

## Chapter 9



## The Meeting of The Ekklesia Part 3

The meeting of the Ekklesia is such an important subject that we have dealt with it in the two previous chapters and into this chapter.

Many people ask me how many people are needed to start an Ekklesia. That's an excellent question, and Jesus has a perfect answer for us. It's found in Matthew 18:18-20. "Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I

## How Many Are Needed?



Matthew 18:18-20 (NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.<sup>20</sup> For **where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.**"

say that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything they ask, my Father in heaven will do it for them. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Jesus tells us that the minimum number of people required for a quota to be met for the Ekklesia to be effective is two, two, or three. When two are gathered in His name, He's there in the midst of them, making it three. This is beautiful; this is amazing. We experience it every week. Just two together in prayer, it establishes the Ekklesia.



## Conventus Civium Romanorum



"According to Sir William Ramsay, when a group of Roman citizens as small as two or three gathered anywhere in the world, it constituted the *conventus* as a local expression of Rome. Even though geography separated them from the capital of the empire and the emperor, there coming together as fellow citizens automatically brought the *power* and *presence* of Rome into their midst." *EKKLESIA*, Ed Silvoso, pg. 25

In the traditional church, success is measured by butts and bucks. How many butts are on the pew, and how many bucks are in the offering plate? So, attendance and offering, or budget, is the measure of success, but that's not Jesus's measure of success at all.

The measure of success for the Ekklesia is transforming lives and changing communities that begin to look more like heaven on earth. We'll see how this works as we continue discussing these matters.

The idea that Jesus used here is verse 20, where two or three are gathered in his Name, there He is in the midst of them. This idea came from the Roman culture in which they were living as a part of the Ekklesia and a part of the Roman government. They had what was called *Conventus Civium Romanorum*. This is basically what Jesus was saying. When two or three are gathered in His name, He's there in the midst of them.

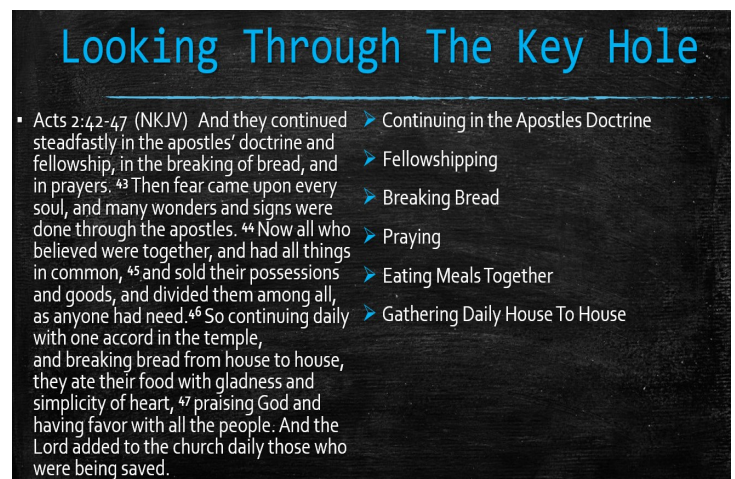
There's another book you should pick up a copy of; the author is Ed Silvoso. It's not required reading for Bootcamp, but it would be another supplemental reading for you. It's just called *EKKLESIA*. In that book, on page 25, Ed Silvoso says, "According to Sir William Ramsay, when a group of Roman citizens as small as two or three gathered anywhere in the world, it constituted the *conventus* as a local expression of Rome. Even though the geography separated them from the empire's capital and the emperor, they came together as fellow citizens and automatically brought Rome's power and presence into their midst."

Isn't that beautiful? That's what Jesus was saying. Jesus and the disciples already understood this concept as a principle or strategy of the Roman Empire. Whenever citizens of Rome would travel to another area, let's say to Germany or England, whenever they would meet together, they were representatives of Rome. They met together in agreement and lived in that foreign country just like the Romans.

They brought the culture and the lifestyle of Rome with them to that other country and, in addition to that, the protection, the power, and the presence of the Roman Emperor. If they got in trouble or had trouble with the government of another country, the emperor would back them up. He would rescue them, and his power and presence were with them. Now, that's what Jesus was saying about the Ekklesia. We represent the Kingdom of Heaven when two or three are gathered together here on earth. We are geographically separated from the Kingdom of Heaven, and we are here on earth with the responsibility of colonizing the planet so that earth begins to look like heaven. As we live out the principles, policy, and lifestyle of the king of heaven here on earth, he has promised His power and presence to be here with us. Isn't that beautiful? I love it. I love experiencing that when we get together in unity.

