

## **Endeavoring to enter into the God-Ordained Way through the Vital Groups**

- I. The God-Ordained Way—Begetting, Nourishing, Perfecting, Building Up**
- II. Moving from a HALL Centered Church life to a Home Centered Church life and becoming Vital Groups**
  - A. The Hall—Focusing on Good Meetings**
  - B. The Homes—Focusing on People**
  - C. The Vital Groups—Focusing on Blending**
- III. The Three Main Characteristics of the Vital Groups**

### **A. Purpose--for the Increase, the Perfecting, and the Building up of the Church**

#### **Acts 2:46-47**

**46** And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of *their* food with exultation and simplicity of heart,

**47** Praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved

#### **Ephesians 4:12**

For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

### **B. Nature—Spiritual**

#### **1. To Be Spiritual Means to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit, Within and Without**

##### **Acts 13:52**

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit

##### **Acts 4:31b**

...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

#### **2. In Acts the Disciples Experienced the Outpoured Spirit Again and Again**

##### **Acts 2:1, 4**

**1** And as the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled, they were all together in the same place...

**4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, even as the Spirit gave to them to speak forth.

##### **Acts 9:17**

And Ananias went away and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him, he said, Saul, brother, the Lord has sent me – Jesus, who appeared to you on the road on which you were coming – so that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit

##### **Acts 10:44**

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those hearing the word.

### C. Condition—Love (loving one another in oneness and with one accord)

I have had the opportunity to serve in many different countries and churches, and it has been my experience and observation that the churches can take two different ways to gain the increase. **One way** is to get everyone excited to preach the gospel and to do a work of effort to gain the increase. However, in the end this way does not produce much increase.

**The other way to gain the increase is the way of love.** When there is the element of love between all the saints, this love overflows to the unbelievers, and when this happens, there is the increase. It is not our working that brings in people. **Doing a great work may be effective to a certain degree, but the greatest work, the work that produces the most increase, is the work that is out of love.**

**Love is the way of the vital groups,** which Brother Lee showed to us and into which we must enter. The very element and expression of the vital groups should be love. In the vital groups we should love the members, and when the Lord brings us in contact with a new one, we should love him into the church. The vital groups are absolutely of the Lord, and this way of living in the vital groups and carrying out the vital groups will produce great results. However, for there to be the increase, one element must be present—love. If in a vital group love prevails and love is the center of everything, there will be the increase. If we love one another and all the new ones, if we pray for the new ones and for one another, and if we have fellowship, the Lord will bless us with the increase. Moreover, if all the vital groups gain the increase, the church will gradually grow. The way to gain the increase is not by our endeavoring or working but by love. Love produces the greatest result.—B.P. (The Ministry Magazine, vol. 10, No. 5, pp. 170-171)

#### **John 13:34-35**

**34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

**35** By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

#### **John 15:17**

These things I command you that you may <sup>1</sup>love one another.

<sup>17</sup><sup>1</sup> This is to love one another in the Lord's life, the divine life, in the Lord's love, and in His commission of fruit-bearing. Life is the source, love is the condition, and fruit-bearing is the goal. If we all live by the Lord's life as the source, in the Lord's love as the condition, and for fruit-bearing as the goal, we surely will love one another. Having different sources of life, different conditions, or different goals will separate us and prevent us from loving one another.

*Holy Bible Recovery Version, John 15:17 footnote 17<sup>1</sup>*

## IV. The Vital Groups are Living and Active

### A. Living

#### 1. Personally--by **Thorough Fellowship with the Lord**

**Proverbs 8:17** I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me.

You may say, "Well, the Lord has not come to me yet." But I would say, "The Lord is waiting for you. You need to go to Him." The Lord is within you, but you may not care to listen to Him. He is speaking all the time. You need to stop yourself from all other things. Go to a closed room, to a mountaintop, or to some other place to be with the Lord for a personal time. The only thing that has helped me and that can help you is to contact the Lord directly. No one can escape from the Lord's presence. He is the source. Go to Him and you will be enlightened.

*The Training and Practice of the Vital Groups, Msg. 8, p. 86*

## 2. Corporately—By Thorough Fellowship with One Another—Fellowship, Prayer and Care

**Hebrews 10:24** And let us consider one another so as to incite *one another* to love and good works.

**1 Corinthians 12:25** That there would be no division in the body, but *that* the members would have the same care for one another.

**Philippians 2:25a** But I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your apostle and minister to my need,...

**Footnote 25<sup>1</sup>** First a brother, then a fellow worker, and then a fellow soldier.

By considering the Word, we can see that there was much fellowship, interceding for one another, mutual care, and shepherding. The fellowship brings the awareness of one another's condition and situation. This will lead into prayer for one another. This will then cause us to go to one another to render a mutual care. Through the fellowship we may find out that a brother has been in an automobile accident. This leads us to pray for him and his family. Then we may consider his financial needs and be burdened to care for his health needs. All of this should not be in a formal way. It should be a spontaneous issue of the Spirit. I hope that from now on we can have all our group meetings in such an organic way.

*The Exercise and Practice of the God-Ordained Way, Message 24, p.232*

## B. Active—By Thorough Fellowship with One Another—Fellowship, Prayer, Coordination

In our group meeting in these days, we have to pray for our work of contacting people. Then we should fellowship about the situation with our contacts, so that we can study their cases, fellowship about them, and receive the mutual help. After your study, we should pray again. This kind of practice will be very practical, useful, and vital. Then you can decide whom you should contact and by what way. We have to believe that what we are doing by the vital groups will not be in vain, because this is a very practical sowing. Surely there will be the real reaping.

