need exercise. This is a picture of the church for you, pastors, worship leaders, and people on the platform. They are at the point of burnout exhaustion, and believers sitting in the auditorium watching it all need to exercise their spiritual gifts.

This is a must-do for the Ekklesia. If there's only one thing you get out of this chapter, take the chart below and begin to implement it. Let it become a Bible study for you and your Ekklesia. All the references are there. Please focus on the



One Another's and implement them in your gathering because things will happen. It almost happens automatically when you get together and start eating meals together. All the one another's just come out of the box, and they start happening. It's beautiful to watch. They happen automatically without having to stress over it. You don't have to program it. It just starts happening as people share their lives with one another.

As always, we have an application and activation for you to do. And remember the warranty or guarantee that you will have a home congregation in your community depends upon doing this part. You have to put it into practice. See, we are working hard at getting people out of the rut. You've been in a rut of going to church, sitting, listening to the sermon, then going home and not doing anything about it, or going to Sunday school, then never graduating.

The only school on earth where you could start in preschool or kindergarten and stay in Sunday school all your life. You get promoted to the next class, the next class, and then you're in the adult class, and before you know it, you're in the senior citizen's class. But where's the graduation? There is no graduation. There's no commencement.

Commencement means you start doing something. In boot camp, we work hard to get you out of that rut and do something. In this chapter, we have another application, an activation.

We want you to invite some friends for a cookout a meal. I do this in the summertime. Cookouts are very popular here. We have a fire pit and grill. We invite some folks over for a meal. Give this a try where you live. Grill some steaks, hamburgers, Bratz, or whatever, invite friends and share your life with them. Start telling them some stories. Please talk about your job, one of your grandkids, or your kids; it comes naturally. Just tell them some of your life stories, and you'll get to practice the One Another's: to love, encourage, and pray for one another. Ask if there is something you can pray for you about. Or if they share something that piques your spiritual thermometer inside, you say, oh, that's something I could pray for you about. Would it be all right if I prayed for you about this? And spend some time together just listening to the Holy Spirit.



You know, in the Ekklesia, quiet time is valuable. There's nothing wrong with quiet time. A time when no one feels pressure to say anything. It means that everyone is listening to the Holy Spirit. In the traditional church worship service, quiet time is terrible. It means somebody forgot their cue, the song, or what they were supposed to do next, and where they were on the bulletin, not so in the home congregation. In the home congregation, quiet time is beautiful. Just spend some time listening to the Holy Spirit and share with others what you're hearing, a prophetic word of encouragement to help them and to encourage them to be a positive word in their life.