

# K-046 True Fellowship

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz emphasizes the need to restore the true meanings of fellowship and truth to reflect God's glory in the church.*

**Duration:** 1:23:05

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:15, Acts 2:44-47, Hebrews 3:13

**Topics:** "Fellowship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by describing their nervousness before delivering the message. They pray and feel led to speak about the deceitfulness of sin and the importance of exhorting one another daily. The speaker emphasizes the need for believers to be witnesses of God's glory and attributes in their relationships with others. They also highlight the radical generosity and abandonment displayed by the early church and how it led to great grace being upon them. The speaker reflects on their own transformation from a self-willed individual to a follower of Christ.

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## Transcript

Sit, class. If ever anyone needed it this morning, tis I. The Lord had me up at unusual hours, with an irregular sleep and a partially comprehended message. Do I dare just go ahead and believe that He'll explain it as we proceed? This is still in keeping with the theme of restoring the altar that has been torn down, restoring the twelve stones.

And there are a couple of words that need desperately to be restored that are on my heart this morning. One is the word fellowship, and the other is the word truth. And both words are extraordinarily connected.

Both words have suffered such slight in our generation that they are hardly recognizable. Fellowship has become some kind of easy, soft, pappy, slap on the back and chuck under the chin, how you doing brother? And truth, well I don't even know if the word is used anymore, has almost an antique ring. I want to say except that both words are restored to their original pristine meaning, and restored together, there shall not be the glory of God in the earth.

So let's just pray that the Spirit of God that has stirred me about these words earlier this morning is now going to make sense over them. Gracious God, Lord, we want to hear what is dear to your heart. And we are guilty, Lord, grievously, of merchandising in holy things, in destroying the meaning, my God, of sacred things, by abuse, by misuse, by familiarity, by neglect, by indifference.

We ask, my God, that the Spirit of Truth shall be with us in a very special way this morning to breathe new life into these words, into these terms, to bring them forth from the dead, to restore them, my God, to the central place in the understanding of God. May we be so ashamed in a sense, my God, of things when you shall reveal to us what fellowship means, that we shall never again be callow or shallow about it, my God, and be satisfied with a backslap or a bear hug. Show us how central it is to all of your great purposes and to the revealing of Thy glory.

Come, my God, and take a jaded, tired piece of flesh and animate and make alive with your own life the things that are dear to your heart. Make them dear to ours also. We'll thank you and praise you for this excursion that we're on and the unfolding, my God, that you've been giving session by session.

In Jesus' holy name we pray. Thy kingdom come, Lord. Amen.

Well, let's just turn where the Lord had turned me. In 1 John, from the first verses of 1 John, what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the word of life. And the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us.

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these things we write so that our joy may be made complete. And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announced to you, that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. Amen.

Well, I suppose that my feeling about these verses is parallel to your own. They are strange, cryptic, unusual. Only John could speak like this, write like this.

They seem to be a mumbo-jumbo of words and terms. You wonder how one is related to the other. There's a sense of mystery about the writing of John that is not to be found in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

It takes a kind of special revelation to put this together, to see the connection between life, between fellowship, between truth and somehow if the Lord will do it, it's a masterful combination that we need to see. So, interesting that it begins with the subject where God left us last night. Not just life, but the life.

The life was manifested, which he also refers to as the eternal life and also as the word of life, all statements referring to the same reality. And then he leaps right from that to another subject altogether, fellowship. And somehow it's intimated that there's an extraordinary connection between the life and the fellowship.

And before we can digest that, he introduces yet a third element, light and truth, as somehow being connected with fellowship, which is somehow connected with life. Now that's where I am this morning. Maybe we can just hold that for a moment and look at two very familiar, famous references to the first

koinonia of God.

Everybody's familiar with the word koinonia. I took pains earlier this morning to look it up in a Bible dictionary because I myself was guilty of relegating koinonia and fellowship to some secondary and lesser category of importance. I was a man for truth and for light, for the principles of God, for the purposes of God, for the kingdom of God, but I did not myself recognize how central koinonia is to all of the things that I've just enumerated.

Fellowship is not icing on the cake. Fellowship is not some kind of luxury or secondary thing which is nice to have after we have truth and light and righteousness. Somehow fellowship is the expression of all of these things together and made possible by light and truth.

If it's not in the light, if it's not in the truth, it's not koinonia either. It's some kind of substitute, which is not the real thing. And there's something so dear to the heart of God about true koinonia, the fellowship of the saints with each other in light and in truth, which is akin to his own koinonia and fellowship in the Godhead.

That the mystery of the Godhead somehow in the mind of God has also to be reflected in the earth. That in the same way as the three persons of the Godhead are in a special kind of integral relationship in light and in truth, the exact condition must be made manifest by his body in the earth. Anything less than that does not release the glory of God and does not incite the approval of God, which constitutes his visible presence and glory, as I hope now to show you.

So, for example, reading from Acts 2.43, where we can begin with 41 about the thousands that were swept into the kingdom after the preaching of Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost. And by the way, just in passing a little footnote, if you've always wondered what it is that gave such extraordinary power to the message of Peter that resulted in thousands being swept into the kingdom by one speaking, the answer is not in Peter. The clue is Peter rising with the eleven.

That's more than just a symbolic statement. It's striking again at the heart of what's at God's heart this morning. Koinonia, fellowship, union, men being made one in truth.

Peter rising with the eleven was more than just a token gesture of men who said, Go get them, tiger, we're with you. It's men in such an extraordinary bond of union that the only way to describe the quality and the character of their relationship is to use the word heavenly. And somehow when men achieve that condition of being, something happens in the heavenly that is manifest on earth, that has an extraordinary expression of the favor of God in presence and in power that swept thousands into the kingdom.

Peter and John going up to the gate beautiful together is more than a statement of two men strolling. Something happened because at the end of the gospel of John, the last thing we hear from Peter is, And what shall this man do? Very Jewish statement. Selfish, private, jealous, guarded.

What about this guy? Suggesting that what pertains to him is unrelated to what pertains to me. But something happened from the speaking of that statement to the day of Pentecost that altered everything, both for Peter and for John. Well, we need to recognize that though they were both Jews, that did not make them one.

And I think it's true then as it is now, the axiom that if you have two Jews, you have three arguments. There's nothing different between Jews and other men, except that what they are is what men are multiplied many times over. It's writ large.

