

The Elders Handbook

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Table of contents

	Introduction
Chapter 1.	What We Believe
Chapter 2.	Importance of the Word of God
Chapter 3.	What is the Church?
Chapter 4.	Functioning of local churches
Chapter 5.	Leadership of local churches
Chapter 6.	Support for Evangelists and Teachers
Chapter 7.	Evangelism and church planting

Introduction to the First Edition

This handbook has been prepared as a guide for Elders (and Bible Teachers) as they seek to lead and teach the local church in the pattern set forth in the Word of God.

Teaching and shepherding the flock is a work especially dear to the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ who charged the elders at Ephesus:

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Shepherding the flock also has its own special reward, for the apostle Peter said to Elders:

“...when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (1 Peter 5:4).

All quotations are from the New King James Version of the Holy Bible.

Chapter 1

What We Believe

We believe in:

- [1] The Bible as the inspired Word of God, our sole authority for doctrine and practice.
- [2] The Trinity of the Godhead.
- [3] The Deity and sinless humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- [4] The personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit.
- [5] The creation and fall of man.
- [6] The sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ for the sin of the whole world and His bodily resurrection and ascension.
- [7] The personal and pre-millennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- [8] The resurrection of the body.
- [9] The judgment of the living and the dead by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- [10] The eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked.
- [11] The reality and personality of Satan, who was created by God, but fell through pride.
- [12] The necessity of the new birth for salvation.
- [13] The maintenance of good works and godly living by all professing Christians.
- [14] The eternal security of the believer.
- [15] The baptism by immersion of all believers.

- [16] That Apostles and Prophets belonged to the foundation period of the Church and they and their special gifts of miracles, healings and tongues are no longer with us today, since we have the completed Scriptures. However, we believe that if God so wills, He still heals in answer to prayer.
- [17] A plurality of Elders as the spiritual guides of the local church, supported by Deacons.
- [18] The observance of the Lord's Supper every Sunday, with meetings also for prayer and teaching.
- [19] In the local church, men and women have differing roles and functions. Men are to fill leadership roles and lead in all public ministry and prayer. In meetings of the local church, men should pray with heads uncovered, women with heads covered, to signify Christ's headship.
- [20] All members of the body of Christ (the Church) should be received until such time as they find they are unable to support the teaching as outlined in this Elders Handbook.
- [21] We believe in the autonomy of each local church
- [22] A more detailed outline of these beliefs and practices are found in the Emmaus Bible Correspondence Course '*Christ Loved the Church*' by William Macdonald.

Chapter 2.

The Importance of the Word of God

Elders and Bible Teachers need an understanding that God's Word is to be faithfully **taught** and **obeyed**. The following Bible references teach that all **Scripture**:

- **Is inspired by God** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- **Is everlasting and will never pass away** (Matthew 24:35)
- **Is powerful, discerning and searching** (Hebrews 4:12-13)
- **Is more necessary than bread** (Matthew 4:4)
- **Cleanses and is life changing** (Psalm 119:9; 1 Peter 2:1-3)
- **Sanctifies positionally and personally** (Acts 20:32 Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18-21)
- **We need ears to hear and a heart to obey** (Matthew 13:9-17; 1 Samuel 15:22-23).

All believers should have a great reverence for the Bible, as it is God's Word to guide us in all areas of our life and faith. It teaches us the way to heaven and how to please the Lord. King Saul lost his kingdom and his life because he rejected God's directions and failed to obey the Word of the Lord:

Samuel said to King Saul: *"Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king"* (1 Sam 15:22-23).

The Word of God equips elders for their special ministry (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and should be carefully studied (2 Tim. 2:15). The Emmaus Bible Correspondence Courses are also highly recommended as being a great help in this. Note the apostle Paul's parting words to the Ephesian elders:

*"And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to **the word of His grace**, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified"* (Acts 20:32).

Chapter 3.

What is the Church?

