

LEARNING AND BEING PERFECTED TO TEACH IN MUTUALITY BY ASKING AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- A main purpose and goal of the group meetings is to perfect the saints by teaching in mutuality
- The best way to teach is by learning to ask proper and relevant questions so that all the members can be perfected in teaching
- We need much learning and practice concerning how to properly ask and answer questions that everyone in the group may be perfected

A Main Purpose of the Group Meetings Being to Perfect the Saints by Teaching in Mutuality

The fellowship, intercession, care, and shepherding in the first section of the group meeting are the beginning and the base of the group meetings. Without such a base, we cannot have effective group meetings. However, these items in the first section of the group meeting cannot fulfill the purpose of the group meeting or reach its goal. The purpose and goal of the group meetings is the perfecting of the saints through teaching in mutuality. The way to have the proper teaching in a group meeting is not by waiting for an assigned teacher to speak. Rather, the best way is to teach by asking questions. There are no assigned teachers in the group meetings; all the attendants are teachers...The goal of the group meeting is to perfect the saints. Without teaching, it is impossible to reach this goal. In a group meeting, the best way to teach is to ask. Even if we have a burden to teach and exhort others concerning a particular matter, we should not release our burden directly. Rather, we should turn our teaching into a question...The group meetings are our meetings. Therefore, all the attendants in a group meeting must take care of the meeting. In our natural being and in the traditional practice there is not the thought that every member must care for the meetings, but in the new way this thought must be sown into us. We should not go to the meetings without a sense of obligation. If each person does not take care of the meetings, the meetings will be poor. Each person in the meeting must be both a teacher and a learner.

The Best Way to Teach Being by Asking Proper and Relevant Questions

In our study and experimentation we have found that the best way to teach is to raise questions in the group meetings. By asking the proper questions and answering the questions of others, we spontaneously teach, instruct, and perfect others. We need to learn not only how to answer the

questions of the new ones in the group meetings but also how to ask questions. To ask questions in a proper way is even more difficult than to answer them. If we have a burden to teach a certain item, we should not teach it directly but turn this burden into a question. We may have a burden to teach the new ones about dealing with idols. However, we should not do this as a teacher. We should rather ask the saints in the group meeting how to deal with idols. This will stir up all the attendants to say something. There will be different kinds of answers with different points. Each one will say something, and all the speaking will become part of the teaching. Then a brother who knows more than the others can add something, and someone else can add even more. The result will be a very good and complete teaching concerning dealing with idols. This way of teaching by asking questions is not carried out by only one person. Rather, it gives an opportunity to all the attendants in the group meeting to function...The best way to learn something thoroughly is to teach it. Often we can learn more by teaching than by listening. (*The Practice of the Group Meetings*, Chapters 1 and 6)

We need to learn to fellowship. Sometimes we do not open our mouth to speak one word. At other times once we open our mouth, we begin to tell stories and speak endlessly; this is not right...In the group meetings we should learn to ask relevant questions. After someone asks a question that is related either to truth or to life, everyone should try to answer mutually according to what each one knows. There is some amount of spiritual deposit in the brothers and sisters. Having loved the Lord and experienced much of Him for many years, we should all have some accumulated riches. Whenever someone brings up a question, everyone should speak from what he knows. You speak, I speak, and everyone speaks. In this way not only do we give an answer to the one who asks the question, but we also render help to every attendant in the meeting. (*The Ministry of the New Testament Priests of the Gospel*, Chapter 4)

