

Fellowship - Part 6 (Supply)

by Lance Lambert

The principle of supply is essential for the building up of the body of Christ, and it requires every individual part to properly work and supply something, so that the whole body is fitly framed and knit together.

Topics: "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the principle of supply in the Christian life. He refers to Luke 6:38 and Matthew 10:8 to explain that when we give what we have received from the Lord, we will receive more in return. The speaker encourages believers to share the little they have, whether it is their testimony of salvation or a specific gift or talent. He warns against contributing what we have not received, highlighting the importance of allowing our natural gifts to be broken by the Lord and filled with the Holy Spirit. The speaker also cautions against overreaching ourselves and encourages younger believers to give what they have of the Lord without trying to imitate or surpass more mature believers.

Transcript

Now, if you would like to turn to Ephesians, and to the fourth chapter, Ephesians chapter four, Ephesians chapter four. And we will read from verse eleven. And He, that is our Lord Jesus, gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ, till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we may be no longer children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slate of men in craftiness after the wiles of error, but, speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ, from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplyeth, according to the working in due measure of each several parts, make us the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

Shall we just bow together in a further word of prayer? We've already got to cover this time, let's very definitely now take what is ours in our Lord Jesus. Dear Lord, we want to bow here in Thy presence this morning, and we want to thank Thee that Thou hast made a provision for us. We thank Thee for that provision for cleansing.

We thank Thee, Father, for that provision for understanding. We thank Thee for that provision of anointing, both for speaking and for hearing. Lord, together now we stand into it.

We want to recognize again, Lord, that apart from Thee we can do nothing. We can neither speak Thy words, nor can we hear Thy words apart from Thee. But, Lord, Thou hast given us the Holy Spirit, that we might know those things which Thou hast given to us.

O Lord, we pray together, take this time now, this morning, and make it live, Lord, with Thy speaking and with Thy working. Take Thy word and make it, Lord, a living reality to our hearts. May be, Lord, we understand some of these things, give us a clearer understanding.

Where, Lord, it's only an academic understanding, get it into our hearts, Lord, by Thy Spirit. But, O Lord, we pray that Thou would stand, as it were, against any kind of just mental appreciation of these things. By Thy Spirit, Lord, get it all into us.

For we ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. This morning I would like to speak about the principle, another principle of fellowship, the principle of supply.

The principle of supply. We find that in Ephesians 4 and verse 16, From whom, this is the head, even Christ, From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together, Through that which every joint supplieth. Every joint supplieth.

Through that which every joint supplieth. Not through that which some of the joints supply. Not that through which the most spiritual joints supply.

Not even through that which most of the joints supply. But through that which every joint supplieth. Every joint supplieth.

The principle of supply. In Colossians chapter 2 and verse 19, We read it, not holding fast the head, From whom all the body being supplied and knit together, Through the joints and bands, Increases with the increase of God. Being supplied through the joints and bands, Increases with the increase of God.

And then I want you to turn back to Ephesians 4 and verse 16 and notice another phrase. In the old version it's a bit of a mouthful. Here it is, according to the working, in due measure of each several parts.

Now you will notice in the New American Standard, which I think is one of the best modern translations that we have, it is rendered like this. According to the proper working of each individual part. According to the proper working of each individual part.

Through that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part. Every joint, each individual part. Every joint, each individual part.

Dear child of God, you are constituted by the Lord through new birth, an individual part of the whole. You are original, you are to be yourself, and yet all that is individualistic is to be dealt with. You are a part of the whole.

You are a part of the whole. You have not got every single thing that you can have in yourself. You are a part of a whole.

Every joint, each individual part. The principle of supply. Every joint supplying something.

Each individual part properly working. Now the trouble with the body of our Lord Jesus Christ down here on earth is that there are an awful lot of stiff joints. Anyone would think that the body of our Lord is a case

of chronic arthritis.

Somehow or other the joints have become stiff. Somehow or other large parts of the body are not properly working. And you know we can talk about all these principles of fellowship.

We can talk about the principle of oneness, of unity. We can speak about the principle of continuity. We can speak about the principle of authority.

We can speak about the principle of the organic. But unless in the end it comes down to this fact that every individual part is properly working, the whole is going to be paralyzed. It must be in one sense an academic venture.

An idealistic venture. Because in the ultimate it is not only that we need to maintain our oneness, it is not only that we need to see that we are part of something which God has been doing through the whole age. It is not only that we must hold fast the head and really know the Lordship and Headship of Jesus Christ in our midst.