The Church is first mentioned by our Lord in Matthew 16:18. It is not found in the Old Testament, for Paul wrote: *"...how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets"* (Eph 3:3-5).

Israel in God's plan (Romans Chapters 9-11)

Elders need an understanding of God's program and the believer's place in it. The Old Testament is mainly a history of creation and of the origin and destiny of the nation of Israel. It introduces Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, and how God promised to bless him and through him all peoples. He also promised to give Abraham's descendents the land of Canaan, and that the Messiah (Christ) would come through his seed. It tells how Moses brought them out of slavery in Egypt and that he was given the Law on Mount Sinai. If Israel obeyed they would be blessed, to disobey would bring a curse.

Israel disobeyed and lost their land and they have been scattered among the nations. Israel has been put aside during the Church age. However, they are being gathered back in unbelief to the land promised to Abraham.

After the Church has been caught up to heaven ('Raptured' 1 Thess. 4:13-18), God will bring Israel to repentance and faith in Christ (Jeremiah 30:1-11; Zech. Chapters 12 to 14; Romans Chapters 9-11).

During the 1000 year (millennial) reign of Christ, Israel will be the head of the nations, and Jerusalem again the centre of worship (Isaiah 65:18-25; 66:18-20; Zechariah 14:16-21); *... "and the name of the city from that day shall be: **THE LORD IS THERE**"* (Ezek 48:35).

Please note: The nation of Israel was promised the land of Canaan as an earthly inheritance conditional to their obedience to the Law of Moses.

The Church Universal (Matthew 16:18)

Please note: In contrast to Israel, the Church is God's new creation and is given a spiritual inheritance in Christ in heavenly places by grace and subject to faith alone (Ephesians 2:1-10).

So the church is not under the Law of Moses, but under grace, for "*grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*". The Church is first mentioned by the Lord Jesus, and was still in the future when He said, "*I will build My church*", not "*I have been building My Church*" (read Matthew 16:13-20). The word 'Church' means '*a called out company*' – called out of the world to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not revealed in the Old Testament (Ephesians 3:3-5).

Before He could form the Church, our Lord had to die for the sins of the whole world, be buried in a rock-cut tomb, rise again the third day and ascend back to heaven.

The Father revealed to Peter that the Lord Jesus was the promised 'Christ' (O.T. 'Messiah', the *Anointed One* of Psalm 2:2). Peter's faith was now resting in Him. Jesus said "...and you are **Peter** ('Petros' -meaning 'a small stone')...and on **this rock** ('Petra'- 'a huge foundation rock' – Christ Himself) *I will build My church*". The Lord Jesus Christ is the 'Rock of Ages' on which to build our house of life, like the wise man Jesus spoke about and who built his house on the rock (Matthew 7:21-29).

Jesus had promised to pray the Father to send the Holy Spirit to dwell '**in**' His disciples (John 7:37-39; 14:15-18). When He went back to heaven He prayed the Father, and so the church was formed when the Father sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Since that time, all who believe are baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body, the Church (1 Cor. 12:13). The Church is called a body and also a building (Eph. 2:19-22).

We call this Church the '**Universal Church**'. It is composed of believers, both Jew and Gentile, from all around the world. Many are now in heaven, and when Jesus returns as He has promised to do (John 14:1-3), He will then take His people who are still on earth (the Church) home to heaven (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

The Local Church (Matthew 18:1-20)

This is first mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 18:17. The book of Acts teaches that when people were saved they were gathered together in local churches. All believers should seek to meet with a Bible believing church. Matthew Chapter 18 is the teaching Jesus gave preparing the disciples for the time when local churches would be formed. Note these points from this chapter about the local church:

- It's members should be converted, not unsaved as in many churches today (18:1-4)
- It should receive those whom the Lord has received except in some special cases (18:5, 15-18)
- Church members should not stumble or lead into sin those who are His (18:6-9)
- And should not despise another believer (18:10-14)

- It should be a place where sin is not tolerated and where Bible teaching is followed to deal with it; for the local church has authority to discipline and should so do (18:15-18)
- It should also be a place where there is 'harmony' ('agree'), for then prayer will be answered (18:19)

Jesus said: *“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them”* (Matthew 18:20). **This is the simplest form of a local church.**

Reception Policy

While churches should receive the Lord’s people in a loving and caring way (Rom. 14:1; 15:7), they must not be open to receive any false teaching or problems some people may bring.

