

ESSENTIAL #3 – SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TEACHING / PRESENTATION IDEAS

Eph. 4:16 "From Jesus the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

QUESTION: How much of what we need in order to grow comes from Jesus?

ANSWER: All of it: "From Jesus the whole body grows."

ASK: And how does Jesus impart to us what we need in order to grow?

ANSWER: *Not* just directly, in our one-on-one relationship with Him, but also through what we give to each *other*!

Eph. 4:16 "The whole body gets what it needs to grow and build itself up as each part does its work." (Paraphrase)

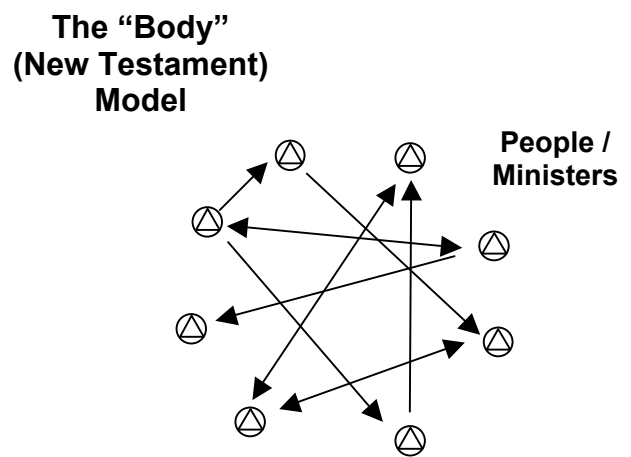
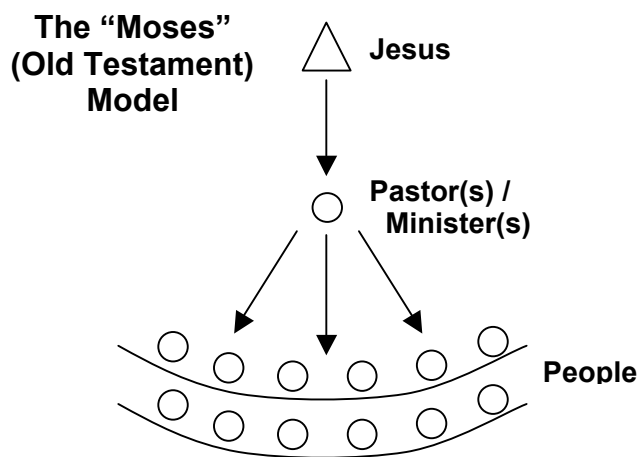
1Cor. 12:7 "Now to each one (of us) the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

God gives His Spirit to every person who opens their heart to Him in trusting surrender (Acts 2:38-39; 1 Cor. 6:19). He actually takes up residence inside of us. And then that "invisible" Spirit sometimes "manifests" (reveals) himself by "prompting" and empowering us to give someone a "gift" in Jesus' name that meets their need and does them good.

QUESTION: What does that idea suggest to you about how our church gatherings should be set up/structured?

QUESTION: How does that compare with the way churches are usually set up/structured?

Compare:



QUESTION: What problems does the Old Testament approach cause?

ANSWER: We bottleneck the Holy Spirit and the gifts he wants to give us through each other.

1 Cor. 14:26 describes a better way that enables Him to use us all by encouraging us to interact and learn each other's needs then minister to them as he enables us:

“Here’s what I want you to do. When you gather together, each one of you be prepared with something that will be useful for all: Sing a hymn, teach a lesson, tell a story, lead a prayer, provide an insight. All of these must be offered for the strengthening of the others.” (The Message)

In that early church, *everyone* was expected to participate. But their goal wasn't just to get everyone involved. Their goal was to assist with each other's spiritual formation, to *edify* and *encourage* each other to grow toward Christlikeness. With that in mind, they showed up each week ready to give each other some kind of a “spiritual gift”. The result? Though there were problems, it was often like *Christmas* morning when they met together. And the Spirit of God showed up in some powerful ways for them.

EXERCISE:

For our next time together, let's each prepare some kind of a gift for the others in our group. Read over the information below and follow the guidelines as you prepare.

TWO BASIC KINDS OF “GIFT” YOU CAN BRING:

1. A **“WORSHIP” GIFT** is direct toward *God* and is designed to help others honor *Him*. It may be a song, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, testimonial of what He's done, psalm, letter of appreciation, poem, etc.
2. A **“SHARING” GIFT** is offered to *others* and is designed to help, encourage, sharpen or strengthen *them*. It may be a lesson you've learned, a passage of scripture (with a personal application), an insight, message, teaching, testimony, challenge, exhortation, correction, encouragement, present, song, skit or dramatic presentation, personal need, burden, request, confession of sin, prayer, prayer request, meaningful question you'd like to pose, etc. (These last few are gifts from a heart willing to share the real you, in itself a good gift.)

GUIDELINES:

1. You may prepare to give your gift as an individual or with someone else.
2. Don't worry in advance about not yet having any ideas. Just spend some time with the Lord, read over the two kinds of gifts you can bring, *ask HIM* what you might give that would bless the others here, then “listen” awhile and then see what comes to mind.
3. Feel free to be simple, creative or fun. Just try to make it meaningful for us, something that will help us grow in our understanding or relationship with God and/or each other.
4. Don't worry about being long or polished. Each person will only have 5-6 minutes to share.