But if we are really going to know the organic, every joint has got to supply something. And each individual part has got to properly work. Now that means you and me.

And the first thing I would like to just say this morning as we look at this matter is to go a little behind. I want to speak about the necessity of being built together. We are talking about fellowship.

Why should we be built with others? Isn't it enough to be saved? Isn't it enough to be redeemed? Why should we be built with others? I mean if some of us feel a little weak and a little in need, there may be a point for being built. But surely if we are strong in the Lord and we find everything in our Lord and we find all that we need in Him, is there really any need to be built with others? Why should we go through all this being knocked about, all this sort of discipline and limitation of having to be bound up with other believers, some of whom are so awkward and so difficult. Of course, it is always the others that are awkward and difficult.

You probably found that out. I mean if they were all like me, it would be such a blissful sort of thing. That's how most of us think.

Why should I be built up with others? Why should I contribute to the building? Why is it necessary for me to contribute to the building up of the body, to the building work of God? Why is it important for me to function? Why is it important that I should take responsibility? Can't I go on with the Lord, get to know the Lord personally, get to know His Word deeply in a personal way, grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him, really see the image of my Lord Jesus in myself being worked up, me being conformed, as it were, to His image? If we turn to Ephesians 2, and verse 20, we read these words, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit, in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. Turn to 1 Peter, and chapter 2, 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 4, speaking of our Lord Jesus, 1 Peter 2, from verse 4, unto whom coming a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house. Now mark that.

Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Ye also are built up a spiritual house. He is the living

stone.

You also are living stones. Together we are built up a spiritual house. Again, turn back to Ephesians, chapter 4. Well, look at Ephesians, chapter 2 first again.

Verse 21. Fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord. Fitly, in whom, in whom the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.

Look at Ephesians 4, verse 16. From whom all the body, fitly framed and nipped together, through that which every joint supplies. Now what do all these terms mean? Colossians 2.19. Not holding fast the head from whom all the body, being supplied and nipped together.

Now what do these terms mean? Groweth into a holy temple in the Lord. Fitly framed together in Christ. In whom also ye are builded together as a habitation of God in the Spirit.

From whom the whole body, fitly framed and nipped together. Being supplied and nipped together. What does it all mean, all these terms? One stone does not make a house.

A group of stones do not make a house. Many stones do not make a house. All the stones necessary for the building of a house do not make a house.

It is the relationship of stone to stone that finally produces a house. If you have a whole great group of stones and every single one of them is vital for that house, but they have never been related together, never built together. There has never been any sort of fitly framing together.

You haven't got a house. You've got all the materials, but you haven't got a house. It is the relationship of stone to stone which finally produces the house.

Now, why do you and I need to be built up together with other believers? Why should we contribute to the building work of Christ? Because all this is related to what God has desired from before times eternal. In other words, what God has always desired is a dwelling place in which He can express Himself and reveal Himself and manifest Himself as it were a place in which He can find His home. However we put it, temple, house, bride, body, mind, however we put it, it comes down to the same thing in the end that it is somehow or other a people who have been brought into a relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ and then are built together in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible ends with a marriage and we discover that that city which is the wife of the Lamb, that bride of Christ is not just personal. Far from it. We find that it is the relationship of saint to saint in Christ.

We find that it is the way they have been brought together, kept together, built together, fitly framed together, knit together, growing up as it were into Christ's head. Together. Now, Brother Kong has already in an earlier time said something about this matter.

And I want just this morning to keep to the principle of supply. But what I do want to say here is this. We can talk till we are blue in the face about the bride of Christ, about the city of our God, about the spiritual Zion, about the wife of the Lamb.

God, unless you and I find our relationship to one another in Christ, in time and in place, we shall never know the building work of God. Now, people sometimes come to me and say, Ah, ah, but just wait. What about those poor saints who have seen something and have no fellowship? They are the exceptions.

I always say to people who come to me, Well, have you got any fellowship? And they always say, Yes. We are so deceitful. It's like people who haven't come to the Lord and who come up to you after a gospel message and say, What about those who've never heard? Leave that to God.

You leave that to God. God is infinitely more just and righteous than you. Infinitely more.

If you've got any sense of justice at all in your heart and mind and conscience, it is because God has put it there. It is the palest reflection of the righteousness and justice of God. Now, coming back to this other matter, what I want to say is, Alright, well, leave those poor saints who are right out in the wild somewhere up in Alaska or somewhere else.