It is the responsibility of the elders (and gifted Bible teachers) to teach in the local church, and the elders should meet with newcomers who have a differing belief to show them the true teaching (Titus 1:5-9). The Bible teaches:

- To take note of and avoid those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the true doctrine (Rom.16:17-18).
- To put away from your fellowship those who are immoral, drunkards etc. (1 Cor. 5:9-13).
- To stand fast against legalistic observances (Gal. 5:1-5).
- To reject after the second admonition a divisive man (‘heretic’ KJV); that is, anyone who is self-opinionated and will not be taught or corrected (Titus 3:10-11).

We are called into liberty – the liberty to do what is biblically right. However, this is not the license to do what we please contrary to God’s Word. A driver’s licence gives us the liberty to drive a car, but not the license to drive on the wrong side of the road and endanger the lives of other people! It is not 'Christian liberty' to be disobedient to the Word of God.

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2 Thess. 3:15).

Chapter 4.

The Functioning of Local Churches

The book of Acts gives **examples** of what these first Christians and churches did – **their actions!**

The Epistles of Paul, James, Peter and John give individual believers and local churches **teaching or doctrine on what we should believe and how to live holy lives.**

After the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Church was formed (Acts 2:1-4) there were about 120 disciples in Jerusalem! Peter preached and 3000 were added. These

first believers “...continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Note these four things the first Christians in Jerusalem “continued steadfastly” in **doing**:

- **The apostles’ doctrine** (teaching). The apostles simply taught what the Lord had taught them (Acts 1:1-3) and what He later revealed to them (2 Cor. 12:7). This is now found written in the New Testament and it is there for us to teach and obey as well (Acts 16:4). The Bible is complete, 'perfect' (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Jude 3) and nothing is to be added or taken away from its pages (Rev. 22:18-19).
- **Fellowship**. This word means ‘things shared in common’. We enjoy **together** the things of the Lord that we share in common through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. We also encourage and support one another along the journey of life. We have been called into this fellowship and are maintained in it by God Himself (1 Cor. 1:9; 10:14-16; 1 John Chapter 1).
- **The breaking of bread**. The night our Lord was betrayed He told the disciples to do this in remembrance of Himself by partaking of the bread and cup (Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-34). This was done on the “*first day of the week*”, the resurrection day (our Sunday) when the local churches met (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). God began His creation on the first day and ‘finished’ it on the sixth day. When Jesus died He said ‘*It is finished*’ (John 19:30). He was in the tomb under the curse of a broken Law on the Sabbath (Saturday), but rose on the first day (Sunday). Christians are His new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) and so should meet on the first day of the week.
- **And prayers**. The church began at a prayer meeting (Acts 1:14; 2:1) and continued in prayer (Acts 4:23-31; 12:12). A suitable time should be set aside for the church to meet for this when the members can be prayed for along with many other needs as well. From 1 Timothy 2:23-31 we learn that this is an apostolic “*first of all*” and therefore is very important. Various aspects of prayer are:

Supplications – why we pray – occasioned by a need felt.

Prayers – to whom we pray – to God in reverence and faith.

Intercessions – praying for others – we have freedom of access, confidence, holy intimacy of approach to our heavenly Father and can make all our requests known to Him.

Thanksgivings – reasons to pray - results from prayers answered and needs met.

For all men – for whom to pray - without partiality.

These are the meetings of a local church and should be times to enjoy fellowship together.

