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Kingdom Relationships

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The Kingdom of God consists of a people who are knitted together with certain others in patterns of Kingdom relationships. Here are some observations that seem to be relevant.

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"...speaking the truth in love, may [we] grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Messiah, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." Ephesians 4:15-16 (NKJV).

The Kingdom of God consists of a people who are knitted together with certain others in patterns of Kingdom relationships.

These patterns of relationships make up Father-God's family universally, thereby making us brothers and sisters in His household. This family is His habitation in heaven and on earth.

One purpose for these spiritual kingdom relationships is to encourage, strengthen, comfort, and build up one another in love into Messiah so that we might be a people to His glory, a people among whom and in whom He can dwell in holiness.

We do our part to accomplish this purpose by staying sensitive and obedient to the Holy Spirit. We need to stay sensitive and obedient to the Holy Spirit as we participate in one another's lives. We cannot function as His body in isolation.

KINGDOM RELATIONSHIPS

Kingdom relationships are tangible and have expression in the physical and natural realm. We may have many tiers of relationships in the world with family, friends, work associates, neighbors, etc. Kingdom relationships, however, are different from all other natural relationships in that the Holy Spirit establishes them.

Historically, in the church system, our relationships have been greatly determined by our membership and participation in an institutional church situation. We relate to people in these settings for different reasons. We like the preaching, the music, the family friendly programs, the liturgy or lack thereof, the people, or because grandpa and grandma are buried in the cemetery.

These relationships usually last as long as we remain active participants of that church. If we leave a church group without its release, we are likely to be marked as rebellious and troublemakers—even perhaps one to be shunned. The members of God's household are knitted together in relationships that go beyond the boundaries of traditional, institutional church walls.

As believers in Jesus, the Messiah, we are intricately connected to others in Spirit-appointed, agape (love) relationships. The habitation of God has to do with being joined and knitted to one another by the Spirit and being built up into Him. Our relationships are spiritually intimate. They have been formed by the Holy Spirit and exist as realities in the realm of the Kingdom of God for eternity.

PATTERNS OF KNITTED RELATIONSHIP

We are all related in the universal sense as His body—the general assembly of called-out-ones (ekklesia). Yet, each of us has our own unique pattern of relationships with whom we are personally knitted by divine appointment. These are those to whom we are supernaturally drawn and with whom we share the Life of Messiah. (“Life” is capitalized whenever the word is used in reference to God’s kind of Life because it is His Life that we share and not our own. He alone is Life.)

These relationships are organic, living, active, dynamic, fluid, flexible, changing, and expanding and contracting as the Lord has need. They are constantly taking on one pattern and then another. Any attempt to freeze-frame these patterns of relationships at any stage will stifle them. Neither geography nor church walls confine these relationships. They are spiritual in nature and are in the spiritual realm of the Kingdom. None of us have the exact same pattern of Kingdom relationships. Once established, we know that nothing can break the bond we have with each other. We may touch each other’s lives often or occasionally. Should we go even a year or two without being together, we always know that we belong to each other and are there for each other. If and when we come together again, we pick right up where we left off. You know the kind of relationship of which I speak!

This knitting together of these relationships is our personal and organic assembly of called-out-ones. They are relationship-based and not membership or meeting-based; although meeting together might come as a result of our relationships, but always and only as the Holy Spirit leads.

PAY ATTENTION TO RELATIONSHIPS

The Holy Spirit puts us in spiritual relationships with other believers to accomplish His purposes in and through us as His body. Therefore, we need to pay attention to these relationships. This means at least four things:

First, we are to pay attention to the concept of spiritual relationships.

The kingdom of God is all about relationships. It is about a people who are in relationship with the Father through the Son, and with one another, bound by His Holy Spirit, as the family of God. We want to pay attention to the very concept of kingdom relationships.

Secondly, we are to pay attention to those in particular with whom we have been knitted together in spiritual relationships.

He places us in the body as He pleases. 1 Corinthians 12:18.

We, therefore, do not have the liberty to go from church-to-church or group-to-group as we please and join ourselves to them, but to be with whom it pleases the Father. These are those to whom we are supernaturally drawn and with whom we share His Life. Some of these connections are local and some are distant to greater and lesser degrees. They may be many in number or few. Numbers do not matter to God. Purpose does matter. If only a few, we still know we have an invisible connection with the whole body of Christ in heaven and on earth.

There are those with whom we have a closer attachment than with others. This knitted pattern of relationships in our lives is our spiritual family within the larger family of God. We want to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to confirm those with whom He has appointed for us to be in Kingdom relationship. We

also want to pay attention to those in particular with whom we have been knitted in Kingdom relationship. Know who they are.

Thirdly, we need to pay attention to why God has placed specific relationships in our lives.

He places us in the body for a reason. He may be doing a work in us or through us, or in them. He may have us connected with certain ones for a lifetime or for a season. He is never wasteful, but we might waste what He wants to do if we fail to know as best we can the answer to this “why” question. Why am I in relationship with Chris, Bill, Jerry, three Bobs, two Larrys, Chad, Bryon, Paul, Stan and numerous others, along with their mates and families?

What ministry function do we perform in each other’s lives? Some are apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some shepherds and teachers. Each of us has varying gifts of the Holy Spirit that are drawn on from time to time—wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, the interpretation of tongues, serving, administration, teaching, giving, etc.

My wife and I do not “go to church.” Yet, we are knitted together with many others in Kingdom relationships. We have no reluctance to call upon these gifts given to us when the need arises. Neither are they reluctant to call on a gifting in us. These ministries and gifts have been exercised one way or another, one time or another for edification, strengthening, encouragement, and exhortation. Yet, none of these have had to title themselves nor have they allowed themselves to be titled. No one seeks to position himself above the others. We simply recognize the gifting in each other and receive from each other as the needs arise. We want to pay special attention to these relationships when it comes to those ministries and gifts in our lives.

Finally, we are to pay attention to those relationships in the sense that we may need to work at making them work.

We desire to be in relationship with those so appointed. These come *super-natural* to us. Nevertheless, we can become sloppy in obeying the Holy Spirit’s leading. Therefore, maintaining healthy, spiritual Kingdom relationships requires attention. We need to elevate them to a high priority. This usually means that something of Self has to die. These relationships are made in heaven and are of utmost importance to Father. Because of this, the enemy of our souls never sleeps in his attempts to disrupt them. Love never fails.

We want to pay attention to these kingdom relationships because through them we express His body to one another and to the world beyond our fellowship one with another. Those in the world shall know the Father and who we really are by our love one for the other. The Holy Spirit has knitted us together for His purposes.