Are there not believers where you live? Are there not some believers who begin even dimly to see some of these things we are talking about? Then, dear child of God, you are caught and you cannot get away. If you want to be part of the bride, you have got to allow God to get you into a right relationship with other believers in time and in place. I can talk about being one with all the saints of God behind the bamboo curtain or behind the iron curtain.

Very conveniently, because they are behind the bamboo curtain and behind the iron curtain. I can talk even about saints, how wonderful it is, how one we are, and how the Lord is building us together because I hear news from the other side of the world. But God says all that is a lot of hogwash.

The real thing comes down to this. What about the saints in the place where you live? Are you finding your relationship to them and are they finding their relationship to you? Isn't that where we have all our problems? Oh, when we thirst for each other, we all look such lovely, shining, scrubbed, clean saints. But it is not long before we begin to find that there are a lot of very ugly corners, many, many problems and difficulties we find with one another.

But we have got to find our relationship to one another in the Lord. Otherwise, we make a mockery of the Word of God. I cannot understand this idea which is such a comfortable idea that has been prevalent for so long in evangelical circles.

That being fitly framed together, somehow or other, it all takes place up there in a kind of never-never land. All are being knit together. Somehow or other, it is all in the invisible.

It has seemingly no relationship to what is happening down here. If God says that we as living stone have been brought to the living stone and are built up as a house, He must mean precisely that. If He says that a whole building, fitly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, He must mean something.

What does it mean? It must mean that we saints have got to find our relationship to one another in the Lord. First to the head, and then to one another in the Lord. It is there, in the people of God, in time, on this earth, in locality, that I must be trained by the Spirit of God.

It is there that I must be changed into the image of Christ. It is there that I must know and submit to discipline. It is there that I must learn obedience by the things which I suffer.

It is there that I must exercise responsibility through the grace which God gives to me. It is there that I must fulfil whatever ministry, however small and seemingly insignificant, or however great and seemingly significant it may be. It is there that I must maintain the oneness at all costs.

And it is there and there alone that by the grace of God I overcome. The overcomer is not some kind of legend, some kind of lovely idea that you can get away from all other saints because you and you alone have seen something. You shut yourself away and become like some monk or nun, some hermit of old.

And so you overcome. God forbid! The way you overcome will be in relationship to other saints. And you may have to spend nights in prayer, but no one will know about it.

You may have to suffer in your own heart, deeply, knowing an anguish and a travail in your heart, but your face is bright so that no one sees that you are spiritually fasting as it were under the law. But there in your relationship to other saints, in the midst of all the problems, in the midst of all the difficulties, in the midst of all the limitations, in the midst of very, very earthly and human circumstances, there and there alone you overcome by the grace of God. And as you overcome in the midst so often of failure and defeat and breakdown and so much that is not right, as you overcome, so God relates you to those other saints, even the most awkward of them.

You discover that it is not to the super and the elite that you get related alone, but to all who are in the family of God. And even if they will not have it, you at least have a right relationship toward them. The character of true service must be produced there in time and in place.

You know the most wonderful thing about being a child of God and about all this building work of God is that we have an eternal vocation in view. All this that God is doing in time and in place is really but a kindergarten. It is a training course.

Not that we should devalue what God is doing here, but it is only a training course. I have said, I think, from one of these times previous to this, that this idea that somehow or other every child of God who is born of the Spirit is willy-nilly going to sit on a golden throne draping the mansions of heaven. Oh, may the Lord preserve us! Our Lord never said anything like that.

He said, if we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified with Him. He said, to Him that overcometh will I grant to sit down in my throne with me as I also have overcome and sat down with my Father in His throne. The fact of the matter is this, that the government and administration of God throughout eternity would be in a mess if it were left to most of us Christians in the state we are.

Where does God do something in our lives, in our relationship to one another, surely? There we learn some of the deepest lessons about God's character in our lessons. Do we not? We can talk about the love of God and it not mean anything really except that we, in a self-centered way, feel that we have been saved and we have been loved. But then we come up against someone who is so difficult, so rebellious, so awkward, who is always throwing, as we say, the spanner in the works.

And we say, Out with him! Out with him! We cannot put up with this problem anymore. Out with him! He is the problem. God says, Oh, no, no, no, no, no, you have got it all wrong.

He is not a problem. I could blow on him and he would be finished. You are the problem.

You are the problem because of your reaction and your relationship. And then suddenly we say, Oh, no, Lord, Lord, you have got it all wrong. I am one of the going on, saying, I am one of those who see someone who does not even see.

Worldly, commercial, fleshly spirit. And then the Lord says, But I died for him and I saved him and I loved him. Then we understand something about the love of God we never saw before.