Jews are extraordinarily contentious and opinionated, self-willed. Therefore, what we see as the expression of the first church is a revelation of such a genius of God, such an extraordinary thing that happened to this particular kind of segment of mankind and made them one. Those that believed were together is another repetition of the sacred word together, which means something more than sitting alongside each other in pews.

Together in the Book of Acts is not a statement of proximity. It's a statement of heaven. Those that believed were together is something that most of us have never tasted in 10, 20, 30, 40 years of our Christian experience.

We've had a backslap in the foyer and a handshake and a cup of tea and how are you doing, brother so-and-so and sister so-and-so and little commiseration and sympathy and the kind of euphoric feeling that comes sometimes in the singing of choruses together, but that misses by a million miles what adheres in the word together as it is expressed in the Book of Acts. Peter and John going up to the gate beautiful together and the man born lame fixing his eyes on them. What did he see, I wonder? Did he see two Jews who were so, though they were Jewish, they were so extraordinarily different? One who always had his head on the bosom of the master and the other who was the bumptious upstart, always first, always rushing to do things, always blurting things out.

Men of such extraordinarily different temperaments and kind that for them to go up together is an achievement that could only have been wrought from heaven. It's a statement of a character and kind of relationship which, except that we find it and come to it again, there shall not be glory of God in the earth. Fixing his eyes on them, what did he see? They weren't both wearing holy dove pins or any other insignia, but he must have glimpsed something that was indefinable.

He saw something so extraordinary in the relationship that it excited something in his almost dead heart who had been laying as a rat, as a reject all of his life, begging, that he had not glimpsed in doctors of the law, in scribes and Pharisees and priests. He saw in two ordinary men that excited equality of faith in his heart that when Peter extended his hand, he could take it and leap to life. I tell you guys, there's a dead world just like that born lame waiting for just that kind of assist that will come when it shall glimpse in us a quality of something that shall excite a faith in it to believe that there's a God in heaven who can restore the dead, who can make the lame leap.

And this is what Jesus meant when he said, You shall be witnesses unto me. Probably you're not too far in your understanding now from what understanding I had about 17 years ago as a new believer first reading those verses. I was a highly individualistic, self-willed man.

I had gone through a variety of relationships, all of which were disasters, highly opinionated and intense, and I brought that same mentality and spirit right into my new walk as a Christian. And when I read, You shall be a witness unto me. Wowee! You, our cats, shall be a witness unto me.

So I imagined all I needed to do was to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and then I would be off in my own individual career for God doing extraordinary exploits. Isn't that the way that you thought of it? Well, I would be surprised if you have had any other thought because you've not been fitted by the world to think in any other terms. The world has encouraged, flattered, and underlined every kind of individualistic impulse in your being.

The whole world encourages self-willed individualism. It has not at all a sense of that which is corporate. And in that regard, as in every other, it is absolutely contrary to God.

I want to breathe upon you the spirit of the corporate genius of God. The corporateness of God. For if you miss that, you miss all.

That's what made the Church the expression of heaven. It was the expression of the Godhead itself. For as some wit once said, God himself is a sweet company.

How do you like that? No wonder we Jews cannot abide Jesus. That Johnny come lately, that presumer, who does he think he is? We have one God, and that's God the Father, who is this one who says he's the Son, and another one who says he's God the Holy Ghost. We can't reconcile ourselves with God in this complexity because we ourselves are so individualistic and see everything in terms of only ourselves and one that we cannot reckon on a God who has this character, that he's three and yet one, because the three are melded together in an extraordinary quality of relationship and integrity that they constitute one.

It boggles our minds. It contradicts the whole tenor of our life. And therefore the mystery of the Godhead must be revealed in earth by the mystery of the body.

It's the same mystery. That's how come we can go to John 17. I'll come back to Acts in just a moment.

This is not going to be organized. It's going to be organic. That means sloppy.

You know the great prayer in John 17, that they might be one. John 17, 21, that they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that thou didst send me. Can you understand the connection? How can Jesus say that if you see me, you see the Father, I and the Father are one, when you know that the Father is in heaven? No wonder that religious sensibility was outraged by such a statement made through a man, visible, present before one, flesh and blood.

The same thing needs at the end of the age to be made manifest again. What do you think of the body of Christ standing before an unbelieving world and saying, if you see me, you see the Father? I think that the spirit of that is caught up in the phrase, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. When you shall see the kingdom, you shall see the king.

As a matter of fact, nothing else shall reveal the king on earth, but the kingdom. Now look, you're all clever, and you know well enough, if you but stretch your mind just a moment, that a kingdom is a social phenomenon. Right? I'm not just talking about heavenly kingdoms.

Any kingdom is a social phenomenon. It requires subjects. It's a contradiction in terms to think of a kingdom, but with one subject.

It's a vast social phenomenon that includes many subjects whose wills are all submitted to the authority of a king. It's social. It's complex, yet one.

And the nature of the king, his character, is reflected in his kingdom. That was true of Great Britain up until recent generations, France, and any kingdom in the earth. It had a certain temper, it had a certain ethos, it had a certain quality, it had a certain common language, values, goals, it departed itself in a certain way, it was military, or it was benign, it was imperialistic, or it was something else.

It fancied itself cultural, or intellectual, or other kinds of qualities, very much a reflection of the authority that prevailed over it. And everything that I'm saying about an earthly kingdom is true also about the heavenly. You shall be witnesses unto me is not spoken, and is not intended to be spoken to a single individual.

The you is plural, and the only way that he can be witnessed to in the earth adequately, that is to say to the point where men shall believe upon him whom God has sent, is to see the glory of the king in his various attributes revealed in the corporality of men, that is to say, in their relationship. What is divine love? How shall it be exhibited? Well, I got it, I know I got it. Can't you see my chest palpitating? That won't do it.

They have to see it exhibited in relationship one with another. A love that is different in character and kind from that which the world calls love, which is sentimental, selfish, conditional. The love of God is unconditional, expansive, intense, passionate, unfeigned.

What's that scripture in 1 Peter? Have what kind of love for one another? Have fervent love one for another. See, everything in heaven burns. God is a consuming fire.

And if the God who is a consuming fire in heaven is to be revealed in earth, he needs to be revealed consumingly. Fervently. That's why a backslap won't do it.

