

## **Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Eight : The Function of the Church**

### **(1) The House of the Living God and the Pillar and Base of the Truth**

#### **I. Overview:**

The house of God and the pillar and base of the truth describe what the church is. The church of God indicates that the church is possessed by God and that the church has the nature of God and is constituted with the element of God. The church is the house of God in speaking of the living God. The living God, who lives in the church, must be subjective to the church. Truth means "reality," denoting all the real things revealed in God's Word. Both the truth and the life are Christ Himself; life is the inward and intrinsic element, and truth is the outward definition and explanation. The church is the supporting pillar and the holding base of the truth. The church is the supporting pillar and holding base of all these realities. The church bears Christ as the reality; the church testifies the reality, the truth. In order for the church to function as the pillar and base of the truth, we all need to arrive at the full knowledge of the truth. When every brother and sister is full of life and truth, the church will be strong as the house of the living God and the pillar and base of the truth.

#### **II. Truth and Enlightenment:**

Day 1 —

A. Expound the words in 1 Corinthians 1:2.

The church is constituted of the universal God, but it exists on earth in many localities, one of which was Corinth. In nature the church is universal in God, but in practice the church is local in a definite place. The expression the church of God indicates that the church has the nature of God, that it is constituted of the element of God.

B. Explain the word in 1 Peter 2:5, and its application.

The church is the house of God. In Greek the word *oikos* means not only the house, the dwelling, but also the household. *Oikos* means both the house and also the folks, the family, that make up the household; thus, it may also be translated as "household". God's dwelling place today on earth is the church, and God, as such a great Father, has a family, which is the church. To us God's house and God's family, however, are the same.

Day 2 —

A. Expound that according to God's New Testament economy, God's house is His family.

As God's dwelling place, the church is both God's house and His household, His family. In the Old Testament the temple and God's people were two separate things, but in the fulfillment in the New Testament the dwelling place and the family are one. According to God's New Testament economy, God's house is His family. Today the house of God is the church.

B. Explain that the church has a twofold function.

The church has a twofold function. To Christ, the church is the Body; to God, the church is the house. Christ is the Head, and the church is the Body of the Head. This is one function of the church. God is the Father, and the church is His house. This is another function of the church. The church as the Body of Christ is an organism. In like manner, the church as the house of God is a living entity, a living house.

Day 3 —

A. Explain the word in 1 Timothy 3:15.

According to Paul's word in 1 Timothy 3:15, the church is the house of God. The Greek word rendered "house" may also be translated "household." The household, the family, of God is the house of God. The house and the household are one thing—the assembly that is composed of the believers. The reality of this house as the dwelling place of the living God is in our spirit. We must live and act in our spirit so that in this house God can be manifested as the living God.

B. Expound the word in Ephesians 2:22, and its significance.

As the house of God, the church is the dwelling place of God. Ephesians 2:22 says, "In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit." Paul says that the saints in Ephesus were being built together in Christ into a dwelling place of God. The church, the dwelling place of God on earth, is the place in which God can have His rest and put His trust. In this dwelling place God lives and moves to accomplish His heart desire.

Day 4 —

A. Expound the firm foundation in 2 Timothy 2:19.

In 2 Timothy 2:19 Paul declares, “The firm foundation of God stands.” The foundation here does not refer to Christ as the foundation of the church but to the church as the foundation of the truth. This corresponds with the base of the truth, which holds the truth, especially the truth of the resurrection of Christ. Hence, the church is the firm foundation of God that stands forever against any heresy.

B. Explain what the Lord’s recovery founded upon four pillars is.

The Lord’s recovery is mainly founded upon four pillars: the truth, life, the church, and the gospel. The truth is an outward definition and explanation, and life is the inward and intrinsic content. Hence, in order to experience and enjoy the Lord as life, we must know the truth. For this reason we must spend an adequate amount of time to learn the truth.

Day 5 —

A. Expound that the standard of truth will be constantly raised higher among the churches in the Lord’s recovery. I hope that the standard of truth will be constantly raised higher among the churches in the Lord’s recovery. We must go up to the high peak. When many people were young, they did not understand such truths as the essential Spirit, the economical Spirit, or the dispensing of the Triune God, but now they all well speak about these things. May we all be able to perfect the young people in truth and have a burden to recommend and promote the Life-study messages.

B. Explain that Paul speaks metaphorically of the church in 1 Timothy 3:15.

Paul speaks metaphorically of the church as “the pillar and base of the truth”. The pillar supports the building, and the base holds the pillar. The church is such a supporting pillar and holding base of the truth. The truth is the reality and the contents of God’s New Testament economy. This economy is composed of two mysteries: Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ.

Day 6 —

A. Expound what we should be in order to see the reality.

Reality comes from knowledge of the Bible plus heavenly enlightenment and personal experience. To see the reality, we first need to spend time in the Word to be nourished and to become familiar with the doctrines of the Bible. The basis for enlightening is our knowledge. Then we need to daily walk in Christ, looking to Him for enlightenment. Once we see the reality by the Lord’s light, the reality will become our experience.

B. Explain the word in First Timothy 3:15, and how to experience it.

First Timothy 3:15 says that the church is the pillar and base of the truth. The pillar and base of the truth is the entire church, including all the saints. In ancient times buildings were supported by pillars or columns, each of which rested on a base. Paul referred to this architectural feature to illustrate that the church is the pillar and base to bear the truth.

### III. Conclusion:

The church is the house of God, which is the dwelling place of the living God, the reality of which is in our spirit. We must live and move in our spirit so that God may be manifested as the living God in this house. God is living, not only living in the church but also moving, acting, and working in it. Because He is living, the church also lives in Him, through Him, and with Him. The living God and the living church live and work together. The living church is the house and family of the living God, and thus becomes the manifestation of God in the flesh. All saints should be encouraged to move toward God's standard. The standard is that the church should function as the house of the living God, as the pillar and base of the truth, and as the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh. The church life today must be God manifested in the flesh, and every local church must fulfill this standard.