

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophecy Message Ten : The Central and Crucial Point of the Recovery Books of Ezra and Nehemiah— the Proper and Adequate Leadership in the Lord's Recovery

I. Overview:

In God's eternal economy and in the Lord's recovery, leadership depends upon spiritual capacity. In God's New Testament economy, leadership means slavery. In the New Testament there is one ministry with one leadership for the keeping of the oneness of the Spirit for the Body of Christ. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is in the New Testament teaching more than in the leading ones of the New Testament ministry. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is the leadership of the controlling vision of God's eternal economy, not the leadership of a controlling person. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the oneness of the Body of Christ, the function of all the members of the Body of Christ, and having a clear vision of God's eternal economy and then be governed, controlled, and directed by this vision. Only under the leadership of faithful persons such as Nehemiah and Ezra could Israel be reconstituted to be the testimony of God, the expression of God on earth. In the Lord's recovery there is an urgent need for the true work of building up the Body; however, this building work can be carried out only by co-workers who have been matched.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound that leadership means slavery in God's New Testament economy.

According to the natural, human concept, a leader is higher than others. But in Matthew 20 and 23 the Lord said that whoever wants to be great among His people must be a slave. Thus, the Lord's concept of leadership is the opposite of the natural concept. These leaders, however, need to realize that, in God's New Testament economy, leadership means slavery. If you would be a leader among the Lord's children, you must be a slave.

B. Explain in God's New Testament economy what the leadership among His children depends on.

In God's New Testament economy the leadership among His children is not official, permanent, or organizational. Leadership spiritual capacity. The one with the greatest capacity is the leader. On the day of Pentecost the greatest capacity was with Peter, but in Acts 15 it was with James. The relationship between Barnabas and Paul further illustrates this principle.

Day 2 —

A. State the word ministered by the apostles having authority.

The apostles have no authority in themselves to control the churches. Only the word ministered by them has authority. If the churches and the saints go on according to the Word, according to God's oracle, the apostles have no authority to touch the churches. But if a church goes astray or is misled, then the apostles have the obligation and responsibility to deal with the situation according to God's word, which has authority.

B. Explain the leadership in today's New Testament economy.

Among the children of God in today's New Testament economy, there is actually no leadership in the natural sense. There is no official, permanent, organizational leader among the apostles. The same is true regarding the elders in a local church. Furthermore, all the churches are on the same level; there is no unifying organization. Rather, we all respect and honor the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Day 3 —

A. Explain God's delegated authority in the church life and in the ministry.

The New Testament shows us God's delegated authority in the leading ones in the ministry. In a family there is delegated authority, and in human government there is also delegated authority. The Bible strongly reveals God's delegated authority in the church life and in the ministry. God's delegated authority in the leading ones in the ministry was for building up and not for overthrowing.

B. Expound that the leadership exercised by Paul and by John was not the leadership in organization.

The leadership exercised by Paul and by John was not the leadership in organization. The first twelve apostles were appointed by the Lord Jesus, but they were not organized. In the New Testament we cannot see an organization. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is not the leadership in the worldly sense to control others. In the Lord's recovery we do not have board members with a chairman or president.

Day 4 —

A. Expound in order for us to serve God, that our vision must be complete.

In order for us to serve God today, our vision must extend all the way from the first vision of Adam in Genesis to the ultimate vision of the manifestation of the church, the New Jerusalem. We are serving God according to the last scene of the New Jerusalem, which includes all the previous scenes. Since we have the up-to-date and ultimate vision, we should closely follow after it.

B. Explain that our preaching and teaching have to be restricted by the revelation of God's New Testament economy.

Our preaching and our teaching have to be restricted under the leadership by the revelation of God's New Testament economy. If someone in the Lord's recovery began to teach, stress, or promote something contrary to or different from God's New Testament economy, there would be the need of some leadership to restrict this. Then there would be no confusion. We need to teach the saints to learn the New Testament economy.

Day 5 —

A. Expound the Lord's recovery is the recovery of the oneness of the Body of Christ. Throughout the past centuries Christians have been divided again and again. In the eighteenth century Count Zinzendorf saw the need of keeping the oneness of the Body of Christ, and a century later the Brethren in England saw more concerning the oneness of the Body. Then in 1920 the Lord raised up Brother Watchman Nee in China and showed him the Body of Christ. Many saints in China took the stand for the testimony of the oneness of the Body.

B. Explain the Lord's recovery is the recovery of the function of all the members of the Body of Christ. The Lord desires that every member of His Body be a functioning member. Almost all Christian groups practice the system of the clergy and laity. The clergy replaces the members of the Body of Christ, and kills the function, the capacity, and the usefulness of the members of Christ. The Lord's recovery is for the developing of the gifts, functions, and capacity of all the members of the organic Body of Christ.

Day 6 —

A. Expound Nehemiah was altogether not ambitious.

Nehemiah was a head, a ruler, of a nation, but he was altogether not ambitious. This is indicated by the fact that he recognized his need of Ezra. In reconstituting the nation. Nehemiah realized that he did not know God's Word. But Ezra, who was famous for his knowledge of the Word of God, was still alive, and Nehemiah was willing to go to Ezra for help.

B. Explain the divine principle being the principle of the Body.

When the Lord Jesus sent out His disciples, He sent them out two by two in the principle of two as a testimony. To be alone is to be individualistic, but to be sent forth with another is to be sent according to the principle of the Body. In keeping with the divine principle, the Lord would not allow His servant to be individualistic. Moses needed Aaron. Hence, Aaron's presence was not accidental. God had prepared him as a match for Moses.

III. Conclusion:

Although the ministry among us is not an individual ministry, it is the unique New Testament ministry, the ministry of the Lord's move on earth in the church age. The Lord's move on earth is through His unique ministry, and we are all partakers of His unique ministry. Even when we go out and knock peoples' doors to visit them, it is part of this unique ministry. In the Lord's recovery, this leadership is not a personal leadership that controls the people. Leadership in the Lord's recovery is God-given leadership by revelation and vision, that is, the teaching of the apostles. All those who serve in the church, not only the co-worker elders, but even those serving in districts and small groups, should be perfected and equipped in the teaching of the apostles of the New Testament, so that what we supply, teach, and shepherd can be used for the building up of the organic Body of Christ in the unique ministry of the New Testament.