You know what? I would rather meet with two or three people in agreement than with two or three hundred people with separate agendas. Two or three in agreement is a lot better. I can tell you that from years and years of experience.

The very first bible study I led was in 1972, when I first became a pastor and went into ministry. I was asked to conduct a Wednesday night Bible study. I was a young man, 21 years old. Most of the people there were senior citizens. There were probably 10 to 15 people there.



**Looking Through The Key Hole**

▪ Acts 2:42-47 (NKJV) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. <sup>43</sup> Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, <sup>45</sup> and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. <sup>46</sup> So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

- Continuing in the Apostles Doctrine
- Fellowshiping
- Breaking Bread
- Praying
- Eating Meals Together
- Gathering Daily House To House

There was a retired pastor and his wife. The church's pastor and wife were there, and a former bishop from the denomination was there. There were a few other people, 10 to 15 people. They asked me to lead the Bible Study as a young man entering the ministry. I prayed about it, and the Holy Spirit had me lead a Bible Study on the book of Acts. Isn't that prophetic?

The very first Bible study that I led was the book of Acts. And I had this commentary that went through the passages of scripture. When I came to the paragraph of scripture that I'm about to share with you. The heading at the top of the page was "Looking Through the Keyhole." The meaning that the heading intended to convey was, what if we could sneak up on the porch of the room or the building where those early disciples were meeting, like in the upper room, and we could peek through the keyhole and look in there and see what they were doing.? Wouldn't we learn a great deal? What were they doing? What went on in those early meetings? The passage of scripture was Acts chapter 2:42-47.

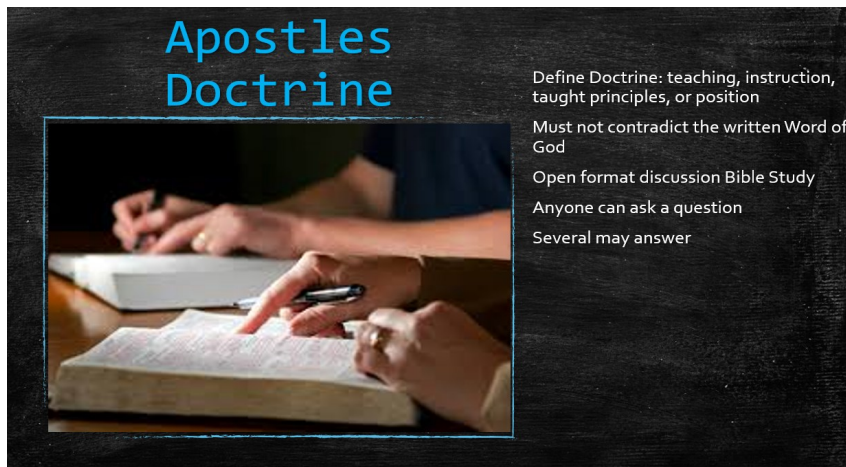
So, it's like this passage is peeking in on them. Or in our culture, we might say if you were a fly on the wall in the room where they were meeting, what would you see, what would you hear? That's what it's like looking through the keyhole to observe what the early Ekklesia did in the Book of Acts.

This is it. In acts 2:42-47, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 'Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as anyone needed. So, continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

We're going to drill down into this passage of scripture, but I want to point out what we will discuss for the next few minutes. Several vital ingredients here took place in the early Ekklesia that we need to be doing today. When we talk about the meeting of the Ekklesia, this is what they did. They continued in the apostle's doctrine. In the traditional institutional church today, somewhere between 80 to 90% believe there are no more Apostles. It's called cessationism.

They believe that the Apostles stopped at the close of the New Testament, and there are no more Apostles. So, it depends on what church you came from or which one you're involved in. It would be impossible for them to continue in the Apostles doctrine if there were no more Apostles.

They also were fellowshiping. That is the real-life blood life flow of the congregation. The sharing of life together. They were breaking bread. Usually,



when the Bible says breaking bread in the book of Acts, it talks about communion—remembering our king's sacrifice and the covenant that Jesus made at that last supper.