Meetings of the church and roles of men and women

When the Lord instituted the Supper, He asked His disciples to “*do this in remembrance of Me*”. He used the bread and wine of the people among whom He lived. The bread used by churches will therefore vary from country to country.

The wine was most probably fermented grape juice diluted with water as many believe the custom of the Jews was at the time. Many poor and isolated tribal peoples have no access to this and so a suitable alternative may have to be used.

Before breaking bread, take time to **worship** the Lord in prayer, by singing suitable hymns and reading and meditating on Bible passages that tell us about Christ.

Any of the brothers may join in this worship, and not just the elders. The entire congregation is involved in the worship of God in singing and saying 'Amen!' Men in the church are free to lead through praise, thanksgiving, prayer, meditation or an exhortation from God's Word befitting to the occasion as led by the Holy Spirit. Being led by the Spirit does not preclude individual preparation. Participation should be orderly, timely, reverent, honouring to God and edifying to the body.

The brothers should lead in the above meetings of the church; the sisters should not take a public part. Principles relating to this are found in 1 Corinthians chapters 11 to 14 and in 1 Timothy chapter 2.

The Bible teaches that in meetings of the church men should have heads uncovered and women should be covered. The reasons are given in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16:

- (a) The headship of Christ and God over women and men.
- (b) The original order of the creation of men and women.
- (c) Because the angels are spectators to local church order.
- (d) Because it was the '*custom*', or the '*customary usage*' or '*practice*' of all the churches in Paul's day, as taught in all churches (1 Corinthians 4:17).

Corinth was a multi-cultural seaport, a melting pot of many cultures. What Paul taught here had nothing to do with Corinthian culture, but everything to do with God's given order. It was even contrary to Jewish practice, where men cover and women uncover in many synagogue services to this day.

In the home and local church men and women have differing 'roles'. However, women are not inferior to men, for all are "*one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:28). Women also have special gifts and God given ministries, especially teaching other women and children and in their witness outside church meetings (Titus 2:3-5; Phil. 4:3). Deborah prophesied but not in the Tabernacle (Judges 4:4-5) and Philip's four daughters did likewise, but not in church meetings (Acts 21:8-9). The Bible does not contradict itself.

While the husband is the head of the wife and she is to submit to him, he should love her as Christ also loved the church (Eph. 5:22-33). He should seek to build her up in the faith and see that she reaches her full potential as a wife and mother, encouraging her to use and to develop her special gifts because she is also part of His body, the Church. The Christian home should be a place of Christian love and harmony, an example to those around who do not believe.

The windows of the church are open to the winds of the world, and elders should resist changes that contradict biblical teaching, simply coming from a worldly point of view.

Giving

The first Christians also gave an offering to the Lord on the first day of the week, probably after the breaking of bread (1 Cor. 16:1-2). This offering can be money or food that can be sold by the church. Giving is an act of worship and we should give freely, regularly, cheerfully and proportionately (2 Cor. chapters 8 & 9; Hebrews 13:15-16).

These offerings should be dedicated to and prayerfully used for the Lord's work

Chapter 5.

Leadership of Local Churches

Each local church is autonomous, and is answerable to God alone. In Revelation chapter 1 the Lord Jesus walked among the golden lampstands which represented the seven churches He addressed in chapters 2 and 3. Notice, He did not place one church over another, each was responsible to Him alone.

Apostles and Prophets

The apostles and prophets belonged to the foundation period of the Church (1 Cor. 3:10-11; Eph. 2:19-20). They and their special gifts of miracles, healings and tongues are no longer with us, since we have the completed Scriptures (1 Cor. 13: 8-13). These gifts are not necessary today for the normal functioning of the local church. They were temporary in nature, used by God primarily for purposes of confirmation and authentication of the apostle's message. They were strictly limited in use in 1 Cor. chapter 14. However, we do believe that miracles and healings do happen at times today in answer to prayer and as it pleases the Lord.

