

A General View

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

(Act 2:46-47)

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A General View

We are part of the Lord Jesus Christ's Church in this region, made up by men and women desiring to love Him daily. I say part of it once there are many other brothers in this city not gathering with us, but still belong to God's family. We believe that a Christian, a disciple of Christ, a follower of Jesus, is the one who surrenders his life under His government.



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Now you will have some important guidelines for your faith and understanding about the normal life of the congregation that now you make part of it.

Our Position in Christ

When we were baptized something supernatural happened - we were put into Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:27 says "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ". Before, we were alone, lost in our stubbornness believing that our intelligence, capability and strength were enough to face the difficulties of life and death, with the illusion that by doing good deeds, or not doing bad ones, would pay off our debt owned before God. But the Lord has rescued by paying the price of laying down his own life, and we came to see that without him we could go nowhere. God then provides a "place" where we could be and receive his full blessing. This "place" is Jesus Christ. When we were baptized, we were placed into Him. Baptism is not a religious ritual to witness the faith of man, it is a miracle in which God places man into Christ Jesus.

Now that we are in Him, we receive from the Father "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). In Christ you have been forgiven and accepted by God, you can now enjoy God's presence, you received power and strength to face the difficulties of the life, you receive the Holy Spirit of God that gives you the power to testify and manifest His gifts. Now, in Christ, you can live pleasing to God, doing His will, even though you are weak, Jesus is strong.

Before converted to the Lord, our lives were just experiences accumulated throughout the years, frustrations, sorrows, joys, financial

struggles, scars in the soul, successes and failures that “God alone knows”. But now, in Christ, you are “a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2Corinthians 5:17). The Lord will ordain you life.

Communion with God

The beginning of that is the restoration of our communion with Him.

The Bible says in Romans 3:23 *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

Once that you can walk with Him now, there are some "tools" that will help you enjoy and develop this communion. Prayer, fasting, contact with the Word of God, hymns, praise and worship unto Lord and fellowship with the brethren.

Eternal Purpose of God

All that has a goal, a purpose. Man was created with a very specific mean:

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:28-29)

We realize that the main goal in man's life is to cooperate with God's purpose fulfillment. Family, school, business, work, careers must contribute to God's purpose.

Then, we say that God wants to have a family of many children in Jesus' likeness. Saying "a family" means that God looks at your family, without labels, signs or thoughts that set us apart – He has only one family, so He wants unity. We are the fruit of the historical divisions that originated in man's heart. By Saying "many children" it means that we understand the great joy in God's heart for the growth of His own family and hence, that we must take part cooperating with it's growth. Reason why God mad of us witnesses and proclaimers. He wants quantity. By saying "in Jesus' likeness" is the understanding that each one in God's family have the main goal in their lives: to reach “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). He wants quality.

Commitment in the Body

And for that to take place, we look at the lives of the first disciples, back in the time of Jesus and the apostles, and we find functioning principles and practices that guide our life as a congregation.

As a new creature, we were placed into the church, the body of Christ, so we are members one of another.

So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. (Romans 12:5)

This relationship occurs at certain levels:

- . First with the one who we call a “discipler”, which is someone with more experience and that will help you by teaching everything he has learned from God. He will be specifically praying for your life, and you should share with him your difficulties and needs having in return help and guidance;
- . Second, you will have a “companion” with whom you will build a great friendship while you're increasingly cooperate with God in the fulfillment of His purpose. Moreover, you will be praying together, speaking about Jesus to other people together, taking care of disciples together as well as serve one another;
- . Third in small group (home group) with which you will meet each week to pray, worship God, share experiences, renew your spirit and courage, grow in faith etc;
- . When we are talking about commitment in the body, it means, beyond any commitment that is marked with any brother personally, to those established by the leadership of the congregation, as general meetings, meetings on the street, the home group meeting and those marked sporadically.

Walk in the Light

One of the first things we learned at the beginning of our Christian life is "to walk in the light". Communion with God and His church leads us to have a more realistic view of ourselves. We come to see ourselves confronted with the will of God - “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

So when we do something that goes against the Lord's will, we are no longer under the light of God. We sinned. Consequently we can express at least three distinct reactions: a) We hide our condition; b) Disguise, treating superficially c) Confess, bringing it unto the light.

The instinctive reaction is to hide sin. Although we may in some measure, for some time, hiding from men, from God never. As a consequence we are faced by a sense of guilt (1 Timothy 1:5,19; 3:9; Proverbs 28:13) and even physical illness (Psalms 31.3; Proverbs 3:5-8).

From Adam until today the **preservation of the self image** is the real reason to hide our faults and sins.

Another reaction is to treat the problem superficially. Walking in the light and confessing sins is like digging the trenches to lay down the foundations of the house. If this trench is opened superficially the house will have not enough foundation and will fall (Matthew 7:24-27). It will not help to transfer your blame to the others, justifying sin, or rationalizing it, finding means of distract your mind from the inner conflicts or yet treat the consequence of sin with medicines.

The third reaction is to confess sin (1 John 1:5-9, Eph 5:8-14; Jn 3:19-21). Reveal what is hidden in the shadows. Tell the truth and assume the consequences of sin. It's saying with conviction and repentance: "I sinned", "I have sinned".

Confession is different from tell something, once the confession is always comes with repentance.

When I confess, I do it unto God, who I offended and those who cover me spiritually. There is forgiveness for confessed sin only (Isaiah 64:6; 43:24-26).

Confession is the cure that God has established for our conflicts.

Family is the first target of our changes

The Bible says in Malachi 4:6 "And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse". It's in the family environment that we are best known and is there where should be manifested, firstly, the love of God in our lives. Learning to love and honor our parents, loving the wife with your own life, love the husband being idoneous and helpful, to love the children "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4 -

ESV). Where, with sincerity and holy humbleness, we correct our mistakes and forgive those who have done wrong at us.

Jesus bless you!