They also were praying. Prayer is an integral part of the Ekklesia. It's one of The most important things we do together.

They ate meals together. Eating the meals is such a fun part. It's a beautiful thing when people come and share their life and share their food. They bring dishes to share, and it's kind of like a symbol of sharing their lives.

And then they gather daily house to house. People always ask me: "Do we meet on Sunday, or do we meet on Saturday, the real sabbath?" I tell them that we should do what it says in the book. And in the book, it says they met daily. So, it says continuing daily in verse 46, with one accord in the temple breaking bread from house to house. They met daily. So, it's not just Saturday or Sunday. It's any day of the week. Some met Saturday, and some met Sunday, but it wasn't just one special day. They met daily from house to house.

So, let's dive into these, drill down into them and look at each one of them a little bit deeper. First of all, what is the Apostles Doctrine? Do not let the word doctrine scare you. It's not a bad word. Doctrine means teaching instructions, taught principles, or positions.



The Apostle's doctrine is not new in the sense of new revelation. It's not like the apostles today are writing new scripture. That's not what we are saying. What the apostles do today is they bring teaching and new understanding and light on a passage of scripture to make it relevant for today and bring it into our culture and apply it to our culture. That's the apostolic teaching. We must not contradict the written word of God. We are not talking about a contradiction to the word of God. It is bringing light to it by applying it to our lives today.

Most of the Bible studies in our home congregations are open-format Bible studies, and this is beautiful, too, because the way it works is that anyone can ask a question. There is a discussion about the passages that are being brought into focus.

## Fellowship



*Koinonia* : Sharing, unity, close association, partnership, participation, a society, a communion, a fellowship, contributory help, the brotherhood.

*Koinonia* cements the believers to the Lord and to each other. (Spirit Filled Life Study Bible)

All: Participate, One Another's, Prophecy  
Trust & Transparency

Just imagine what it would be like if you were sitting in a mega-church some Sunday morning and the pastor's preaching through the sermon. Suddenly you had a question and raised your hand and said, "Wait a minute, I don't understand that; I have a question?" Probably they're going to escort you out of the building. But that's not the way it is in the Ekklesia. Anyone can ask a question.

We encourage people to ask questions. Often, I have people ask questions. I tell them they don't have to apologize for asking a question. I tell them to ask and remind them that this happens when we gather. This is part of our coming together to ask and answer questions. When someone asks a question, there might be several people that answer the question. Look at all that light that shines on that passage of scripture or that person's problem. Light comes from several people to help bring understanding and application to what's going on there in Bible study.

The Bible studies in Ekklesia are in open format. We have an advanced class that you can take on How to Study the Bible and another advanced class on How to Lead a Bible Study. You can find them on our website at [okmtraining.org](http://okmtraining.org). I encourage you to take those advanced classes—; How to Study the Bible and How to Lead a Bible Study.

The second thing that the early church did was to continue in fellowship. This is the Greek word *Koinonia*. It's sharing unity, close association, or partnership—participation, a society, communion, fellowship, contributory help, and brotherhood. The Spirit-Filled Life Study Bible says that *Koinonia* is the cement; it cements the believers to the Lord and each other. This is the cohesiveness of the community sharing life with one another, which is woefully missing in the traditional church. They're trying to bring it back through small groups, but it's paramount in the Ekklesia because everyone can participate, minister to one another, and prophesy. *Koinonia* is a beautiful thing to see happen. The Holy Spirit comes into the meeting and orchestrates it. There's no bulletin. There's no order of service. It just happens as a flow of the Holy Spirit in the meeting. Trust and transparency occur over time, and people open up and share their lives.



The breaking of bread in the book of Acts usually refers to communion. The church has made a big religious ceremony out of it. In Matthew 26:26, Communion



ion is a legal agreement, a covenant that Jesus made with the disciples. He said. "This is the New Covenant in my blood which is shed for you." The early Ekklesia had the breaking of bread or communion, as we would call it, every time they would get together.

They had communion in their homes whenever they would get together. It is essential to realize that having professional clergy present is not necessary to administer communion. A professional clergy was not even in the Bible. It wasn't even around for almost 400 years. It started developing after they started meeting in the buildings in 325 A.D. In the Ekklesia, everyone could administer communion and share. This is what they did.