The Lord Himself chose and appointed the apostles (Luke 6:12-16). Apostles were men who had seen the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:21-26; 1 Cor. 9:1). No one today can make this claim. We are given instructions to appoint elders in the churches, but not apostles. The apostles appointed elders in the churches to carry on their work (Acts 14:23).

The prophets also had inspired messages from God because the believers did not have Bibles. Scrolls of the Old Testament books were rare, costly and bulky and few existed. The first books of the New Testament were not written for some years after Christ's resurrection and ascension. The book of Revelation written by John about 96 AD completed the canon of Scripture. Today gifted teachers gather and learn from the Word of God and carry on the work of the prophets.

Elders and Deacons

Each church should have a number of **elders** as it grows. *"Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety"* (Proverbs 11:14). Please note that Paul called the **elders** of the church at Ephesus (not the 'Pastor') to meet with him at Miletus (Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1).

To these elders he said, *"Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to **shepherd** the church of God which He purchased with His own blood"* (Acts 20:28).

An elder is one who is **spiritually mature**, and the **'work'** of elders is to **'oversee'** and **'shepherd'** the flock. These are 'doing' and 'caring' words! The word **'overseer'** is translated **'bishop'** in some old versions and that word has a corrupted meaning today.

The word **'overseer'** means to **'stand in a prominent place and oversee the flock'**, watching out for good pasture, water, and any danger from wild animals. Elders are to protect the flock from danger, and feed them from the good pastures of the Word of God. It is the 'far view' of caring for the sheep. Note Psalm 23.

The word **'shepherd'** means to **'feed from God's Word with other acts of special care'**. It is the 'near view' or caring for the flock. Peter uses similar words in 1 Peter 5:1-5 to what Paul says in Acts 20:28.

The word **'pastor'** is taken from Ephesians 4:11 and should be translated **'shepherd'**. The same word is used by Jesus when He said *"I am the good shepherd..."* (John 10:11) and it is never translated *"I am the good Pastor"*! The word 'Pastor' has been given a meaning beyond what the Bible teaches and often places a man **above** his fellow believers. The elders are **"among the flock"** and lead by example.

These words were never meant to be used as titles or badges of distinction. Jesus warned against this in Matthew 23:1-11 where He concluded by saying, *"And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ"* and *"He who is greatest among you shall be your servant"*.

Elders lead by example and not by force. In this way they gain the respect of the flock who are to esteem them highly and submit to them (1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 Thes. 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7, 17).

An elder is one who is spiritually mature, his gift and work is to oversee and shepherd the flock.

The **deacons** (meaning 'servants') support the elders in the work of the local church. The qualifications for elders and deacons are found in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1. They must have a good testimony in the community and in the church, be of good behaviour having only one wife. The wives of elders and deacons are to be godly women of discretion.

A deacon is one who supports the elders in the various activities of the local church.

Chapter 6.

Support for Elders, Evangelists and Teachers

In the New Testament, most elders were men who owned their own farm, business or worked in some way to support themselves and their own family. We do not find churches in the New Testament with a paid 'Pastor' who did most of the preaching and led the church in its worship.

However, we find that some were called in a special way to serve God. Notice that Paul and Barnabas were called by the Holy Spirit and sent by the **elders** for this special ministry (Acts 13:1-4). Later they reported back to the church on the ministry to which they had been commended (Acts 14:26-27).

Later Timothy joined Paul and Silas in missionary work. He was well reported of by the brethren in two churches and no doubt had their full commendation (Acts 16:1-5).

All who attempt to serve God in a special way should be called by the Holy Spirit to the work, should be commended by their elders, and should give regular reports on the work they are doing.

However, **elders** who rule well may have special need of extra support if they **labour** (work very hard) in word and doctrine as this may not leave them much time to earn a living (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

How were these first missionaries, evangelists and teachers supported?

Paul worked with his hands to meet his own needs and the needs of those who served with him (Acts 18:1-3; 1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8).

There were times when he and others received gifts from churches and Christians (Philippians 4:10-20; 3 John 5-8).