*The Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups, Message 25, p. 244*

# The Critical Role of the Homes to Carry out the God-ordained Way

## I. The Homes being containers to retain the new ones we have contacted on the Campus and in the Community

**Acts 2:46-47**

46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of *their* food with exultation and simplicity of heart,

47 Praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.

**When it comes to God's work, the beginning is always the best.** After it is handed over to man, it begins to go downhill. The beginning of Acts was the best. There was the “skating rink” in the big meetings to skate people in. Many skated in. **Then there were the meetings from house to house to bring people into the foundation of the church.** **Once a person joined the home meetings, he was kept.** This is God's wisdom. *On Home Meetings, Chapter 1*

In the past our failure was that we only had the big meetings and did not build up the home meetings, so we did not have a place to store the water. It was like giving birth to children with no place to raise them. **Now we have found that the home meetings are the right place for the new ones to grow up and live.** Therefore, we all must see clearly that the new way depends on the home meetings, and the home meetings depend on how we lead and perfect the new ones.

*The Furtherance of the New Way for the Lord's Recovery, Chapter 7*

**The home is a steady and stabilizing unit. Those who are saved in the homes grow up in the homes.** Since they are built up in the homes, it is not easy to lose them. In the past the church life was like a social club. When a person was saved, he was frequently ignored because of lack of care and concern. Now the church must be built up in the homes. When a person is saved and baptized, he will not be dropped. Rather, the fruit will remain and be strong.

*Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 1: The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way, Chapter 16*

## II. The Home being the Place to meet every need

**1 Thes. 2:7, 11**

**7 But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children.**

**11 Just as you know how we were to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling you and testifying,**

## III. The Community Saints Developing Nests In Their Home Meeting

**Psalm 84:3** At Your two altars even the sparrow has found a home; And the swallow, a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young, O Jehovah of hosts, my King and my God.

A. The core meeting at a separate time from the home meeting

B. Prayer, fellowship, care

**1 Cor. 12:25** That there would be no division in the body, but *that* the members would have the same care for one another..

C. Prayer, fellowship, coordination

## IV. The Important Cherishing And Nourishing Function Of The Community Saints' Homes

**Acts 2:46-47**

46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of *their* food with exultation and simplicity of heart,

47. Praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.

### **A. Providing a Base for the Dispensing of Christ**

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and announcing the gospel of Jesus *as* the Christ.

It would be very profitable if the saints could acquire a house that would be a station for the work among the students...If this couple together with all the saints help the students, take care of their needs, prepare meals and snacks for them, and even wash and mend their clothes, the students' hearts will be touched. **Then it will be easy for us to dispense Christ into them.** *Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1967 Vol. 2, p. 105*

**However, we still need another practical help to make our gospel preaching work prevailing. If we only have prayer and the word without this little help, our work will not be as effective as possible. This little additional help is the homes...**

Our homes have several advantages. In America many freshmen attend college away from home. Since they are considered full-grown, they may leave home once they have graduated from high school. Many of them are lonely and homesick. If we invite them into our living rooms for a little snack or perhaps a dinner, **they will feel at home and this will open them to the Lord and the truth.** Furthermore, people do not have a goal and they are tired of their old manner of life. This situation is sovereign of the Lord. Once a young person graduates from high school, he usually begins to think about the goal and meaning of his life. Many young people today do not have a goal. They are wondering what to do and where to go. They do not have a goal in their human life. The material riches of America cannot satisfy the hearts of the young people. **Therefore, we must take this opportunity to fill up the gap in their hearts with Christ. The best way to do this is by opening up our homes.** *Preaching the Gospel on the College Campuses, Ch. 2*

### **B. Practical care in the homes—untying the “knotty” problems in life**

Colossians 2:2 That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

## **V. Providing a Place where the new ones can touch the Riches of God's Inheritance in the Saints**

### **Judges 2:10-11**

10 And all that generation as well were gathered to their fathers; and **another generation, who did not know Jehovah or the work that He had done for Israel, rose up after them.**

11 And the children of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Jehovah and served the Baals.

### **Ephesians 1:18**

The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

### **Psalm 71:18**

So even into my old age and greyheadedness, **O God, do not forsake me, Until I have declared Your strength Unto the next generation,** Your might unto everyone who is to come.

**If the older saints in the church can pass on the lessons they have learned in the Lord throughout the years to the younger saints,** regardless of whether it is a burden for the gospel, knowledge of the truth, or a portion in the service, **this would be wonderful.** In this way, the older saints can rest and sleep in peace, the young people can function appropriately in the church, and the teenagers and children can grow up healthily in the church. *Knowing Life and the Church, Chapter 9, p. 113*

## **VI. Providing an Environment for Spiritual Progress and Growth**

### **Philippians 1:25**

And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,

### **Colossians 4:12**

Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

## **VII. Providing a Place to See a Pattern of Living Christ, both for Today and for the Future**

### **Philippians 3:17**

**17** Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe those who thus walk even as you have us as a pattern.

### **Hebrews 6:12**

**12** That you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and long-suffering are inheriting the promises.

...If the saints in every locality are well coordinated, the new ones will be inspired with what they see. **They will see the real social life, communal life, and family life.** Our service in coordination will touch, soften, and warm up their heart to receive the living, piercing word (Heb. 4:12). Once a freshman is brought into your living room, most of the work is already done. *Preaching the Gospel on the College Campuses, Chapter 2, pp. 27-28*