

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this meditation and memorisation series you may learn how to build up the Christian Church. Two teachers will meditate on the meaning of a Bible verse.

In this tenth series, the Bible teaches five truths about the Christian Church. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: THE ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCH. We will meditate a new Bible passage, memorise a new Bible verse and then review the previously memorised verses together.

(S) **POINT 1. MEDITATION OF THE NEW BIBLE VERSE**

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is Acts 2:42. We will meditate the truths in the Bible together. Let me read from Acts 2:36-47. "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ". When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call. With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptised and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Everyday they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

The memorisation verse is: The activities in the church. Acts 2:42. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42.

(T) **First. The six important activities of every church.**

Every church in the world should at least have the following six activities.

One. Jesus Christ must be in the centre of the Christian's life.

When a non-Christian hears the good news about Jesus Christ, he should repent, turn away from his sins and old corrupt way of living and turn to Jesus Christ and the Bible way of living. He should accept Jesus Christ into his heart and life.

Usually new Christians were immediately baptised as a sign and seal that all their sins have been forgiven and that they had been born again by the Spirit of Jesus Christ living in their hearts and lives.

After that, Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper together with other Christians. During the Lord's Supper they commemorated that the body of Jesus Christ had been broken on the cross and his blood had been shed in order to make complete atonement for their sins.

(S) **Two. The Christian devotes himself to read, study and apply the teachings of the Bible.**

Christians should devote some time every day to read or study the Bible. The Bible contains the words of God that has never been changed or falsified as the enemies of Christians claim. No other religious book can make the same claims as the Bible. The Bible consists of 66 books written by about 40 different prophets and apostles over a period of about 2000 years and in at least three different cultures of the world: the culture of the East - Aramaic, the culture of the Middle East - Hebrew, and the culture of the West - Greek. Nevertheless the Bible has one undivided message, namely, that the God of the Bible speaks and acts within our creation and our history in and through Jesus Christ! The God of the Bible took on the human nature in Jesus Christ and entered his creation and our history to save us from all our sins, sicknesses and oppression by evil people. We have thousands of old hand-written copies of the Bible and many translations of the Bible in the languages that existed at the time the Bible was completed. And in spite of so many manuscripts, there are no contradictions in the message of the Bible! No other religious book in the world can make the same claim! The Bible is the absolute standard of the truth that all people should believe and the absolute standard of the way all people should behave.

(T) **Three. The Christian prays to the Living God.**

The Bible does not teach that the Christian should perform ritual prayers and prayer postures, but rather that Christians should talk to God. When God speaks to the Christians through the Bible, the Christians respond and speak to God

about his words to them. And when Christians make their requests in prayer to God, they look expectantly forward to what the Living God is going to do. Christians receive real answers to their prayers! Christians who pray every day, see how God works in their lives and in their world every day. The God of the Bible is sovereign and majestic and yet he loves to bend down and listen to the prayers of his spiritual children on earth and answer every one of their prayers when their prayers are according to his will. Many non-Christians testify how they received a vision or dream about Jesus Christ, how they turned in faith to Jesus Christ and how Jesus Christ saved them. Many non-Christians testify that the god of their former religion did not answer their prayers, but that the God of the Bible answers their prayers!

(S) Four. The Christian devotes himself to fellowship with other Christians.

When a non-Christian begins to believe in Jesus Christ, he is connected to the Living God through Jesus Christ and he is connected to other Christians. The Christian fellowship is not like a religious organisation where the behaviour of the followers are prescribed and often forced on them. The Christian fellowship is also not like a club where the members can freely do whatever they like. The Christian fellowship is belonging to the Body of Christ of which every Christian is a member. One Christian functions more like the hand and serves others, while another Christian functions more like the mouth and teaches the others. That is why Christians regularly come together, not to perform rituals, but to have genuine fellowship. Christians meet in small groups in a house to read and discuss the Bible, to worship God with singing and prayer and to encourage one another because of the persecutions by non-Christians. But Christians sometimes meet in larger groups. Christian fellowship means that Christians love one another, help one another and learn from one another.

(T) Five. The Christian witnesses about Jesus Christ.

The apostles witnessed the truth about Jesus Christ to the Jews who came to celebrate the harvest festival in Jerusalem. They told people that the God of the Bible had revealed himself as the Saviour and the Lord in Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ is now the King of all kings in this world, even when the governments of the world do not acknowledge him. They said that the world and its people were corrupt and that people should escape from these evil people by turning to Jesus Christ and letting Jesus Christ save them. Acts 2:41 says that on one day more than three thousand people accepted their message and became Christians. And Acts 2:47 says that the God of the Bible added daily to the number of saved Christians. Because the message of the Bible is true, it saves people from their sins and people really receive forgiveness for all their sins. Many people in the world fear the Last Judgement Day, because their sins are not forgiven. But Christians do not fear the Last Judgement day, because Jesus Christ paid for the penalty of their sins on the cross and all their sins have been forgiven.

(S) Six. The Christian obeys the teachings of the Bible.

A very important part of the activities of the Christian church is that Christians share their possessions with the needy people in the world. Christians build and serve in thousands of hospitals and clinics. Christians care for the lepers and the handicapped. Christians build and serve in thousands of schools and teach people to read and write. Christians stand up for justice and righteousness and oppose the political oppressors and military terrorists in the world. Christians change their bad habits and strive towards holiness of life. Christians give up hatred and revenge, violence and murder. Christians are the light of the world and build other people up instead of tearing them down. Christians walk in the footsteps of the Living God when He walked on earth in Jesus Christ. Christians follow the example of Jesus Christ. In Psalm 115:8 the Bible teaches that people become exactly like the god they worship. Therefore, if people are spiritually dead, their god is spiritually dead. If people are full of hatred and revenge, their god is a hateful and revengeful god. If people are violent and kill, their god is a violent and unjust murderer. But if people begin to change and love their neighbours and even love their enemies, then their God is a God of love and is the only true God.

