



PRESS RELEASE

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A House Church?

Paris, TX August 11, 2014. A common lament among many church leaders is how hard it is to find people willing to commit their lives to God. Church attendance has been steadily declining over the years as has men entering seminary training. I was recently speaking with a pastor who provides regional support to local churches who told me research indicates that close to three-quarters of the people attending church are not living regenerate lives in Christ. The same habits and lifestyle they had prior to coming to church continues to be the way they live after joining.

Many in ministry are quick to acknowledge that there are serious problems facing the contemporary church today, and all but a very few think it is more of a problem for how “the other guy” operates and not how they do. This brings to mind the tongue-in-cheek definition for insanity, “continue doing the same things the same way yet expecting a different outcome.”

While canvassing my neighborhood with flyers inviting my neighbors to come join me and my wife for bible reading and study in our home church, I sometimes get that inquisitive look as if to say, “Are you kidding me?” or “Are you a cult?” Most are too polite to ask the probing questions, though thankfully some do. A healthy “testing of the spirit” is a good thing because we all know that many who come-a-knocking do “miss the mark” with their theology and teaching. What is more concerting about my invitation to home bible study is the, “That’s weird; I’ve never heard it done that way” type comments from people who identify themselves as regular church goers. How is it that some regular church goers do not know that the bible teaches us God’s New Covenant church was not only established but regularly met in private homes?

Jesus, after His resurrection, commanded the apostles to remain in Jerusalem, and they stayed in the “upper room” where they met daily with the other disciples for prayer and fellowship. Soon after, the Holy Spirit came upon them on the Feast of Pentecost while meeting in their upper room residence and 3,000 souls were baptized that very same day. That’s a pretty big number for a one-day baptism by any standard of measurement, then or now. The apostles and disciples continued to meet daily in the upper room and the church gathered together from house to house at the homes of the believers. During that time the church grew exponentially with large numbers being added daily. Never again did the church experience such rapid and sudden growth, and all this with house churches.

While some may think it naïve to attribute this exponential growth to meeting in private homes, this is without question the biblical model the apostles established for the church and is worthy of emulation for many reasons. A personal God chose a personal environment to reveal Himself to His people. God uses the family to describe the relationship within the Triune God (Father, Son) and with His people (family of God and body of Christ) and what better place for family to meet than in their home? The smaller size groups that can typically meet in the home are more conducive to fellowship, discipleship, and sharing in the Lord’s Supper.

Even after the Holy Spirit came to establish the New Covenant church in the upper room residence of the apostles, the model for coming together in the home continued throughout all the New Testament writings and for a long time thereafter. The church did not meet in homes in an effort to escape persecution, for after Saul ravaged them they experienced peace and favor until the time of Herod and Nero (Acts 9:31); and they did not home church because they lacked the financial resources to build church buildings, for the early church was flush with money due to very generous contributions from many who sold their property, land and houses and gave the full proceeds to the church as a freewill offering (Acts 4:34); nor was it culturally acceptable for them to meet in homes because, just like today all religions of that day had their own temples and synagogues to worship. When the apostles decided to home church, it was contrary to their culture for they were accustomed to attending services in the temple when in Jerusalem and the local synagogue every Sabbath. The apostles established the home church as their preferred meeting arrangement and going house to house welcomed God into the hearts and homes of the believers.

The home church model continued for about 300 years until the institutional model emerged that began to construct buildings as the place for worship. The apostolic model was replaced by the institutional model and the "home church" paradigm shifted to a "church home" paradigm which remains to this day. Those who choose to attend services in erected buildings of worship does not violate any direct commands in the New Covenant, but why then is the apostolic model as recorded in Scripture looked down upon and not considered a viable option for church? Our purpose is not to lambast the emergence of the institutional church, but rather to answer the question often posed to me, "Why a House Church?"

To fellowship and disciple are the heart, soul, and lifeblood of the church. My heart is burdened to return to the biblical roots from whence we came and recapture the spirit to go make disciples, as commanded by Jesus in Matthew chapter 28, verses 19 and 20, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Jesus' command is to go make disciples, not to erect buildings. Jesus is commanding His shepherds to make students or pupils they may teach and lead into deep and abiding personal relationship with our Lord Jesus. A disciple is not one who follows in a physical sense of "tagging along" but in the spiritual and intellectual sense of learning all we can come to know about Jesus, His teachings and His way so we can live by what we've been taught. Even the detractors of the home church model recognize that more effective learning occurs in smaller home study groups than in the institutional church environment.

God is family (Father, Son) and He used the family home as the preferred setting to accomplish the making of disciples as guided by the Holy Spirit. God established house churches as His setting of choice to disciple, pray, worship and fellowship. Perhaps it's long overdue but is it not time to consider a return to basics to heal the malaise? You're welcome to join me and my wife in in our SE Paris home church to learn the bible and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We open our home for bible study every evening at 7pm, call for our address: 512-938-4388 and visit our website for more information, www.TheLordsChildren.org/.

About The Lord's Children. The Lord's Children is a non-denominational, evangelical, home bible church founded in 2001 and anchored in the historic and apostolic Christian theology of Salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus; His crucifixion and bodily resurrection from the dead after three days and nights in the grave; and His bodily ascension to the right hand of God the Father in heaven. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells all regenerate believers and leads them into obedience to God to do good works as the fruit of their Salvation. We advocate a return to the New Covenant model of church fellowship and discipleship in the homes of believers as taught in Scripture. You may call 512-938-4388 for more information or visit The Lord's Children website: <http://TheLordsChildren.org/>