



MINISTERS FORUM NEWSLETTER

INFORMATION MINISTERS CAN USE

“FATHER” WHERE ARE YOU?

“ABLE MEN”

Moreover
 thou shall provide
 out of all the people
 able men such as fear
 God, men of truth,
 hating
 covetousness and place
 such over them, to be
 rulers of hundreds,
 rulers of fifties,
 rulers of tens.

Exodus 18:21

What defines a Father

"Anyone can be a father, but it takes a real man to be a daddy." ... A good father makes all the difference in a child's life. He's a pillar of strength, support and discipline. His work is endless and, oftentimes, thankless. But in the end, it shows in the sound, well-adjusted children he raises.

Greetings! Fathers – Pastors - Ministers - of the people of the Most High God – our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Last Sunday (4/6/2017) we observed PENTECOST SUNDAY. Next Sunday (June 18, 2017) we will observe Father’s Day. During this same month (June) there will be many other observations but the ones I would like to focus on are ones mention above namely Pentecost Sunday and Fathers Day. Last year June Newsletter also focused on Pentecostal experience of Acts 2 where the Holy Ghost was poured out and the experiences at Azusa Street and you are invited to revisit last years’ Newsletter.

The Acts chapter 2 experiences and by extension all of the book of Acts ignited the beginning of the awakening of the saving experience – infilling of the Holy Spirit. This reminds me of the gas that is needed in a car empowering it to drive - without which, the car is not able to move you to your desired destination. In the same way the Holy Ghost empowers us to live on earth and ultimately taking us to our destination – Heaven.

*You will also observe that on the way to your destination the vehicles has to **maneuver** manoever all kinds of obstacles (rough and rocky roads, potholes ditches and sometimes smooth roads, although many times we do not acknowledge the smooth ones but always complain about the undesirables ones. The undesirable ones “mash up, front ends, backends, chassie, etc. and so many damages which must be fixed and most times has to be referred to the experts. More power to those who are Mechanics or have some skills/experience at fixing some of the damages.*

*You may say where is this going? It is going to your ministry as Pastors and Ministers, most of whom are Men/fathers who have experienced the Pentecostal experience and who now fathers spiritual flocks of children who are often times battered and bruised and the fact that many of you are not equipped to help them although filled with the spiritual tank of gas - **the Holy Ghost** because you are not readily equipped with the knowledge and skills (not a mechanic) to apply the interventions that might be needed to help members who are hurting (bruised, abused etc).*

*This month being the month in which we celebrate Fathers brings into question role and actions of fathers generally and specifically the fathers of the flock who we call Pastors and Ministers in the same way **Abraham was called the father of many nations.***

What defines a Father?

One of the most important creeds in Christian history begins with the phrase, "We believe in one God, *the Father Almighty*, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." This simple affirmation carries several important truths that everyone needs to understand. Some of those essential truths include the fact that:

Father is a source - Our earthly fathers are an important source of our genetic makeup. But God is the ultimate source of our lives. He knew us before we were conceived and formed us in the womb.

Father is provision - Fathers find joy in giving to their children. That's because a *chief role of fatherhood is to provide*. Jesus used this reality to explain the goodness of God when He said, "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:11).

Father is correction - *Children don't like discipline, but it fosters security knowing Mom and Dad love them enough to correct wayward behavior. Good parents mirror the fatherhood of God when they administer the short-term pain of discipline to shape a child's long-term character. As the Bible says, "The Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son" (Hebrews 12:6).*

Father is love - As a parent, you've probably received a small taste of how God feels as "our Father in heaven." When parents look into the face of their newborn baby, they know they will love the child no matter what. That's exactly how God feels about us." – **Kurt Bruner**

In 1 Corinthians 4:14-21 Paul referred to himself (among other things) as a **spiritual father**. In order to resolve problems among the Corinthians he tells them that he is their spiritual father in the faith, and as such will exercise his spiritual authority. In v: 15 **countless tutors (Ministers) are mentioned among them, referred to as "beloved children."** Just as an earthly father's heart goes out to his children with human love, so Paul's heart naturally went out to these Corinthians with God's love. *Vs.16 says a Spiritual Father Exhorts and Counsel his Children:* The word *exhort* means "to urge to a course of action"; Counsel means to give advice and by extension the same is true for Counselling especially for those who are wounded and abused.