Aquila and Priscilla made tents for a living, and planted churches (Acts 18:1-3; Romans 16:3-5). Today many Christians are moving into towns in many lands and planting churches in the same way. It is now called '**Tent Making Ministry**'! These workers are mainly self supporting.

Those who are called by the Holy Spirit must look to God and not to men for their needs. He has not promised an easy pathway, in fact trials and tribulations followed our Lord and His apostles. Should we expect less, and look to man instead of to God?

All churches should aim at becoming self governing, self supporting and self propagating.

Believers should also help support the Lord's work and workers

Each elder and all the believers should give to the Lord's work as able (2 Cor. chapters 8-9). Gaius has left us a good example in this in providing visiting servants of the Lord with the essentials for travel (3 John 5-8). When attending conferences or elders meetings, believers should take enough food for themselves and a little more, or take money to cover this unless advised otherwise by the Conference organisers. Ask yourself this question: 'If I stayed home would I have food to eat?' It is a sin to expect others to feed us at conferences when we have food at home. All should try to grow a little more food and earn some extra money for this and to support the evangelists and teachers, widows and orphans.

Every male in Israel was to attend the three yearly festivals, and all had to bring food as an offering as well as food for themselves. They were forbidden to come empty handed (Deuteronomy 16:16-17).

Elders should do and then teach these things to the flock.

Chapter 7.

Evangelism and Church Planting

Just before the Lord Jesus Christ went back to heaven, He commanded His disciples saying: *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Amen (Mat 28:18-20).

This is called the ‘Great Commission’. The book of Acts records that Peter, John, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Paul and many others preached and told others about the Lord. Many were converted and new churches planted. This should be the pattern for us to follow today.

Making disciples means teaching the new believers by word and by example the **'all things'** found in God's Word. A disciple is a **'disciplined one'** who learns to follow and follows to learn. A disciple has **conviction** about the true teaching of God's Word, and will not depart from it. A disciple has **commitment** to the Lord and His ways as revealed in God's word and also to the local church and its activities.

The Lord Jesus commanded that the disciples were to be **baptised**. The word means to **'dip'** or **'immerse'** and much water is needed for this (John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39), because in baptism there is a picture of our burial with Christ into His death and our resurrection with Him into a new life (Romans ch. 6).

All Christians have a responsibility to live lives that commend the Gospel, and to look for opportunities to tell others about the salvation that is in our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what the believers at Thessalonica did: *“For from you the word of the Lord sounded forth...”* They *“turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven”* (See 1 Thess. 1:8-10).

The Coming of our Lord

The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples about His coming **for them** (John 14:1-3). When a Christian dies, their soul and spirit are immediately with the Lord enjoying His presence (2 Cor. 5:8). Then when the Lord returns, the dead in Christ will rise first, and those living believers will be 'caught up' to meet Him in the air (often called the 'rapture' – see 1 Thess. 4:13-18). When we see Him we shall be like Him (1 John 3:1-3).

The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples about His coming for them (John 14:1-3). Paul taught the churches this as well. He is coming and we will be caught up to meet Him in the air (called the 'rapture' 1 Thess. 4:13-18). When we see Him we shall be like Him (1 John 3:1-3).

Each time we partake of the Lord's Supper, *“you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes”* (1 Cor. 11:26). The Church is waiting for the Lord Jesus to return at any moment (1 Thess. 1:9-10) after which the great tribulation runs for seven years, called the time of Jacob's or Israel's trouble. See Jeremiah ch.30; Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew ch. 24; Rev. 7:13-14).

Then the Lord returns with His saints in great power and glory and established His 1000 year (Millennium) reign. Judgment then occurs, following which is the eternal state (Revelation 19:11-21, Rev. Ch. 20-22).

Our Lord Jesus also taught His disciples to use the gifts He had given them, and to “*Do business till I come.*” (Luke 19:13).

Let us also be busy serving the Lord, meeting with His people and waiting for His coming.