You see, we can talk about the love of God on and on and on but until we come up against one another in this way and we discover the nature of love and the capacity of love, the infinity of love, we do not really understand love. And then we begin to understand why. Of course, I would not be here if God had not loved me.

I am just as difficult, I suppose, in other ways to other people. I often wonder what it must be like in heaven when all the various prayers and sighs are coming in, thousands and thousands every single second and someone is saying about so-and-so, Oh Lord, do get rid of so-and-so. They are the problem to this whole place.

And there comes in another prayer and says, Lord, from so-and-so, I find so-and-so so difficult, Lord. We have to find our right relationship with one another. If anything is going to be done, stones have to be shaped, stones have to be cut, stones have to be polished, stones have to be fitted together.

All this work is done where we live now and in our relationship to one another in Christ. Why should I be built together with others? I must be built together with others if I want to be in the city of God. If I want to overcome and sit down with Christ in His throne, if I want to possess the inheritance which my Lord has given His whole life for, then I must be built with others.

Why should I contribute to the building? Because there is no other way for me to be built in until I start to contribute the little I have. Have you ever discovered that the moment you start to give, that moment you start to discover how poor you are? We can live in a kind of spiritual fool's paradise, sitting there, listening to various ones contributing, leading, helping, sharing from the Word, nodding, or saying, didn't think much of that. And we do not know our own needs until suddenly we have to take responsibility for someone else.

Suddenly someone comes to the Lord through us. For the first time, we've, as it were, been used by the Lord to lead someone to Christ, and then we suddenly become concerned. We try to help them and we find that we haven't got it in us.

You know, we help them a little and a little and then we nearly smother them, then we nearly suffocate them, and then the one we've led to the Lord gets angry with us. That often happens, after a while. He says to us, I think you're starting.

We suddenly find, when we begin to take responsibility, that there is real need in our lives. And that, in turn, if we mean business, will drive us on to the Lord. Well now, really, what I'm trying to say this morning is that each individual part has got to work properly.

Every single part. All increase, all development is according to the proper working of each individual part. You know what it is? When some small, up to that point, almost, as far as you're concerned, unrecognised muscle gets a cold in it and seizes up.

Oh! Got pain. Or one joint gets inflamed. Oh! The pain that one joint can do.

You know, sometimes it's such a small area that gets infected, but the whole body feels it. Dear brothers and sisters, I just wonder sometimes in those companies that are represented here, whether you're one of

those painful spots. Because you've seized up, you've got a cold.

You've got a spiritual cold. Maybe someone dealt with you harshly. Maybe you felt that somehow or other someone said something about you, unkind.

Maybe you've been misrepresented and you've got a cold. Your love has just gone cold. And you said, Oh! What for you? What for you? If they are like that, what for you? You've got a cold.

Now, you're not only damaging the body, you're damaging yourself. Or maybe you've been a joint of supply and you've given something and then got inflamed. Some infections got in.

You just got inflamed. And all kinds of infections that can get in, you know. Devices of the enemy.

Imbalance. Something else. Your joint gets inflamed and then something happens to the body as a whole.

Not only is the body damaged, but you are. Now, what is this principle of supply? I think every one of us here probably sees the need that we should all work together. That every individual part should be properly working.

That every joint should be supplying something. What is this principle of supply? It is found, I believe, in Matthew 10 and verse 8. Matthew 10 and verse 8. Here it is, the last part of this verse. Freely ye receive, freely give.

Freely ye received, freely give. Give what you have received. Give what you... That is the principle of supply.

You have received... Give it. Don't give what you have not received. Ah, there's much problem.

That's just where we get so much problem. People are always contributing what they haven't received. Here's someone with a gift of singing.

So just because they've got a gift of singing, everyone says, sing, sing, please sing. It's not that the gift, their talent for singing has gone through the cross and been broken by the Lord and filled with the Spirit. And then, oh dear friend, don't let's be silly about this.

And sometimes someone singing can bring the Lord to us. Let's be afraid of it as it doesn't... Oh, that's all the world. That's entertainment.

That's entertainment. Sometimes someone can have a gift like that which has gone right through the cross and there's something in it of a quality that was never there before. One person can play the piano.

I thought that's a natural gift. One person can play the piano and all you get is them. And another person can play the piano and all you receive is the Lord.

What is the difference? They may both have musical degrees. What is the difference? One person can be a... I was going to say a genius, a wizard on the piano. And yet you show it, all you get left with is them.

