

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying
Message 3 : The Pattern of the Apostle Paul in Cooperating with
Christ's Heavenly Ministry to Shepherd People for the Building Up of the Body of Christ

I. Overview :

Paul was a pattern of cooperating with Christ's heavenly ministry to shepherd people for the building up of the Body of Christ; he also was a pattern of the glad tidings that he spread. We need to follow the pattern of the apostles to pay more attention to life than to work. Paul was living and ministering Christ as the Spirit in his spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ. The best way to shepherd people, to cherish and nourish them, is to give them a proper pattern. The apostles not only preached the gospel but also lived it; their ministering of the gospel was not only by word but also by a life in the Holy Spirit and in the assurance of faith, thus making them an excellent pattern to all other believers.

II. Truth and Enlightenment :

Day 1 --

A. Why do we say that the service of the elders does not depend on the method but on the person?

The person is the way, and the person is the Lord's work. If God does not gain a person, He will have no work, and He will have no way. A way is a course that a person takes. If God does not gain man, He will have no course to take. Man thinks that the most important thing to do is to find a good way. However, God's work does not involve giving us the ways but is a matter of gaining the persons.

B. How should we help the brothers and sisters properly?

What God cares for is whether or not you have been touched by Him. The measure we yield ourselves to the Lord determines the measure we are able to serve Him. If you have been dealt with in your temper, you can help others with their temper. If you have been dealt with in the way you dress, you will be able to help others in the way they dress....

Day 2 --

A. What does it mean that Paul in Phil. [3:16](#) said "to walk orderly"?

By this word Paul charged us how to walk and how to order our lives. Whatever state we have attained to in our spiritual life, we all must walk, as the apostle did, by the same rule, in the same path; that is, we must pursue Christ toward the goal that we may gain Christ to the fullest extent as the prize of the upward calling of God.

B. What kind of attitude should we have as a proper shepherd of taking care?

Our attitude may be that everyone is weak but we are not weak. We may have the feeling that we are strong ones. In 1 Cor. [9:22](#) Paul said, "To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak." This means that we should come down to the weak one's level. To a sick person we come down to the level of a sick person. This is the way to shepherd people by visiting them.

Day 3 --

A. How should we conduct ourselves as a pattern for new believers in 1 Thes. 2?

In order to be a proper pattern, we need to be pure in our motives, especially concerning money, otherwise we may be among those who adulterate the word of God and peddle it. We should never speak words of flattery, we should never have any pretext, and we should never seek glory for ourselves. We should do our best to please God instead of trying to please man.

B. What things do we need to note to feed the new believers and young ones?

If we give too much teaching to new ones and young ones, we shall damage them. One of the most important matters in the raising of children is proper feeding, and caring for children is ninety percent a matter of feeding and ten percent teaching. This also should be our practice in caring for new believers in the church. Feeding involves the presenting of patterns either from the Bible or from church history. By reading the biographies of saints throughout the ages, we nourish ourselves and experience a kind of fostering.

Day 4 --

A. How did the apostles experience God in the preaching of the gospel?

They enjoyed Him as their boldness in the struggle for the gospel. They were bold not in themselves, but in God, even after they had been outrageously treated by the Philippians. Suffering and persecution could not defeat them because they were in the organic union with the Triune God. They were struggling and speaking the gospel in the boldness of God.

B. Why's said to seek glory from men is a real temptation to ever Christian worker?

The Lord Jesus, while on earth, gave up His dignity, and the apostle would rather not use his right. Anyone who seeks glory of men is a follower of Satan. How much we shall be used by the Lord and how long our usefulness will last depend on whether we seek glory of men. If we seek glory, our usefulness in the hand of the Lord is finished.

Day 5 --

A. What kind of attitude should we have to serve the church?

Those who are believers may consider the leading ones as dignitaries. However, in the local churches there are no dignitaries. Instead of being dignitaries, we are slaves serving one another. Nevertheless, certain ones began to assume dignity as soon as they were given a position. This is shameful. We should learn of Paul never to stand on our dignity or assert authority.

B. Explain in 1 Thes. 2:7 "...as a nursing mother would cherish her own children".

The Greek word "nurse" denotes a nursing mother. Cherishing not only includes nourishing but also includes tender care. Even though Paul was a brother, he considered himself a nursing mother. Surely, he had no thought of position, dignity, or authority. The thought of being a nursing mother, whose dignity consists in nourishing and cherishing her children, in taking care of them in a tender way.

Day 6 --

A. Expound that the apostles not only imparted the gospel of God but also their own soul to the Thessalonians.

The apostles love the new converts, even by giving their own souls to them, which can be compared to the word in 2 Cor. 12 about being spent for the sake of the believers. Paul was willing to spend not only what he had, but was willing to spend himself, his very being. The apostles were willing to impart what they were into the believers. This can be compared to a nursing mother giving herself to her child.

B. Explain that in 1 Thes. [2:12](#) Paul exhorts the believers to walk in a manner worthy of God?

To walk in a manner worthy of God is actually to live God. Only a life that lives God is worthy of God. When we live God, we walk worthily of Him. Such a walk will lead us into the kingdom and usher us into the glory of God. This is the goal of God's calling. God has called us to enter His kingdom and glory.

III. Conclusion :

The best way to shepherd people, to cherish and nourish them, is to give them a proper pattern. Paul is an excellent pattern of preaching the gospel, to all saints in Thessalonica, and living Christ; this pattern comes from what he is and lives before God.

He lives and ministers Christ as the Spirit in his spirit; he does everything in the Body, through the Body, and for the building up of the Body of Christ. He becomes a proper person in the presence of God, the person being God's way, and the person being the Lord's work; what he is is what he does. We need to follow the pattern of the apostles to pay more attention to life than to work. Brother Watchman Nee's life ministry follows this pattern until his martyrdom.