I remember growing up in a tradition where only the pastors only did communion once every three months. The connection was shared when the visiting conference superintendent would be in the service. He'd come around once every three months. He would pray over the elements, and then we could have Communion.

Not too long ago, I was in a church transitioning from being an independent charismatic church into a more liturgical one. This church observed a doctrine or a belief that you had to be a member of that church and ordained in that church to pray over the elements. Even though I had been in ministry for many years and was ordained four or five times, I wasn't allowed to pray over the communion elements because I was not part of that denomination. The priest or the pastor would have to pray over it. They believed something mysterious or mystical happened to the bread and the wine when that priest prayed over it.

They thought it wouldn't happen when I prayed over it because I wasn't a member of that denomination. I wasn't ordained in that denomination. They believed that when their clergy prayed over communion, it turned into the very presence of the body and the blood of Jesus. I was struggling with this, and I prayed about it and said, "Lord, I don't understand." I said what is this? They pray over the bread and the juice, and somehow, they change it into the body and the blood of Jesus, and I said I don't understand this, Lord." I asked the Lord, "Can you help me with it? What is going on here?" Entire denominations are split over whether the bread and the juice turn into the body and the blood of Jesus. I asked the Lord about this, and he said, 'Russ, I'm more concerned about the bread and the wine changing you to be more like me than I'm concerned about you changing the bread and the wine into me.'" I thought, oh Wow. You are more concerned about changing us to be more like you, and here we are gathered around the table, praying over the bread and the juice. Praying we change it for you. I thought The church had missed it. We are so far off the rails.

Jesus wants to change us through that time of fellowship with him. Through the time of renewing the covenant with him. He's changing us. As I said earlier, the tradition I grew up in only had communion once every three months when the conference superintendent would come around and pray over the elements. I was in another fellowship, and they had one at the time. In this other fellowship, they communed every Sunday, every time they met.

And I was struggling with that, too, because it was different from the religious tradition I grew up with. And I was praying about it and working with it. I said Lord, what this is. I said I grew up with this religious tradition that we only took communion once every three months, and here these people take communion every week. Lord, why do we have to remember you every week? Why do we have to do this every week and remember you every week? He made it clear to me. He said, "I remember you every day." And my heart was broken. I repented. I was weeping. I had to pull the car off the side of the road because I was driving in

the car while this was going on. He said softly and tenderly to me, “Russ, I remember you every day.”

I had to repent for my attitude because I realized that I was asking the Lord of Heaven why I had to remember him every week, and he remembers me every day. I repented, and at that period, I took communion every day for 30 days. It was the beginning of the year. Now, I start every new year with communion for 30 days and even fasting other than communion.

In the Ekklesia, we remember his sacrifice every time we gather together. Communion is not a religious ceremony with pomp and circumstance and all the religious fluff. It’s renewing a covenant with a King. The King who died for us. He laid his life down. He gave his body and blood for us, and we remember that because we forget it so often. We need to be reminded constantly. Every time we get together, we renew our covenant with him. We say to him. “Lord Jesus, you are my King, and I will follow you.” There is this little song; I have de-



cided to follow Jesus. No turning back, no turning back. That's what we're saying with communion. We're renewing the covenant he made with the early disciples, and we say, “I’ll

follow you, Jesus; I will follow you. No turning back, no turning back.”



The early Ekklesia also devoted themselves to prayers. In Ekklesia, prayer is first and foremost in everything we do. This is the number one priority of our gathering together.

We are praying for one another and the community. Dean Briggs' book, Ekklesia Rising, has a subtitle saying that Ekklesia is a community of contending prayer. That's what we are. That's what

we do. You are the ruling council of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

We must begin performing like that, acting like who we are—letting our identity work out in our behavior. We need to behave as though we are the ruling council of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth with decrees and declarations, warfare, prayer, and intercession to change a community. The Bible says that we have heaven's authority where two or three are gathered in His name and agree. The king's power and presence are in the room with us. We can exercise binding and loss even with two or three gatherings. Let me illustrate this.