Oh, the way their fingers run over the key. The way... Oh, it's so beautiful. But all you get is them.

But another person, you get the Lord. You receive the Lord. Why? Because that natural gift has gone into a melting pot.

It's been broken by the Lord. And then it's been given back in resurrection and filled with the Spirit. And then it becomes a channel of grace.

It becomes a joint of supply even. Now, I've only used two extreme things, singing and music, but it goes into everything. Why? You see, we often think, here's a person who can organise.

Oh, he's a great organiser. Well, he's a gift to the church. We say, hmm.

We get him right on. Oh, how America has suffered. Haven't you suffered? I've never seen a more organised place in the whole of my life.

You go into some churches, they are that organised that really you almost feel your breathing's been organised for you. Every single thing is programmed. The children are programmed.

The young people are programmed. The older people are programmed. The money is programmed.

The meetings, everything's programmed, programmed, programmed. We need organising ability when it has gone into the breaking of the Lord Jesus. And when it's come out into resurrection and filled with the Spirit, what a gift it is.

Here's someone with the gift, as we say in Ireland, the gift of the gab. That is, they just have a natural gift for talking. They could talk, as we say again in Ireland, the hind legs off a donkey.

For them to talk is the most natural thing in the whole wide world. They can talk and talk and talk and talk. And of course, once they get saved, they talk.

Only this time they talk Biblical talk. And they talk Biblical talk. And so we say, ah, so and so's a preacher.

So we immediately get them into theological seminary. And through theological seminary, into church, dress them up, ordain them, and now we've got the minister. And from then on he goes on with the gift of the gab.

It's no problem to him to speak because it's easy to him. It's natural to him. That's the problem.

It's natural to him. But oh, isn't it wonderful when God can take such a gift of communication, a natural gift, and put it into the cross, the breaking, as it were, of the cross, and then put it into resurrection, and then fill it with His Spirit, and anoint it with His Spirit. Oh, then there can be something wonderful.

Under the government and control of the Lord. The principle of supply. Don't give what you have got naturally.

Give what you have received from the Lord. Jesus said these words, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely ye have received, freely give.

And you know these dear ones went out and here is an amazing thing. They didn't even know the Lord deeply. They had no experience of the cross or the Spirit, yet they went out and they saw the most incredible things happen.

They saw the lepers cleansed. They saw demons cast out. They saw the sick healed.

And they saw Satan, Jesus said, falling as lightning from heaven. Why? Because they simply obeyed this one law of supply. Give what you receive.

Don't give what you have naturally, but give what you have received. If our Lord has given you something, give it. Dear child of God, if you are born of God, you have something of the Lord, haven't you? Give.

Give what you have of the Lord. This is the principle of supply. Don't overreach yourself.

Now let me speak to those of you who are younger in the Lord. When you come into a time like this and you hear all these wonderful people and you hear them talking about things like the overcomer and spiritual warfare and the nature of the church and being built together. Oh, you think, I've never heard of such things in my life.

And then you try to overreach yourself. When it comes to a time of praise, you either say, so good, so good. I can't open my mouth and praise the Lord.

Why? With all those wonderful brothers there and those tremendous sisters. It's stupid. And God would say, who does so and so think they are praising me this morning with all these wonderful people here in the front row? Please turn the cassette over at this point.

But you know there are times when a baby's cry means more to father than anybody else, than anything else? You see, if the baby tries to be a university graduate, that would be stupid. Father would say there is something wrong with this child. But you know, so many of God's children are trying to be university graduates, spiritually, before their time.

They try to take on the language, try to overreach themselves. They say, Oh, Lord. And they start talking about things they don't know the first thing about.

And then the whole thing becomes artificial and God says, Oh, dear, dear, dear. I don't get any joy out of this. And when you overreach yourself, what you've done is this.

You started by giving what you've received and then you went on to what you've not received. The principle of supply is to give what you have received. Dear young child of God, have you found the Lord? Why don't you open your mouth next time we have a time of open praise and say, Thank you, Lord, for saving me.

That means more to the Lord than if you said, Oh, Lord, I'm so thankful for the book of Revelation and how the overcomers have got through in those seven churches, Lord. And then those standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb following Him with His Word. I mean, you know, the Lord says, Look here, you haven't seen that.

You haven't seen that. What do you mean talking to me like this? Why don't you just, why don't you just praise me for what I am? Do you know there are times when we have people take part in prayer and they give us a whole potted version of the Sermon on the Mount. And I feel sometimes the Lord says, Oh, dear, dear, dear, I gave that.