A little chuck under the chin won't do it. How you're doing, brother, won't do it. But a demonstration of fervent love, not just with Anglo-Saxons like yourself, but with those who are extraordinarily different from you and who would in the natural rub you the wrong way.

That's what this lame man must have seen in Peter and John. Men who had rubbed each other the wrong way now going up to the gate beautiful together. The glory of that church, I think, was far more amply demonstrated in Antioch than it was in Jerusalem.

Because in Jerusalem it was in its inception Jewish, which was an achievement. But in Antioch it contained all of the diversities of men. Now there were in the church in Antioch certain prophets and teachers and then it lists them in Acts 13.

One was from Cyrene, one was with Mana'an the Tetrarch, one was Barnabas, one was Saul, one was Niger, a black man, a Roman, a Gentile, two Jews. And when they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate unto me. And that was the beginning of apostolic glory.

You think it was mere happenstance that the Holy Ghost rang out at a moment when men were lost in worship together? Or was it the moment that the Holy Ghost was holding his breath, waiting to see realized on the earth? When he found men of such extraordinary diversity, of language, culture, nationality, race, and even calling in God, ministering unto him, that was it. The condition was fulfilled by which the call of the Holy Ghost was released for the apostolic journey to begin, which was a glory. Fellowship sort of today has the kind of the ring of popcorn.

Fellowship. Well, we'll have fellowship. That means a little back slapping.

Here's what it means, that they may all be one. Not by sublimating their differences and swallowing them down, or by concealing issues or turning your back to them, but by the most full giving of oneself over to the issues of truth. To expressing what's in your heart.

To speaking the truth in love. To exhorting one another daily while it is yet today. To confrontation.

To bringing to the surface and to the light the things that are concealed and dark. Rather than swallowing them down and looking the wrong way. And hoping by a little glib smile and a slap on the back to pass them over.

True koinonia requires desperately the assistance of the Holy Ghost. You know when Jesus said, you shall be witnesses unto me? Right after he said, is it time now to restore our kingdom to Israel? He said, don't worry about that. Leave that with the Father.

But concentrate on this. You shall receive power from on high that you may be witnesses unto me. We were all nice guys before we came to Minnesota.

Really, we had it all together. We all could express the principles of the body of Christ. We all believed in submission to authority.

And all of these things. We were nice guys and great fellowship for the first couple of weeks. Then all of a sudden, whatever we had that was human and limited began to run out and dissipate.

Our nice guyism came to its end. And you know what began to replace it? Sullen resentment. Chafing irritation.

Indignation and vexation with the saints. A difficulty to abide and to tolerate them. You know what I often say to churches when I speak in varieties of churches? I say, you know, there's only one difference really between us.

When this service is over, you'll go home. When our service is over, we are home. But that one difference speaks volumes.

It's one thing to sit with saints for an hour or two on Sunday and put your best foot forward and look religiously polite and affable. But to stay with them through Sunday and find them again with you on Monday of all days. And Tuesday and Wednesday through all of the vicissitudes of life after you've had a row with your wife and barked at the kids and kicked the cat and this went wrong and that and you're not at all in your best spiritual condition but you are what you are with your face sticking out before the saints.

Then the conditions are there by which truth can be made manifest. Where the light must shine. Where relationship cannot be phoned up and gotten over glibly by virtue of the fact that you have a nice personality or a sweet manner.

It won't last beyond a few weeks. It's either going to be the life of God. That's how John begins.

And the life was made manifest. It's a palpable thing. It's tangible or else we're finished.

If it's not there in the clutch and in the crisis when we run out of our good guy-ism, we're finished. It's the life which operates in the light which is truth that makes koinonia koinonia. And as I read this early this morning koinonia, it says, is not association but participation.

Those that believed were together does not mean that they merely associated. They participated in a shared common life. And don't think that is not a supreme achievement for men who are diverse in temperament, background and even in callings in God.

The foundation of the church built upon the apostles and the prophets. My God, what a talent, what a genius God has to take the most disparate elements and say that until they come together there's no foundation for the church. You say, what's so hard about apostles and prophets getting it together? You can't believe how hard it is.

An apostle is a teacher. He's a builder. He's a master builder.

He builds on the principles of God in the Word and he's exacting a sure foundation and line upon line and precept upon precept. But a prophet, oy vey, he'll recite from the back of a book of matches. He'll foam at the mouth.

He'll come out of the seams. He'll perspire. In one fell swoop, he'll just brush aside all that is considered time-tested principle and do something utterly ungainly and unique and freaky that you wonder if the man has his marbles.

He'll get up and say to a church, Would to God I could frolic with you in the grass. And where does it say that in the scriptures? If there's anything calculated to rub an apostolic teacher the wrong way, it's a prophet. You never know what's coming next.

They have so little tolerance for the particulars and see the sweeping vision and everything for them is an event that's got to happen now. And they're so impatient with these teachers with their slow plotting, line upon line, principle upon principle. It's a contradiction of temperament and calling.

And God says that the church is to be built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. What will it take to get those guys together? It'll take the supernatural enablement of God which is available to men who walk in the truth and in the light as he is in the light. And I want to tell you guys, that is no ordinary light.

It's a light of the intensest kind that reveals every shadow. I can tell you of things that have happened in the intensity of our Koinonia shared common life that would never happen in 10,000 Sundays of conventional church experience. For example, we have a food locker, a commissary department where whatever the Lord gives us goes into this little building, I don't know how small to describe it to you, probably the length of this platform in a square with a freezer, a refrigerator and shelves into which come the women of the community one by one to make their selections.

Now we don't always have every kind of food stock available. Sometimes there are long dry seasons and other times the Lord sends up bagels and Jewish delicacies and we go wild. But on this occasion we had a carton, a cardboard box full of frozen orange juice.

Very special treat. And no one says how many you're to take. Imagine a woman coming into this food locker and closing the door behind her utterly alone with God to make her own choices.

I'll tell you that there is more spiritual work of a true kind performed in those minutes than 10,000 Sundays. And in this particular case the woman was from California who had been very accustomed to juice as a common asset in life and she was now living in a severely cold climate in northern Minnesota where she recognized that orange juice was even far more imperative than it was in California. So she helped herself to a number of cans probably more than was prudent without a regard for what would be left for the others.