(T) Second. The functioning of the local church.

One. The local Christian communities or churches gathered and scattered.

The basic activities of the local Christian community in the beginning were *to gather* and *to scatter* (Act 2:42; 5:15-16,42). The Christians in every place gathered together regularly for worship and prayer, teaching and preaching, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for fellowship and service. They also scattered into their neighbourhood, into the streets and houses, and even to the neighbouring towns to preach, teach and to heal.

(S) Two. The local Christian communities or churches were led by a body of elders.

The book of Acts, written by Luke, as well as the letters of Paul and Peter teach unanimously that each local Christian community or church was led by a group of church elders, called *a body (or board or council) of elders*. The qualifications, tasks and limited authority of the elders are not to be determined by any human being, human organisation or any human culture, but are clearly taught in the Bible. Although the local Christian community has leaders, these leaders may not lead the local Christian community as they wish. The way in which a local Christian community or church should function is also laid down in the Bible (1 Tim 3:14-15). No leader in the Christian Community has the authority to change these biblical instructions. Moreover, the Lord Jesus and the apostle Peter teach that no leader of the Christian community or church may lord it over Christians that are entrusted into their care (Mt 20:25-28).

(T) Three. The local Christian communities or churches conducted their meetings in houses.

The local Christian communities or churches that are described in the New Testament conducted most of their meetings in the houses of Christians. The churches were *house churches* or *house fellowships*! They met in houses for the regular worship service, for teaching and preaching, for praying, for evangelism and for training of workers. Even today, in many places of the world, local Christian communities or churches still meet in houses.

(S) Third. The three foundational activities of every church.

The three most important activities

in the local Christian community or church are: evangelising, establishing and equipping.

One. Evangelising.

The Christian Community *grows in quantity by evangelising* people. The followers of Christ proclaim the message of God's grace and declare to all people that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in Jesus Christ (Act 20:20-27). They proclaim the kingdom of God, the whole will of God, the unsearchable riches of Christ and the manifold wisdom of God. No one is born a Christian. A genuine Christian must be born again! Without rebirth, no one becomes a genuine member of Christ's Body (1 Cor 12:12-13). Without faith in Jesus Christ, no one will be saved (Jn 3:16,18,36).

(T) Two. Establishing.

Ephesians 4:11-16 teaches that the Christian Community *grows in quality by establishing* all the new followers of Christ through growing to maturity in Christ. Helping the new followers of Christ to grow to maturity in Christ is also called *making disciples* (Mt 28:19-20). This is usually done by mature Christians with the help of other Christians fulfilling the *one another responsibilities* to one another. The objective of making disciples is not to turn new Christians into members of some group, but to help them to become *disciples of Christ*. They stimulate them to have a growing relationship with Christ, to obey Christ and to develop a Christlike character. The measure of *maturity* is Christlikeness (Eph 4:13). Some visible results of maturity are: *unity* on the basis of the teachings of the Bible and on the basis of *knowing* Christ personally as Saviour and Lord and *fellowshipping* with him every day (Eph 4:13); *stability* and *discernment* in the teachings of the Bible (Eph 4:14); and *truth and love* in all relationships (Eph 4:15).

A great enemy of growth in the Christian Community is to depart from the truth and to compromise with the lie, whether in beliefs, words or deeds. Another great enemy of growth in the Christian Community is to be coldly indifferent to the thoughts and feelings, trials and interests of the people we are trying to serve or win to Christ.

(S) Three. Equipping.

The Christian Community is *built up by equipping* all the followers of Christ *for works of service*. The word *equipping* means *to restore, to make complete, to train, to equip*. Equipping Christians to do a specific work of service in the Christian Community is done by those specially gifted in that area (Eph 4:11) and not necessarily by the church elders. The Christians are equipped to do the many different services both in the local Christian community as well as in the worldwide Christian Community. For example, some followers of Christ are equipped to evangelise, while others are equipped to care for new believers. Likewise, some followers of Christ are equipped to preach or to teach, while others are equipped to lead or to show mercy, etc. No member of the Christian Community should just passively *attend the community* or house church. Eventually, every member should function in the task that Christ has assigned to him (Mk 13:34).

(T) POINT 2. MEMORISATION OF THE NEW BIBLE VERSE

Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. The topic today is "The activities in the church" and the reference is Acts 2:42. Let us memorise the Bible verse together.

(T+S) The activities in the church. Acts 2:42. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42.

(S) The activities in the church. Acts 2:42. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42.

(T) POINT 3. REVIEW OF THE LAST BIBLE VERSES YOU HAVE MEMORISED

Let us review the last 5 Bible verses that we have memorised without looking at our notebooks. Series "The kingdom of God", verses 2-5 and series "The Christian Church", verse 1.

(S) Welcome children into the kingdom. Luke 18:16-17. Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. Luke 18:16-17.

(T) Preach the gospel of the kingdom. Matthew 24:14. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:14.

- (S) Never look back from serving in the kingdom. Luke 9:62. “No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” Luke 9:62.
- (T) The triumph of the kingdom. Daniel 2:44. “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those other kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.” Daniel 2:44.
- (S) The nature of the church. 1 Peter 2:5. “You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5.

(T) **POINT 4. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Daily review the last five memorised Bible verses once every day for 5 weeks.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and build Christ’s Church” and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to “Discipleship training on the air”.