Why does He have to give it all back to me? Why can't He simply say, Lord, I adore you? But you know, somehow or other, some of us, we can't do that. To actually say with our lips, I love you, Lord, in front of all His people, we just cringe. But we can give a paraphrase of some book.

It's not real. It's not real. Better to tell the Lord you love Him with all your heart and be real.

Then there comes out the God of warmth and there comes back from God of warmth to you and the whole body is warm. Oh, if we could be joints of supply. If we would only give what we've got to give.

You see, some of you are suffering from a kind of introversion. You feel when you hear wonderful things, you say, well, I can't rise up. Well, don't worry about that.

You will. Listen, the only way you will get to where those others have got is by being yourself in Christ. And as you give what you have got, what you have received from the Lord, you shall get more.

The principle of supply. Look, for instance, at Luke chapter 6. Luke chapter 6 and verse 38. Give and it shall be given unto you good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom.

For with what measure ye meet it shall be measured unto you again. What a wonderful word. Listen again.

Give and it shall be given unto you. How? Good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye meet it shall be measured to you again.

Do you want to know what the principle of supply is? Give the little you have of the Lord. Share it. That's fellowship.

Share the little you have of the Lord. Don't go beyond. However little it is, share it.

If you have just been saved, share that. If your testimony is just the salvation, share that. If it goes further, share more.

But give what you have received and it shall be given unto you and as you give, you get more back. Give them what you get back and you'll get even more. Oh, now here is a way to be spiritually avaricious.

Give what you receive of the Lord and you will get more. Give the more you receive and you will get even more. Give the even more and you will get even more than that.

You see, some people sit down and say, until the Lord comes to me with a spiritual blockbuster and sort of blows me one thousand miles ahead in the path to the kingdom, I'm not going to contribute a single thing. My dear friend, you never will. You will go to the Lord without having grown hardly at all except in your head.

You won't get anywhere. The only way to get anywhere spiritually is to be a joint of supply. What you receive from the head, pass on.

Pass on. Share. Don't overreach yourself.

But share. For it is a principle with the Lord that whatever a man gives, he gets back. I have never failed to be amazed by the Dead Sea finding all its sources in the snows of the Hermon range.

Three or four little sources it begins and always even at the height of the dry, hot season, those waters are sparkling and cool. For they come from all the melted snow which goes deep down into great wells, as it were, inside Mount Hermon. And wherever that water comes in the river Jordan, it brings life.

Even where they have piped it all the way through the plain of Sharon down to the Negev, wherever it comes, it brings life. You can see an arid wilderness on both sides of the river Jordan but where the river goes, it is all fertile. And yet, the whole of that river with all its millions of gallons of water per day pour into the Dead Sea and not a thing lives in the Dead Sea.

Not a shrimp, not a crab, not a fish, nothing, not even a bit of seaweed, nothing lives in the Dead Sea. How is it that it can take all that life-giving water and turn it into sterility? Simple. The Dead Sea takes everything and gives nothing.

The Dead Sea has no outlet. It takes every single thing it can and gives absolutely nothing. Therefore, it is the Dead Sea.

There are believers, there are companies that will take every single thing the Lord has for them and they turn the whole thing into sterility. It becomes sterile. They can revel in the doctrines of the resurrection of Christ, in the ascension of Christ, in the fullness and anointing of the Holy Spirit and in all many other matters.

But somehow every single thing that comes to them, they make sterile. No one ever gets saved. There is never any real movement of the Lord because there is no outlet.

The principle of supply is that you have got to give what you receive. This is true individually. It is true corporately.

Now, fellowship is just the sharing of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful through whom you are called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We are sharing what we have of the Lord.

Now, may I say some practical things about this matter? I have sought to explain just a little bit of this principle of supply. Whether it is on the corporate and wider level or whether it is your individual part in the whole. The fact is that we have to give what we have received and when we give what we have received we receive more.

What is the practical need? Well, I believe, obviously, first of all, we need in the life of the Church of God in any given place, we need not only time of teaching and time of the ministry of the Word, we need time when the whole of our time is open to the Spirit of God for the exercise of the priesthood of all believers. We, brethren, we need to see this that in the life of the people of God we need to, as it were, have times which are entirely open to the Spirit of God to lead so that we may learn to follow the Spirit of God, learn to discern the anointing in a gathering, learn to keep under the anointing. Oh, I wish we could speak about that.

How to distinguish the anointing, how to abide under the anointing, how to keep under the anointing and therefore keep in light right the way through a meeting. But we learn tremendous lessons this way. Then may I say something else about being a joint of supply? All those of us who haven't got any responsibility of leadership, we all need to be open to the Lord.