This is not association, this is participation. She took home her little catch and she put it in her own little freezer in her refrigerator and began to enjoy the bounty. And as the stock declined one day a kid from across the road in one of the other house trailers came and said my mother sent me to ask if you had any frozen orange juice my brother is sick.

Well she chafed a little bit and she opened up her supply and she took out a can and gave it to him. And sure enough the same kid came back the next day have you got any more? And she said no. The kid went back to tell his mother that she had no more and she had to go right from that statement to the daily morning prayer meeting.

And there we were sitting together face to face in the presence of God. And this woman shifted from one side of her seat to the other side of her seat in such restlessness and writhings until finally she had it blurred out that she was ashamed of herself that the spirit and presence of God was deeply convicting her that she had just spoken a lie. And what was really the humiliation was that it was a lie for a paltry can of crummy orange juice.

And she couldn't go further and we couldn't sit there longer because she felt that she was impeding the spirit of God by not bringing this into the light. You see there's something about participation as against dissociation when you're together long enough and intensely enough that must reveal the issues of truth in the light. But if you have only to hold your breath for an hour on Sunday you can get away with it.

I think last year if someone would have said to me Art are you trying to say that community is not an option but that every believer must somehow find his way into one expression of it or another I would have drawn back and hedged a little bit well I don't know, I would commend it but I couldn't say, now I would say unequivocally yes. Not to be in community is to be outside of the definitive relationship of the kingdom kind that God intends for all his saints. There's no way that the redemptive work of God by the spirit can take place in the light except that you're in a relationship with the saints that is long enough and intensive enough to accomplish God's purposes.

I don't care if it's on a farm I don't care if it's in the inner city because I've seen it in London from where I've just come what the arrangement is, whether it's apartments whether a whole group of believers together have bought an apartment building as they've done in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada 18 units and have moved into the one building together or they're on a farm as we are with separate house trailers or what the arrangement is they went from house to house daily breaking bread is a principle that must be restored to God's people. We must live together close enough we must have access to each other and proximity by which the redemptive workings of God can take place where the spirit of just men can be made perfect. I in them and thou in me that they may be perfected in unity is the cry of God that the world might know.

Now I know that we prefer other alternatives to this renting a football stadium, a rally putting stickers on our bumpers is that what you call it, on both ends of the car? An evangelistic device, a gimmick, a campaign a hot shot evangelist, something like that and maybe there is some justification for these things but the eternal and unchangeable principle by which the world shall know that the Father has sent Him is the demonstration of the koinonia of God and His people and nothing less. Those that believed were together and had all things common and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need and they continuing daily with one accord continuing daily whatever made Christianity a Sunday venture. It's a distortion and a caricature and a grotesque that the great faith which

is daily in the intention of God has been made a Sunday addendum.

There's no way that mere Sundays even punctuated with a midweek Bible study can attain to this glory. It's a daily thing or it's nothing. You say, Art, that's inconvenient.

That's true. Gets in the way of your business. That's true.

Your hobbies and your pastimes and your recreation. That's true. That's why you have to have a passionate desire for the kingdom come that will reorder your priorities and put fellowship first and not last.

That will show you that it requires an extravagant investment of time of patience, of giving yourself over and not just mechanical time itself but time spent in intensity and openness as is described in the Orange Juice incident. Because when that woman blurted out her sin we were all convicted because we recognized that there but for the grace of God go we. She was describing our weakness and our sin but she had the courage to confess it and by which we were all convicted.

And from that we got into a discussion about orange juice. Well, what is there about orange juice that would make cowards of us all, to paraphrase Shakespeare? Is it the vitamin C in northern Minnesota that is so valuable? Well, if we didn't have frozen orange juice and we had vitamin C tablets would she have done the same thing? It was evident, no, that she would not. It's not the nutritional content.

So what then is it? Well, it's something about the color orange itself. It's something about the flavor and the taste. It's something about the pulp as it goes sliding down your gullet into your stomach that is sensual and voluptuous and desirable.

And we got into a discussion of the sensuality of food and the world system as it pertains to food and to eating that was like a revelation as if God was taking a veil off that we gasped and spluttered to see how extraordinary a thing food is and eating practices as it binds one to a world system and makes cowards of us all. It's a revelation that could not have come in any other way except by people who are not in association but participation in the kingdom of God. I can multiply the events.

If it's not orange juice, it's something else that has come out in the course of our life together. Those that believed were together is more than a statement of sitting alongside one another in pews. As a matter of fact, I would say that the first priority if we are to go from our present institutional death and Sunday Christianity which is a caricature of God's kingdom intention to the glorious thing that must be revealed if men are to know in the world that the Father has sent them is to take those pews out.

My God, how long shall we continue staring at the back of each other's heads? How long shall we hide ourselves in the obscurity of the pews? How long shall we be encouraged in the passivity that comes in sitting in a kind of amorphous, faceless congregation watching men who are overexerting themselves because we're passive? My first recommendation, if you have a heart for the kingdom and it's going to take great courage and you're going to hear shrieks and howls that you can't believe how deep-seated are these traditional furniture arrangements and whoever said that the church is a rectangle based on the model of theatre with an elevated platform it was not so in the beginning. We have to deal with our buildings and our arrangements and our structure and make it more conducive to the glory of the reality that God is after in true koinonia or there'll be no glory and no revelation. You pastors and leaders and elders, you'll need the courage of the Holy Ghost to take out those pews and to arrange seats in such a way that people shall be seeing each other face to face.

And not the least of what you'll have to suffer is a personal decline because you yourself will not be on the exalted place of the platform but you will be with the others in the same circle which is the perfect geometric figure. Not hogging the show and taking over or manipulating or running or conducting but participating together with the others. I think one of the greatest compliments that our fellowship has ever received came from a Jewish brother from another community who spent a couple of weeks with us daily and said at the end, if I didn't know who the elders were I would have been hard pressed to identify them in the fellowship.

Not that they were not there, not that they were not present, not that there was not an authority that could be called on when needed at any moment but they did not enjoy a kind of exalted and visible status that would make others to diminish. They were just brothers in the fellowship until such time as their oversight was required. That means that when we come together there's no looking to a song leader or to a pastor to guide us through the hour but the Holy Ghost himself is the director being expressed through the many.