About a year ago, we prayed over issues in our local community. The area where we live was formerly inhabited by two different tribes of Indians, the Miami Indians and the Potawatomi Indians. Our little town was actually kind of a dividing line between their two areas, and they were constantly fighting and battling over the fishing and hunting rights. They lived by fishing and gathering food. They hunted deer and other wildlife in the woods. They were battling over their fishing and hunting rights' boundary lines or territory lines. They were pretty mean in their approach to one another. If the things they did to one another were portrayed in a movie, it would have a very restrictive rating because they

## Prayers



The Ekklesia is first and foremost a community of contending prayer.

You are the ruling council of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

The agreement of 2 or 3 (Matt. 18:19)

Binding & Loosing

"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done" in my community

Your community – heaven on earth!

were fierce and gory. For example, the Miami Indians would take the Potawatomi Indians and string them up by their hands in a tree. They would tie them up in a tree, and then with a knife, they would open up their stomach, letting their bowels and stomach drop out and leaving them alive in the woods until the coyotes and other wild animals would eat at them while they were still alive.

That kind of thing went on where I live between two tribes of Indians. And the area, even today, up until just a couple of years ago was filled with that same kind of jealousy, competition, and territorialism. Like this is my territory, and this is my territory or turf. These kinds of turf wars were even among churches. There was such division and competition, jealousy, and suspicion. All of that was strong in this area. Our Ekklesia began to pray about it.

I was praying with some other pastors in the area, and the Holy Spirit led us to pray specifically for a strategy to break that spiritual principality over this region and unplug it. One Sunday night, we went out praying in the neighborhood. One of the couples. A husband and wife who were elders in our fellowship and overseers felt that the Lord would have them go to the grounds where the Miami Indians held their annual Potawatomi. They would hold a Pottawatomie meeting every year in August. At that meeting, it was a powwow, and they would march around a fire, singing, dancing, and praying. Annually, they would recommit this whole territory to their god as Miami territory. They claimed it as Miami territory. This is in history books, but we observed them doing it in a park where they would meet.

On this particular Sunday night, the Holy Spirit led this couple to the grounds where the pow-wow was being held. And the Holy Spirit instructed them with some specific instructions, for the wife to walk around the grounds backward, praying in tongues. The husband lovingly took her hands and walked with her as she walked around the grounds back, praying in tongues. Holy Spirit told her she was undoing all the curses spoken as the Miami Indians danced around the fire, sang, prayed, and pronounced curses over the region. They did this on a Sunday night. That same week, on a Wednesday, I received an email

In which the mayor's wife said this was the last year the Miami Indians would hold their pow-wow here in our city. They were moving on. I don't know where they went, but they're no longer here. When the couple from our group obeyed the Holy Spirit and did what he told them to do, that prevailing spirit or the principality was unplugged and taken away. Since then, churches and pastors have developed an exquisite sense of unity. They're praying together, and they meet together. A group of other pastors prays, and it's just amazing to see what's happening. That was two people praying. They bound the principality in prayer and cast it out. We can do that because we are seated with Christ in heavenly places.

We do spiritual warfare from the third heaven and take care of business here on earth. We're praying, "Let your kingdom come, and you will be done on earth as it is in heaven." As we do this, our communities and neighborhoods should look more like heaven on earth and less like hell on earth.



As the Ekklesia rises in your community, pray for his kingdom to come and His will to be done in the community where you live. Ask the Lord to let your community begin to look more like heaven. Jesus, we want to colonize our community with the principles, the policy, and the lifestyle of heaven itself. That's the praying we do; as a result, our communities will begin to be transformed.

I wanted to share another powerful example of contending prayer with you. We have prayed that our whole area becomes a cancer-free zone. This came about when we asked ourselves, do we see cancer in heaven when we look at heaven? Cancer is an evil demonic spirit. Cancer is not allowed in heaven. Why does the Ekklesia allow it in our community?



We were in an Ekklesia meeting. It was one of our equipping meetings, and the Lord gave us a prophetic word: that someone would drive through our city on a significant freeway. They would be coming from the east and driving through our town, and as they come driving through our city in a car, they have cancer. As they move through our city and go out the other side to the west, they will be healed and have no more cancer. We've been praying that our whole city becomes a cancer-free zone. The people are just passing through, like a car wash, getting cleansed. A car goes through, and the brushes get it all lathered up with soap, then rinsed off. We prayed that someone just driving through our city would also be cleansed and washed off just from the presence of the glory of God in our community.