Now, we don't just give anything we've got just like that because we happen to have it. There must be a time. Some people come to a meeting and say, well, I've got a hymn.

I'm going to give it anyway. I've got it. It's been burning in me.

So, the first available opportunity puts them in. That's not the proper working of each individual part. My body doesn't just work sort of all independently.

I'd have what we call St. Vitus' dance. In our open time, the Holy Spirit is sovereign. And if you've got something, there will come a correct time.

You will know it by the Spirit as we move through. Here's the time you must contribute what you have. However little or however much.

Under the government of the Spirit of God. We don't just give what we have willy-nilly because we happen to have it. Even the timing of its giving must be under the Spirit of God and in relationship to the rest of the members of the body.

May I say something to those of you who are more responsible brothers in companies? I believe that to be a joint of supply in this matter means that you brothers when you have open time must get together beforehand. And you must cover those times. One of the great tragedies at present is the way people drift into meetings.

They say just because the Lord is with us and it's going to be an open time, no one takes any responsibility. Everyone just drifts together. And then we spend the first half hour wandering.

And only just before we begin the meeting comes to a close do we get anywhere. Those of you who are responsible brothers if God has given you responsibility you've got to lay down your life. And in this sense it means you've got to give even more time than anybody else.

Otherwise you should not have the responsibility. We have to meet beforehand sometimes to govern the time. To proclaim that Jesus is Lord over the time.

To use keys to lock up what is not of Himself and to unlock what is of Himself. We must declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. Always recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

One of the things the Lord has shown us in Richmond is that the leading brethren they have no rights whatsoever we meet always at least something like twenty minutes or half an hour before every gathering. And we don't spend the time just flittering away talking. We get on our knees and we really cover that time before the Lord.

Sunday morning we will be together with any other brothers who wish to come with us from quarter past ten until about ten to eleven. The time begins at eleven. And the weeknight we will meet together at ten past seven for the time beginning at half past.

I remember a while ago when we came to the conclusion that we brothers had got to get together on a Monday evening. And we said, Oh, we can't do it. We just can't do it.

We are all so busy. And the brothers who are married said, How can we do it? Can we give another time? And we felt if we don't everything is going to suffer. To be a joint of supply means that we have got to get... And so we began on a Monday evening just we responsible getting together and then we opened it to anyone who got complaints, suggestions, counsel, or needed counsel or prayer or help to come.

And I suppose every Monday evening we are there now from five thirty to nine o'clock. So that is another evening gone. But if God has done anything amongst us I believe it is partly due to the fact that there are

some brothers who have fallen into the ground and died.

That dear child of God is real headship. That is not just throwing weight around and saying we are the boss. You do what we say.

You do this and this and this. But it is being pioneers in sacrifice. Pioneers in laying down our lives for the brethren.

That we must do. That is a joint of supply. What a wonderful thing it is when we are in our gatherings together this principle of supply is evident.

Now you see we make a big mistake if we think of only the church when we are gathered. We are the church at all times. And we are as it were to be joints of supply and each individual part is to be properly working at all times.

Nevertheless when we come together then we can take the temperature of the whole church. You see. In an open time you can take the temperature of the church.

You can quickly see whether this principle of supply is in operation or whether it is being contravened. Be careful dear children of God of hiding behind singing. It is a wonderful thing to sing praises to the Lord and as it says in Ephesians 5 to sing to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

But dear children of God be careful that we hide behind just endless singing. As if that alone is praise. Sometimes we need to just open our lips and praise the Lord.

One after another. Sometimes I don't think it is such a bad idea to all praise the Lord together. Seems to get rid of a lot of inhibition that way anyway.

After all the Lord is hearing all those thousands of prayers at the same time all through every 24 hours. He sorts them all out. But it is a lovely thing to lead one another in praise.

Sometimes it is a good thing to praise the Lord all together. Just praise Him and sort of worship Him in a volume of praise. But we need to be a joint of supply.

There are times when we need to have something from the Word. A word of exhortation. When someone has had a revelation from the Lord which they can share under the government of God.

There is nothing more wonderful than an open time when the Holy Spirit is in charge. How He leads us. But may I say something else and I will close then about the outside our gatherings.

I think that we need to be a joint of supply outside our gatherings too. There are all kinds of ways we can help one another. Some people have just been saying that they don't know what to do.