That's where the waiting comes in, the awkwardness, the silence, the tedium, the tension, the suffering because it's much more convenient to be led by men but it rarely eventuates in glory. All that believed were together and had all things common, sold their possessions and goods and part of them to all men as every man had need and they continuing daily with one accord in the temple and in breaking bread from house to house did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart praising God and having favor with all the people and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. I'm no great Bible scholar but you know what this speaks to me? That somehow God was pleased with the arrangement.

I know what the scholars say that this was just transitory. The church of Jerusalem was a transient church. It was just a helter-skelter makeshift thing with the eruption and the suddenness of Pentecost and soon enough these forms would dissipate.

I don't believe that. You know what I believe? This is the model that God gave in the beginning. When the Holy Ghost came down upon men in earth and the smoke cleared this was the first pure and original expression of koinonia as it came down purely from heaven before men had their chances to mar it and to alter it by tradition or by any other expression of their humanity.

And if this is an hour of restoration, I believe with all my heart God is wanting to restore this. And he added to the church daily such as should be saved. It's interesting that in every case or in the two principal cases where God describes the character of the koinonia of the first church as being together, that before that verse expires there's an economic as well as a social statement made.

That if there is no economic consequence of what it means to be together it's not the koinonia of God. All that believe were together and had all things common. What do you suppose that the day after Pentecost Peter wrote up a big sign and took it and nailed it on the wall and said now hear this, all you who were saved last night hear the rules of our fellowship if you participate with us.

Have all things common, no man thinks that the thing which he has is his own and will make distribution of it, nothing like that. No one had to be told, no one had to be instructed. Because what they did was the organic expression of the life which they had received which is generous to a fault and pours out always.

It's interesting to ask the question, I may be the only one in our generation who has raised it. How it is that what we call revival or renewal with the charismatic movement with this filling of the Holy Spirit the baptism

of the Holy Spirit which so many have professed and have received has not been attended by the same expression as what happened when the Holy Ghost came down at the first. But on the contrary, what distinguishes the charismatic movement is that men continue to live and go on in the same mode of single domicile individual self-willed worldly model as they had before.

They may throw an extra dollar or two in the collection plate but there is no real radical alteration of the economic or social lifestyle as was the consequence when the Holy Ghost came down at the first. And I want to suggest that when the true revival of God comes at the end of the age by which the world will know that the Father has sent him we can expect not only a radical social consequence but also its economic expression too. This has been my personal experience.

A man who lived in his own 17-room house in New Jersey with two Valvos, serving God admirably and living far more modestly than others of men like me who are in ministry whose lifestyle was yet more extravagant. Ours was an older 17-room house but it still had five and a half baths. As I say so often, with the God we had them now.

And the Lord said, OK, sonny boy, time now to come to the deeper things which I've called you and you've got to leave this comfort, this privacy. There's plenty of place to get lost in a 17-room house and come into the intensity and grinding demand of living with other saints which is the true fellowship of God. Because your ministry is not some kind of individual virtuoso thing that you have independent of other men.

But your ministry is to flow out of my life and my life flows out of the relationships of the saints. Put that in your spiritual pipe and smoke it. I know we'd rather have it the other way.

We'd rather have individual ministries based on our individual virtuosity and ability wholly independent of men and enjoy the benefits that accrue to us through ministry privately and then on Sunday be great sports and spend an hour or two with the saints. That's what the flesh wants but it is not the way of God. True New Testament ministry of the kind that is penetrating and that affects time and eternity must grow out of his life and the life comes out of the relationships.

There's an extraordinary organic connection between the expression of ministry and the foundation of life in Koinonia out of which it must come. God has seen to it. Anything else is aberration, distortion and contradiction from the New Testament pattern of God.

Are you with me so far? Let's look at another expression, a famous statement in Acts, this time the fourth chapter beginning with the thirty-first verse and when they had prayed the place was shaken. By the way may I say that the most powerful form of prayer is corporate prayer and corporate prayer is more than men together in a room each speaking their individual prayer. Corporate prayer is a qualitative thing of yet another kind.

If you've read the book Intercessor what's his name? Reese Howell's Intercessor you will read of how a band of souls actually affected history during World War II that they had everything to do with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 that they had everything to do with a blunder made by Hitler by which instead of invading Great Britain as it was hanging on the ropes he turned insanely and invaded Russia which was the beginning of the end for the Nazi thing because a group of saints in England were praying deception upon him praying that expressed deception that Hitler would turn to Russia rather than invade England which he did. Well how did they know to pray that? Because they had the mind of the Lord together because as the Lord himself is corporate and they were corporate they apprehended the

corporate mind of God which could only be done in a fellowship together and then they prayed it into being in the earth in agreement with his desire in heaven together. The room in which they prayed was shaken.

There is not one of us likely in this room that has ever experienced this phenomenon and we have only begun to taste something of this after six years together because your prayer cannot exceed the quality of your relationship. Katz said so. If ministry cannot exceed it neither can prayer neither can worship and that's why worship in so many of our congregations is the expression of our musical ability rather than the expression of the quality of our relationship with each other and with God in the light and in truth.

Boy you're getting an earful this morning. I'm amazed at what's coming out. I just feel like I'm being rung like the Lord is getting it out.

I only pray you're understanding me. I'm making statements that are so charged and so contrary even to the temper of our present religious generation and its wisdom that it almost constitutes, I don't know what to say, a charge that what they have called spiritual reality is in truth a fiasco and a lie because the truth is the whole truth and nothing but the truth or it's not true. It's interesting that at the end of 1st John we began this morning by reading from the beginning of it.

The last line is Little children guard yourselves or keep yourselves from idols. And I even looked up in the wee hours of the morn the word idol and it means a God substitute. Little children keep yourselves from idols both from God substitutes and from church substitutes.

And from koinonia substitutes. Don't satisfy yourself with association when God has called you to participation. It's a substitute and an idol.

And when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together. It's much more than sitting alongside each other in pews. Listen guys, we are in for such battle, such conflict.

The issue of what's going to take place in New Zealand is not going to be settled on the horizontal level. It's up in the heavenlies. Spiritual battle that must be fought by a people together who are spiritual.