The perfecting work in the group meeting is carried out mainly through the mutual answering of one another's questions. Every member can answer according to his capacity, and every member can be taught. Within God's people there are many riches. However, many times when we go to a group meeting, we do not speak. Although we are rich, it seems that when we come together, many of us leave our riches at home and appear to have nothing. This is due to the marriage between our disposition and religious tradition. To have a proper group meeting, we must dissolve this marriage. The Lord wants us to meet in the group meetings so that we can release what is within us. Some young ones may answer in a way that is not so right, yet this is still a

kind of teaching that can help others. No matter who we are or how young we are in the Lord, we all can and must speak something in the group meeting. Sometimes an interesting question can open the way for the saints to pour out the riches that are within them. Therefore, you all must learn how to ask a proper question in order to help the meeting. If no one else asks a question, this puts the responsibility upon your own shoulders. You must initiate the mutual teaching by asking a question. You might ask, "Why does the Bible tell us that Christ became the life-giving Spirit?" There are many answers to such a question, and every believer, old or young, can give an answer. (*The Exercise and Practice of the God-ordained Way*, Chapter 28)

Our Needing Much Learning in How to Ask and Answer Questions

Many times when we try to answer a question, we give a lot of good teachings, but we do not answer it according to the asker's thought. Therefore, while one is teaching, all the others must be learning. In this way everyone is exercised. We are all being taught, sometimes by seeing a negative example. We might realize that although someone's answer is good, it does not fit the question. We have to learn how to answer in a very fitting way. After going home, we may consider certain questions so that the next time such a question is raised, we can answer in a better way. Also, in our practice of the group meetings, our teaching should not be too long. If we say a short word to hit the point, this is good enough. We should not try to answer everything in every aspect. We should try to leave more time for others to say something. Then we will learn more.

When someone asks a practical question, you should first give them a practical answer, and you should also try to make your answer short. Someone may ask, "You talk about worshipping God. How do you worship God?" You may say, "To worship God is not to bow down or prostrate yourself, which is what many people think. That is not the worship the Bible teaches. To worship God is simply to contact God. When you pray to God, that is your worship to Him. When you sing to God or praise God, that is worship. Even when you are sitting and considering God, that is another kind of worship." This answer is good enough. You have spoken, and now you can leave some time for others. Then a sister may conclude the answer to this question by saying, "In order to pray to God, to praise God, to sing to God, and to call on Him, you have to exercise your spirit. Do not merely call or pray from your throat; you have to exercise your spirit. The Bible tells us in John 4:24 that God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit."

This is not too doctrinal, yet it gives him some practical instruction. If you give someone a good answer, this answer can imply very much teaching.

Someone may ask how to read the Bible. There are many ways to answer this question. You may teach him to pray-read the Word. This is not bad, but this is not the best answer. You must give him some direct, brief instruction. You must always consider someone's question and not answer anyone according to your thought. You must answer a question according to the asker's thought. He has asked how to read the Bible. You might say, "The best way to read the Bible is simply to read it. Just read it again and again." Then you may go further to tell him that the Bible is the Word of God, so you should pray before reading it. Also, you should advise him to read through the Bible consecutively, not skipping from book to book, and that it is better to begin with the New Testament. If he takes these points and practices them, he will receive very much help. If you still have time in the group meeting, you may go a little further, but do not go too far at one time. Do not forget that he is a new learner. If you go too far, he will not be able to pick up that much. Some questions raised by new ones are quite trivial. They are not related to a crucial point, or doctrine, so we should not spend much time on these matters. Some questions are related to basic problems like baptism or calling on the Lord. For these we need to spend more time to answer them properly...In the entire recovery the practice of having group meetings according to the scriptural way has just begun. In the past we did not have the organic practice of the group meetings. You all have to learn very much; therefore, you should go forward gradually in the group meetings. After faithfully practicing for about one year, this will be built up as a very positive habit among us. (*The Exercise and Practice of the God-ordained Way*, Chapter 25; for additional reading see also the "Questions and Answers" section in this chapter)

Fellowship Questions:

1. How does teaching in mutuality help perfect the members in a group? Why is it best that teaching be carried out in mutuality by all of the members of the group?
2. What has been your experience of asking questions in a group? Provide examples of times when a particular question greatly enhanced the group's fellowship.
3. In what areas do you most desire more learning and practice concerning teaching in mutuality?
4. What questions would you like to ask your group and may not have yet?

5. What additional steps are necessary outside of your meeting time to have the proper asking and answering of questions in the meeting?