That's the praying we need to be doing to change the community around us, to identify the enemy's pockets and strongholds, and to lift them to heaven in prayer.

They ate their meals together. This is a beautiful and fun part of the Ekklesia because everybody likes to eat. I do, and, incredibly, God would choose something so familiar as the dining room table to be the track that the Ekklesia runs on to bring the kingdom of heaven to the whole earth. Isn't that beautiful?

You can go to another seminar. You don't have to take more training to learn how to use the dining room table. You don't need a new seminar on evangelism or discipleship. You know how to use the dining room table. We all love it, That's the track the Ekklesia runs on. The kitchen table is the primary vehicle for expanding the kingdom of heaven on earth. Isn't that beautiful? We don't need some new program. We need to do what they did in the Book of Acts. Eat your meals together and share life and talk about Jesus. Everyone has a table. Everyone knows how to use it, and everyone enjoys eating. I have yet to meet very many people that hate to eat.

Isn't this great? You can do this. We all can do this. We eat meals together every time we gather. The bringing of a dish is symbolic of sharing your life. When you bring a dish and share it as part of a meal, you share your life with others. This is symbolic of sharing your life at the table. Beautiful things happen at the table, people talk, and people communicate. They share their stories, they share their struggles, they share their burdens, they share their prayer requests. They were sitting at the table. Jesus comes into the midst of them. Do you know that He said in the Book of Revelation, "Behold I stand at the door and knock"? He's

knocking on the door. Contrary to popular opinion, Jesus is not discussing the door of your heart here.

Jesus said those words John wrote down as a letter to an Ekklesia. If anyone would open the door of the Ekklesia and invite Him in, He

would come in and eat supper with them. He would come in, sit at the table and eat a meal with them. That's what He does where He's welcome.

Have you ever been someplace where you knew you were not welcome? It's a very uncomfortable feeling. So, whenever we meet, we welcome him to come to the table and eat the meal with us, and He does just that. Beautiful things happen around that table.

They gathered daily house to house. And this is the one I talked about earlier. It's not just Sunday at 10 a.m. instituted in the fourth century. But in the New Testament, the early Ekklesia met any day of the week, any time of the day, house to house.



Daily, not just Sunday at 10 a.m.  
Any day, any time is o.k.  
We rotate homes for convenience.  
What an amazing difference the living room makes compared to the auditorium!



Invite some friends over for dinner and a prayer time  
After the meal gather in the living-room  
Share with them an issue in your community where the enemy has obviously gained a foot-hold.  
In prayer seek the Lord for direction.  
In prayer begin to contend for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Daily anytime, any place, and in our situation, we rotate homes just out of convenience. Having your Ekklesia meeting in the same house every week becomes a real burden for the host. But by turning it and sharing homes and maybe even occasionally, meeting at a restaurant, a park pavilion, or a picnic table. Take a picnic to a park somewhere; it breaks up that responsibility by rotating it from home to home and from house to house.

What an incredible difference the living room makes compared to the auditorium. Oh my, everything has changed. Miracles happen when you eat a meal together and sit down and begin to talk and share. Jesus shows up. The Holy Spirit takes control of the meeting, and it's a beautiful thing to see.

As always, we do have an application and activation for you. Remember how important it is to do this application and activations. It would be best if you did this to see an Ekklesia rise in your neighborhood and community. I guarantee you will see an Ekklesia rise if you do these applications and activations.

We want you to invite some friends for dinner and a prayer time. You don't have to be deceptive about it. Say something like, "let's get together and have a meal. Let's eat, and you bring something, and maybe we'll share the meat. You bring the vegetables, or we'll make the main part of the meal. You bring a dessert, and we'll get together and set up a time to get together with some friends." After the meal, gather in the living room and share some issues in your community. Maybe there's a house of prostitution or a crack house in your neighborhood. Maybe there's an Islamic temple in your area. Begin to share with them where the enemy has made a stronghold, a foothold in your community, and how you're concerned about it. Then, pray about it and seek the Lord for direction—asking Him for a strategy from heaven for that stronghold. What would heaven have us do.? Ask the Lord and then begin to contend for the Kingdom of Heaven to come to your neighborhood and agree together in prayer that God's Kingdom will begin to manifest in your community.