I remember one day we came to one of our regular morning prayer meetings hungover, do you use that expression? Somewhat depressed and heavy. And we just couldn't get rolling, we couldn't get untracked. And someone mentioned about the fellowship 13 miles away that was going through extraordinary satanic harassment.

And then someone mentioned about the community where the kids go to school 8 miles away, Cass Lake, where it's 50% or more Chippewa Indian and how they have a totem pole and all kinds of satanic things and the medicine men and beating drums and all kinds of occultic things were happening. And then we said, hey, what are we going through? For the last few days there's been a heavy oppressive atmosphere in this entire fellowship. And we all of a sudden became conscious that we were being beset upon by demonic power.

I said, okay, hey, let's face up to this in prayer. So some people began to pray, some looked very beatific and religious but were silent. I love what Spurgeon has said in his lectures to students, get that book, the very first chapter.

He says, your public prayer, your ability to pray publicly is the truest index of your spiritual condition. Praise God for Spurgeon. Lectures to my students, Spurgeon, what's his name, Charles, Charles Haddon

Spurgeon, England's greatest preacher, the prince of preachers who established his own Bible school.

He was a tremendous man of God and very insightful. And I love that statement, I'll never forget it. It's very much in keeping with what I've said before, prayer cannot exceed the quality of your relationship.

And the quality of your prayer, which is the expression of your spiritual condition, is reflected in your ability or inability to pray publicly. Feeble prayer, feeble relationship, both with God and with men. And we started to pray very feebly.

Though we were beset about by demon powers, some prayed, some were silent, some looked religious, some were completely out of it, didn't know what to do, some were just waiting for the moment to pass, just like any other fellowship. And I stopped them. I said, if our life depended on your response right now, we would be dead.

If this is as much prayer as you can muster, we're finished. I said, if we were pioneers and we were crossing through the desert and we were being attacked by Indians and we turned our wagons in a circle and you guys were defending yourselves physically as you're doing now spiritually, we'd be dead. Some of you would have your arms folded as the arrows, flaming arrows would be whizzing right through.

I said, let's get with it. My God, this is life or death. And evidently that spurred them and we began to pray.

And something began to move and to work where the heat of one began to ignite another. Within the space of minutes, there was a conflagration in prayer. The room was shaken in which we prayed.

Men were lashing out with their fists. I had a duck as the arms were whizzing all over my head as guys were really battling with these powers and letting them have it. And some were on their knees, some were on their faces, some were stretched out prostrate, some were gushing in tears, some were powerful.

If you had walked into that room, you would have thought, this is an insane asylum. You have never seen men and women together in such a posture of prayer, engaged in spirit battle. And as this thing was gaining momentum, I had a sense that when we first began, the demonic host was looking down upon us and saying, the Ben Israel Fellowship.

But as we commenced praying, I saw that smile wither and turn to fright. And this demonic thing began backing up as the velocity and the intensity of our prayer mounted. And then I saw at a given moment, he really panicked and began to flee.

And I saw that we were pursuing in prayer until there came a moment like a great fist went pow! Right through the smog, right through the clouds, right through all of the coagulated things and broke through and the whole demonic host just was scattered all over the place. And at that very moment, we began to laugh. First from this corner, then from that, then from here.

That those who were really swinging were not just giggling, laughing, holding their mouths and we were just roaring with laughter. Not because anyone told us, but because in the realm of spirit where we all were, we knew that a victory had been obtained. I'll never forget that day.

I don't think we've ever had another prayer meeting quite like that. But when it was over, you know what the Lord spoke to my heart? He said, you did not realize to what degree the relationships of the fellowship have grown over the years. Because your face is always pressed right into the problems.

You always see that this is wrong and that's wrong and this needs to be corrected. You're an elder and you're concerned with the things that are wrong. And therefore you have not seen the quality of the relationship that have been attained over the years.

But this prayer today was its statement. I'm always amazed when visitors come to us and they leave and they say, I'm really impressed with the love that's in the community. I say, love? What love? All I see is suspicion and jealousy and hoarding of orange juice.

Here's what I want to say, guys. That prayer meeting, that decisive battle, could not have taken place the year before. It took a certain length of time of intensive relationship together to establish the quality of life by which that kind of prayer could be expressed corporately.

And when they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate unto me. The issue of prayer is the same as the issue of worship, which is the same as the issue of service. The issue is life together in the light and in truth.

It's not easy. It's painful. It's confrontational.

As we said yesterday, truth before it becomes joy is first pain. But yet we're commanded to speak the truth in love. Exhort one another daily while it is yet today.

Next Sunday is too late. I told you I lived in a 17-room house with two cars. I also attended at the same time one of the grooviest charismatic fellowships in America.

A super success, charismatically speaking. And yet somehow my Jewish heart was not satisfied. And I came back four years later to this fellowship.

They finally invited me to speak after a four-year moratorium for which people had been praying four years for my return because the church was now at a crossroad and a crisis. The pastor who didn't care for me too much had since left and left yet another church and yet another. And this new pastor who didn't have any previous history with me and was willing to have me for a Sunday night service.

I stayed over for a weekend in that community. Only to learn that three of the principal spiritual women whom I had known through the years, one was a neighbor across the street, all had become unabashed whores in such flagrant immorality that I was shocked beyond all speaking. And I can't even describe to you where one of them, the woman across the street, would get out of her husband's bed at three o'clock in the morning and in her nightgown hop into a car to find someone with whom to shack up.

Horrible, horrible statements of three of the principal spiritual women in the congregation. And that thing was just in my gut. I couldn't get over it.

And I was looking to the Lord for the message on Sunday night. And Saturday morning, just like this morning, about 4 a.m., the Lord waked me and had me to look at the scriptures in Hebrews. I think it's the third chapter where it says, Watch out, be careful for the deceitfulness of sin.

Lest your heart be heartened by the deceitfulness of sin. And then the other scripture in tandem with it, Exhort one another daily while it is yet to day. I had seen the scriptures but I had never really seen them.

The Lord just spent some time with me in them and I closed the book and went back to sleep as I did this morning. I came Sunday night for the service and I had completely forgotten that the Lord had awakened

me early in the morning. I had no message, my usual condition.

They brought me into the pastor's office to look me over to see if I was kosher and acceptable. I guess I passed the test. We went out into the congregation and the place was packed.

