



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Weekly Bible Study - 13:05:2009

Website: www.victoriouschristianministry.org

STUDY 16: THE MINISTRY OF VISITATION

James 1:27

In our last study, we noted that James 1:27 identified the fact that adherents to the true religion are characterised by:

- (i) **Visitation to the fatherless and widows, and**
- (ii) **Lives That are unspotted from the world**

Today's study takes a closer look at the first aspect – Visitation. In future, we will also take a closer look at the second point – Purity.

Visitation to church members is sometimes carried out gracelessly as one of the routine activities rather than as a ministry unto the Lord. In the Ministry of any growing church, visitation forms a very important part of the work. Man needs positive encouragement to be able to decide aright. The third law of thermodynamics makes it clear that things will get from order to disorder and from bad to worse if left alone. Evil triumph when good men do nothing. The devil sow tares only when men sleep. We must act on time, and persist in actions to build the type of fellowship we would be proud of.

INSTITUTION AND INSTRUCTION

The ministry of visitation is as old as the bible itself. God visited Israel in their predicament (Exodus 3:16,17; 4:31). Jesus visited Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38). Paul visited the churches (Acts 15:36). And it was the practice of the early church to visit one another. We are also commanded to "be thou diligent to know the state of thy flock and look well to thy herds" (Proverbs 27:23).

IMPORTANCE AND IMPACT

The three-fold ministries of the church - to win, build and commission is greatly aided by the ministry of visitation. Some of the aims of the visitations carried out by the early church were to see how the believers do, confirm the churches, comfort and establish the believers in the faith, so that their labour would not be in vain (Acts 15:36,41; I Thessalonians 3:2,5). In times of sadness or joy, birth or bereavement, in particular, people need our presence more than they need our money or cards. When properly conducted the impact of a spirit led visitation can be tremendous. There would usually be inspiration, edification, assistance, enlightenment, encouragement, fellowship, challenge, deliverance and consequently rejoicing. (Exodus 3:16,17; 4:31; John 11:8,43,44). When successful the outcome is usually attractive and memorable. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus and he became the leader of the early church. Many great Christian leaders today, were painstakingly followed up by others. What joy it gives to see your convert grow to become a giant of faith!

INPUT AND INSISTENCE

For a successful realisation of its importance there must be the personal input of time, love and selfless sacrifice backed up with earnest supplication and executed under the guidance of the Holy spirit, with the aim of seeing "Christ formed" in the prospect (Galatians 4:19). At the spiritual level there must also

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be sufficient input of appropriate scriptures that would achieve the desired goals. Man exonerates diplomacy and tact but God exalts His word. No visitation can be considered complete without scriptural input. Occasionally, it takes time to get the required response. The farmer sows and waits for the crop to germinate. If we sow as we should and water in due season, the crop will germinate. Persistence is important! Winners never quit and quitters never win. Never give up until you have made the last trial; and never make the last trial until you have succeeded. God is always faithful to give the increase when we have done our planting and watering (I Corinthians 3:6). "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.... In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand...." (Ecclesiastes 11:1,6). When we sow in tears we certainly will reap in joy (Psalm 126:6). And after positive response is obtained it is still needful to continue supporting the newcomer till he is able to stand on his own. A baby needs ample support after birth till he is able to walk.