But there may be some brother who is so busy in the work of God and so weighed down that maybe you could go and do some practical job that will release him. And some of you older brothers can help some of those who are in full responsibility sometimes by just doing some practical job which you can do. Which would just lift something for them.

It is such a practical way. But some of us can only think of being a joint of supply as far as the platform is concerned. If we are on the platform that is being a joint of supply where anywhere else we are nothing.

But you know God rewards people in the end who do practical things that help others who have got big responsibilities. There are some people who pray for us and only God knows it. But they labour in prayer behind the scenes.

They will share in any reward that comes to such ministry. Because they have undertaken a laborious task which has no glamour no romance and no popular recognition. But it being a joint of supply Oh! Brothers and sisters if we could only see this thing.

Maybe there is someone who is ill. Now let me get this quite clear. Sometimes the principle is this.

Everyone should bear their own burden. Never do anything that will make another member of the body lazy. But on the other hand there are times when being a joint of supply is a very practical thing.

Here is some sister who is not well. What a wonderful thing it is when some other sisters go and say look we will help you in this and this. Tell us what we can do so we can just help you.

Isn't that a practical way? Do you know what happens? That dear sister who is weighed under hasn't been able to praise the Lord. But suddenly because of this joint of supply she praises the Lord. Worries disappear.

I was speaking about this in a company a while ago and I happened to just say this. I said maybe the best way you can be a joint of supply is by going round to somebody and cutting their lawn. And an old sister came up to me afterwards she had been a prayer warrior in that particular company.

She said brother perhaps I shouldn't tell you this. She said I have had my whole hip taken out you know and this new one put in. And she said when I went one of the responsible brothers in this company came to me and said that he would I said to him when he said is there anything we can do I said to him well the thing I am worrying about is the garden.

I won't be able to do it now for nine months. So this brother said to her we'll cut it. And he charged her.

But when she came back she found it hadn't been cut. And then she said some dear brother came and he won't take a penny. She said when you said about praising the Lord this morning she said I thought to myself I was so down.

She said I tried to get over it all but every time I looked out of the window all I could see was a forest. And she said I worried and worried and worried how can I what will my neighbours think? What about my testimony? Here as a believer. And she said when that young brother came in with his bright face and just cut the whole thing and she said it was really hard work because someone else who had taken the money didn't do it the second time she said I got on my knees and I worshipped the Lord.

Now that's a joint of supply. So dear sisters bake a cake now and again for somebody. Send a bunch of flowers now and again to somebody.

Go on a visit to somebody. Don't you maybe a joint of supply? You see we tend to think that only if we've got some sort of tremendous spiritual message are we going to be a joint of supply but sometimes you know we can do the most practical things and we become a joint of supply in the body of Christ because we release something precious of the Lord in someone else. What a wonderful thing then to be like that.

Dear sisters those of you who are married let me just say one thing to Timothy chapter five I think it is verse fourteen remember your job is your home. I believe that the home of the married sister is her ministry in the house of God. And remember it says rule the household rule the household forgotten often this matter rule the household I've been into places where some husbands won't allow their wives to make a single decision regarding their home.

I know one brother who will not even allow his wife to dress in the colour she wants to dress in. I remember another occasion where I went and her brother wouldn't even allow his sister to pray not in his presence. He had the idea that she wasn't permitted to pray at any time when a man was present.

If you read Dear Sisters Proverbs 31 you will have a very big shock about the sister who is above Christ. This sister goes down and buys a field and produces things on it and she weaves and spins and sells it. What a remarkable quite foreign to some of these ideas in some Christian circles.

Here is a sister who is not who is in right relationship to her husband in subjection to him but she is ruling her household. She is not letting him have all the violence. She is ruling her household.

That's her ministry. When decisions about policy have to be taken it's her husband. But she is ruling her household.

Oh dear sisters be a joint of supply. Your homes can be places of hospitality. Your homes can be places of ministry.

And if nothing else your children are a God given heritage. May the Lord help us to be joints of supply not only in our gatherings but outside of our gatherings and in our homes as well. Shall we pray? Dear Lord this finds all of us out the proper working of each individual part.

Oh Lord thou knowest how so many of us are not properly working. Lord by thy Spirit stir us. Dear Lord we need to know what it is to stir up some of us to stir up the gift that is within us.

Others of us Lord need to know what it is just to take that step in faith and share the little we have of thee Lord with our brothers and sisters. Some of us Lord need our eyes open to that great range of practical things that we can do which make it so much easier for the rest of the saints. Oh Lord help us.

But grant Lord that we may be joints of supply in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name. Amen.

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