I mean packed. There was such an air of expectancy you could cut it with a knife. I came up to the platform, still waiting for the Lord to give me the message for people at a crossroad who somehow had come to the end of their charismatic ways and sensed that there's a dimension beyond but they didn't know what it was or how to approach it as some of you are in this present moment.

And as I was sitting on the platform and the service was going on, I began to feel sick. In fact, I was hot and cold and feverish and weak. I loosened my tie and I turned to the pastor and I said, Is it warm in here? He said, No, it's just you.

I said, I better take a look at the scriptures and see how my eyesight is. I opened the Bible. I couldn't read a verse.

It was all a blur. I said, Lord, what are you doing to me? These people have been waiting four years for my return and I can't even read from the scripture. I said, well, I'll give them some report of the recent overseas trip.

What else can I do? Finally, I was called on in that condition. I got up with my knees wobbling, leaned on the pulpit, looked out on those bluttered faces, could see the expectancy tape recorders poised. I didn't want to describe it in my condition.

I said, but let's pray first. As I prayed, the Lord said, Beware of the deceitfulness of sin. Exhort one another daily while it is yet today.

I knew that it was clear. The Lord reminded me that these were the scriptures he had shown me earlier in the morning and I was to speak from them now for the first time. I did.

The moment I opened my mouth, the feverish thing went, the weakness went, the sickness went. The clarity came, the power came. I was able to see and to read and to speak and we sailed through a tremendous word on the necessity to exhort one another daily while it is yet today.

And I said to them about the horror of immorality that had taken place in their own charismatic fellowship and by the way, which is becoming endemic throughout the world of pastors running away with their counselees and all kinds of things happening. Some of the most impressive charismatic leaders in America have since become casualties and fatalities of immorality. Men who have majored on relationships, at least verbally.

And my question to the congregation was, at what point does a woman who is first spiritual become a whore? Whore. At what point does it happen? Certainly there has got to be some progression or retrogression. There has got to be some kind of decline.

There has got to be some kind of visible change that could have been discerned and noted by those who love one another. You can't believe how I am worked over in my own fellowship. I am jumped if they think that I exaggerate.

And what I think is just a colorful phrase, they take apart to pieces. There is no one who is more ruthlessly examined in the fellowship than me. Praise God.

It is a safe guard and a loving provision by God through his people. It is painful but I appreciate it. I don't think that I could have survived walking in this age without such protection.

Here is the point, people. Exhort one another daily. Next Sunday is too late.

Do we love one another enough to know one another well enough? Is our relationship such that we have a knowledge of each other that when something is at its inception we can begin already to see the leaven working. Because the voice is changing. The manner of speaking is becoming affected.

A certain stylistic thing is beginning to slip into the life. The man is beginning to get glib and professional. You begin to see that the sharp edge is off or he is callow or he is full of ambiguity or he is not coherent.

Some telltale evidence that there is something working in the life that is not right. That someone needs to finger and speak to in love. Speak the truth in love.

If you will not speak, it is not loving. If it is not loving, it is not true. And there is something about the structure of our conventional church situation that does not lend itself to this kind of speaking.

Confess your faults one to another that you might pray one for another and be healed. I remember as a young believer being trained for Jewish missionary work in New York City. I was going through a terrible time with my oldest son.

The reason it was terrible was that he was my greatest vexation because he was so much like me before I was saved. Self-centered, always getting into the thick of things, always saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. One of those personalities that just insinuates his way into everything cloying and demanding.

You do not want to be reminded of what you were and what you still presently are to a greater extent. And there is something about this kid that rubbed me the wrong way. And my wife, you know the way women are, as demanding as I was on discipline, that is how lenient she was in her condescension toward him.

Always looking the other way. In fact, just before we left on this trip, the same son, now 17, was sitting on the arm of a sofa, which my mother has given us, a carved Spanish sofa, a very finely wrought thing in wood. Sitting on the arm of it, this big strapping 17-year-old.

And I said, do you have to sit there? And my wife says, well, where else should he sit? If she can find some way to justify, to rationalize, to pacify her son, she'll do it. If she can get up early enough to build a fire, we have a wood-burning furnace, and let him sleep, she'll do it. Well, there's much peace now, but it wasn't always so.

There was really a vexation, and I would lose the control of myself and let him have the back of my hand. And I was on my way to a prayer meeting one day in New York City, when that happened, just before the meeting. Isn't it remarkable? Always just when you're ready to get spiritual.

That's when these things erupt. So I gave him the back of my hand, and I went to the prayer meeting, and the last word I heard from my wife as the door slammed behind me was, go tell him what a great saint you are! Steam was coming out of my ears. I was driving to church, justifying myself, he had it coming, this was long overdue, when is that woman going to learn that without discipline, you know? I got to the

church, the service had begun, and they were taking testimonies.

I slipped in very quietly. You know, the people were raising their hands, yes, Sister Smith, I just want to say that the Lord is so good to me, and this week... And as I was sitting there, the Spirit of God was saying, confess your faults one to another. Confess your faults one to another.

And I was doing a slow burn. I was turning purple, red, green. The throat would open and swallow me.

I knew what the Lord wanted, and I raised my hand. Oh, Brother Katz, our Jewish brother, yes, Brother Katz! Thinking he was going to give a very pleasing testimony. And I got up, shaking and trembling and saying, from the moment that I've arrived in the church tonight, the Spirit of God has been saying to me over and over, confess your faults one to another.

I want to say that in the four years that I've been a Christian, I have never seen this done in the church. And maybe I'm out of order right now to do it, but I feel that I must confess a fault. You should have heard the silence.

You could have heard a pin drop. And I said, I want to say that I'm ashamed of a behavior that is chronic and continuing, that I can't alter, toward my son that is unbecoming a father, unbecoming a Christian, and unbecoming a man being prepared for God's service. And I went on to describe the situation with my son.

And when I finished, silence. It was the first time I heard the pastor without anything to say. And as we waited in this terrible tension of something that had never before happened in all of our Christian experience, a woman on the other side of the room got up and said, I want to confess a fault also.

And she began to speak about some horrible vexation of her life over which she never had power or answer. And the next thing we knew, we were all on our feet in prayer that we might pray one for another. And the glory of God came down.

We were lost in God. Talk about mountaintop experience. I don't know how long we were on our feet praying and praising God, but I do remember the last statement that the pastor made before we went home that night.