Counselling the abused has proven to be somewhat challenging for many pastors and ministers for many reason; in the interest of being clear and simple I will explain by referencing the response shared by three(3) pastors:

Pastor # 1: *"I can preach and lay hands on the sick and lots of other things but I don't know how to counsel a rape victim or an abuser – and it is not that I condemn them but I just don't know what to say"*

Pastor # 2: *"I may have lived a sheltered life was never exposed to abuse and sexual issues – I don't know how to work with them – I am just blank in this area of ministry"*



Pastor # 3: “ the new breed of converts/members come with all kinds of issues – divorce, rape, incest, abortion, child abuse, and the worst ones homosexuals and lesbians (sigh) cho! me can manage dem”

Maybe the ministers spoken to were in the minority, in terms of how spiritual fathers are weak in dealing with children (members) who are being abused or have suffered abuse; but the question is what will happen in these churches to those who are still struggling with some form of abuse and how can they be helped.

Interventions in Counselling the abused- hurting

What is expected of a father who has a problem with his children that he can't address? The answers vary - he may seek help, he may pretend that it is not happening and ignore it, he may pray about it and wait on the Lord to deal with it – and in the mean time as the person or the church waits the situations are getting worse. One pastor mentions the fact that many are struggling with sexual sins such as pornography and Domestic and Intimate Partner violence in the homes. As I pondered these thoughts the scripture “faith without works is dead” rushed to my mind and the question – what does the Lord expect of us? And the answer came back saying if a pastor is not able to help the members he needs to seek help.

Seeking help is not a replacement of the DIVINE INTERVENTION that must be in any counseling ministry but that the minister must be equipped minister personally or have someone trained to help or to make referrals to.

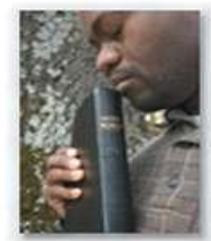
Reducing the fear and incapability to Counsel the abused

So where do you begin in *Counseling the abused* when you have no knowledge of the pain and how or what to do. Let's start with the 3 pastors mentioned above; there are clear indications of *fearfulness and incapability*

- To *reduce the fear* expressed or implied training must be accessed. It is scriptural and mandated by God for Christians , more so Pastors to be knowledgeable in the different sins that beset the members and people in general, and help them out or to cope with the ensuing pains which accompany different unpleasant situations.
- If pastor is pressed for time in the work of the church capable/able men/persons can be asked to do counseling. * *this however should not be because the pastor is fearful – if this is done out of fear the pastor needs to be counseled about the issues of fear. [where a pastor go for counsel? Is a big question].* It might be a good idea to enroll in a course.

According Rev. Bill Shannon we live in a world filled with uncertainty and tragedy. Every day we hear of some event that devastates people's lives. Where can these people turn? Where can the husband turn if his wife is found in adultery? Where can the mom turn if her child dies? Where can you turn to if you lose a job? Should people in such tragic circumstances be forced to look for help from non –Christian professional counselors?

Pastors need to be equipped to father effectively



Pastors need to be equipped to give hope to people through the most severe trials. They ought to be equipped to take hurting congregants to the scriptures and point them to a powerful sovereign God who cares about the lost and hurting. The pastor ought to be able to revive the common hope people have from believing in a God who cares about troubled and broken people. Yet with all the resources available for pastors, too often I hear of pastors who sub-let this task and refer members not to the Word, but to outside “professionals” relegating soul care to those outside the church who are not necessarily guiding in the direction of the faith of the member.

The result is that some within the church lose confidence in either the sufficiency of scripture, or in the pastor’s knowledge of the Bible. After all, if the pastor can’t give counsel from the Bible, then certainly the problem is either with the pastor or the Bible. Scriptures tells us that every believer in Christ is both capable and equipped for the ministry of encouragement to another believer. Romans 15:14 says, “Concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.”

A Spiritual Father sets examples for his children:

A human father will seek to set an example for his children by being a hard worker, being faithful to his wife, being humble and respectful toward others. He will also seek to set a good example by not abusing his family, drugs or alcohol, not smoking, not using profanity, not stealing, lying or cheating. A father exhorts his child in many ways. He may exhort his son to keep his room clean, use his manners and be respectful toward adults. Likewise Pastors need to exhort and counsel spiritual children in things like trusting God, repenting of sin, obeying the Word, using their spiritual gifts, serving others, forgiving those that have wronged them, persevering in trials, praying without ceasing, studying the Word, sharing their faith, and giving to the poor.

It is also important for pastors and ministers to know members well enough that exhortations flow naturally from a heart of love for their spiritual welfare and progress. How about you? Are you setting a good example for your spiritual children? Would you be pleased if your spiritual children live their Christian lives just like you? Would you want them to imitate you in your zeal for Christ, your service to others, your love for the saints, and your diligence in the Scriptures? These are sobering thoughts to ponder and embrace accordingly.

Send Comments/Feedback –

Please take a moment to say whether this Newsletter has helped or is helping your ministry. Send your feedback to: mythoughtsforyours@gmail.com

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.” Ephesians 4:5