He said, we had been waiting for revival to come to this church. We thought that God would send some high-powered evangelist. But look what happened, he said, when only two of us were obedient to the scriptures.

What would it be, he said, if we were all obedient? And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spoke the word of God with boldness. Isn't it interesting, both in the first giving of the Holy Ghost in Pentecost and again in Acts 4.31, the filling of the Holy Ghost is not an individual, but a corporate experience, the genius of the first church as it came down from heaven. And when they had prayed, they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they spoke the word of God with boldness, and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, Acts 4.32, neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed were his own, but they had all things common.

Twice in the two most pointed statements of the first koinonia of God as it came down from heaven, in the same verse that describes the social relationship, there was also before the verse expires a statement of the economic participation that cannot be said for the church today. Our economic life is our own, it's

private, contained. We may, in some moments of largesse, give a few dollars for a missionary or give a tithe, but we're far removed from the radical abandonment and generosity that characterized the first church where the relationships that were social were expressed also economically.

You know what God said about this church? The 33rd verse, Acts 4.33, And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. You don't have to be a Bible scholar to figure this one out. That God approved everything that was described, for great grace was upon them all.

I guess I have to stop. I want to say we're going to need great grace at the end of the age. The end times, the extraordinary requirements that shall be upon God's people, the collision toward which we're heading, kingdoms in collision, the severe and final clash of kingdoms of light and darkness are going to place upon us extraordinary requirement which cannot be met on the basis of our conventional present Christian experience.

We are going simply to need great grace. And great grace as it was given then and as it will be available to us is not for the one, it's for all. Great grace was upon them all.

All not in the sense that they associated together but that they participated together in a certain quality of heavenly relationship that was wholly different from anything that the world knows as fellowship and fraternity which was radical, passionate, extravagant, generous in time and in substance and had not only social consequence but economic. And I cannot believe that we're going to come to that again except in the same way. That they all may be one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, just as we are one. I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that thou didst send me. The last verses of 1 John and I'll end this.

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding in order that we might know Him who is true. And we are in Him who is true. In His Son, Jesus Christ, this is the true God and eternal life.

The issue of life is also the issue of truth. Speak the truth in love. Exhort one another daily while as yet today.

The issue of truth is the issue of life. We have as much life as we have truth. They're one and the same.

As much light as we have life. As much fellowship as we have light. As much life-saving witness as we have fellowship.

That the world might know that the Father hath sent me. Because you're one. Shall I repeat this formula? The issue of truth is the issue of life.

Not truth academically. Truth inwrought in the relationships of God's people. For there is no relationship except in the light as He is in the light, which is truth.

Things concealed. Things hidden. Things unexpressed.

Things ignored because they're too painful. Because they're too demanding. Because who wants to exhort one another daily? It's not a pleasant activity.

And what if it will not be received? And what if you'll be misunderstood? What if you're wrong in your assessment? Well, it's safer, it's easier not to bother. And step by step, because we don't bother, because we don't see, because we don't attend one another, the deceitfulness of sin takes over. And the first expression of that deceit is to disguise itself as sin.

It's only mild flirtation. It's only because, well, we understand each other. Or a certain kind of spiritual understanding that we don't have with our own spouses.

That's the inception in the beginning. But the end is whoredom. Fornication.

Adultery. Devastation. Wreckage.

Death. The issue of truth is the issue of life. We have as much life as we have truth.

I am the way, the truth and the life. You can't escape that. We have as much light as we have life.

For his life was the light of men. John speaks about the life which we have handled and fondled, which was made manifest. We have as much fellowship as we have light.

Walking in the light as he is in the light. Having fellowship one with another. We have as much life-saving witness as we have fellowship.

That they might be one. That the world might know that the Father has sent me. Koinonia.

The true community of God's people. A fellowship of participation and not mere association. Of shared common life is the key to the restoration of God's glory and to his witness.

You shall be witnesses unto me. You shall be. Jew and Gentile.

Black and white. Mori. Aborigine.

You shall be in your relationship together witness unto me. My love. My righteousness.

My truth. My light. My meekness of spirit.

My humility. My generosity. My abandoned love.

My giving nature. You shall be. Don't allow the word fellowship to sink into the low condition in which it is today as some kind of secondary afterthought.

Some kind of icing on the cake. It's at the heart, the foremost place in God's sight. Great grace was upon them all.

With power gave they testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. God added to the church daily such as should be saved. The approval of God was upon the all who are living in kingdom, koinonia, relationship together.

Fellowship is more than a back slap and a bear hug. It's more than a how are you doing, brother. It's a participation in a certain quality of life in the light and in truth.

Requires the enablement of his spirit to walk it. It's got to be daily or not at all. Let's pray for the restoration of this in the earth.

Thank you precious God, Jesus. We feel that we are but scratching at a very great subject. But we have this much understanding that as we see our present conventional church experience, we recognize that there is a tremendous disparity with that which was given at the first.

When there was glory in the church. When the power of God was made manifest. When signs and wonders attended those who believed.

And precious God, we ask that you would lead us back. That there would be a restoring of this stone that has fallen over and that has been torn down. That this foundational thing shall be restored to the people of God.

That you'll give us a desire, a heart attitude to want it. That we'll be willing to pay the price of the inconvenience and the humiliation and the mortification and the disappointment and the disillusionment that comes when we turn earnestly toward each other on a daily basis. My God, give us the heart and the enablement and the stamina to pass through the veil of shallow casual Sunday religion and into the realm of daily earnest Christian living.

Let us not draw back. Give us the courage to face the truth. To be exposed and to be found out, to be revealed, to be corrected, to be adjusted, to be exhorted by one another.

To be perfected, to be made one. Seal up these things in our hearts, my God. And I pray especially for the leaders in this room.

The men who must actually, physically and literally take out the pews. My God, give them courage. Give them great grace.

Lead us, my God, again that the church might be a glory to your name in the earth. That there might be a kingdom of heaven at hand. That we might again be restored to the statement that the first church was able to express to a dying world.

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. My God, do these things, we pray, for New Zealand's sake, for all the nations of the earth. I will thank you and praise you for what is on your heart and for telling it to us straight as sons and as daughters.

In Jesus' holy name we pray.

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