

Title: ^{LOVE} Let's Talk About Ministry

Text: Hebrews 13:1-3

Hebrews chapter 13, please. Hebrews chapter 13 verse 1. There are notes in your bulletin, and I trust you will use them as we study the Word of God. Hebrews chapter 13 beginning with Vs 1.

(Read Hebrews 13:1-3)

Prayer

For the past few weeks we have been looking at our responsibilities as christians in living the christian life. The Bible tells us to fix our eyes on Jesus, instead of our circumstances or other people. When testings and presssures come our way, we were told to consider Jesus who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself.

Last week we dealt with some exciting practical applications of christian liveing. We were told to pursue peace with all men....we were encouraged to pursue sanctification; and to see to it that no root of bitterness developed within our lives.'

Now, this morrowing I want to come to another principle which is our responsibility as a christian to fulfill. AND THAT IS: OUR SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY ~~IN~~ MINISTER TO OTHERS. And how that ought to be done.

Vs 1 says, "Let love of the brethren continue."

Now, when you talk about ministry to other people, you might not put this into a cateogory of a difficult christian problem. But, if you reflect upon your own life and ministry, I think you can see that it is a problem. One of the easiest things to do is to cop-out on our responsibility to one another.

For example....when ;you come to church you are acturally seating as a spectataor and you are hearing the teaching of the Word of God.

And it ^{would} be possible for you to do this week by week and never once involve yourself with another christian. And never once do anything to share the ^{Gospel} ~~ministry~~ that God has given to every believer.

"Brotherly love"...It is easy to say. But, Paul is not talking about a position. He is talking about a PRACTICE. Something you ought to be doing in your life.

Love of The Brethren
(1D) WHAT IS ~~BROTHERLY~~ LOVE? First of all, the nature of brotherly love.

The word "love" is not the same word used in John 3:16 where Jesus said, "God so loved the world." But, it is the same word Jesus used when He said: "I call you no more servants, but I now call you "FRIENDS." "Delphia" meaning "friend". And "Philio" meaning "love."

The word has the concept of "friendship" or "affection" or "companionship." It definitely means that two people are involving themselves in one another's lives. Let brotherly love continue. It is obviously a great need among Christians. It means that continually we ought to see and experience among Christians "love and affection."

Let me quickly give you some examples of this love from the Bible. If you are quick you might turn to these passages....

Romans 12:10... Some examples of how the Bible tells us that brotherly love ought to be among christians. Affection...friendship...companionship... one with another. We cannot live alone. Many of us are alone. ~~We~~ are lonely. Many do not sense that loneliness in others. And ministry is applying what Christ has taught us....

Romans chapter 12 verse 10..says: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love....Look at Vs 9, which is the statement of which the rest of the chapter is built. Vs 9 says: "let love be without hypocrisy."

Now, if God's love is not to be hypocrisy then it is going to include brotherly love...friendship, companionship one with another...^{See Rom 12:13}

Turn over to I Thess. chapter 4...And notice what ^{Paul} ~~Paul~~ says in Vs 9....
I Thess. 4:9: "now, as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for any one to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another."

Now, if there is one message that is clear from God's Word, it is that Christians are characterized by loving one another. In John 13 Jesus said: "by your love, will all men know that you are my disciples."

And Jesus as well as Paul taught that the way love is characterized is through "brotherly love." Look at Vs 9 again..."Now as to the love of the brethren." That is "Philia" love. "You have no need for any one to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love (agape) one another." So, the two are very much related.

What am I trying to say: I am saying that our relationship one with another as friends and companions, meeting needs and ministering is described by God as the key element in loving one another. If we truly have the love of God in our hearts, we are going to ministry to one another. If we don't have God's love we will find ourselves withdrawing and not caring, ^{and criticizing} Another ^{and judging fault with others} christian could go down the tubes and no one would really care...

Do you see the point?....Paul is saying in this 9th verse that I shouldn't even have to write to you about this matter because our Lord taught this. ~~Some~~ Some people call this, by the way, the 11th commandment. And Jesus ^{did} ~~did~~ say that all the commandments were summarized into two: "LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD AND LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, WHICH IS THE WORD FOR FRIEND, AS YOUR SELF."

The Romans were very much amazed at the love of the Christians. For example...in the arenas as Christians were being feed to the lions, one Roman historian remarked that as they were about to die, these christians expressed, openly, their love for those in the stands.

Another thing that amazed the Romans was that Christians would open up their homes to other christians; and treat them as members of their own family. This seemed very strange to the Roman culture. Yet, Christians were ~~ministering~~ ministering to one another through-out the empire. And it impressed the Romans They were amazed at how the Christians greeted one another. For example the book of Romans tells us that the early Christins greeted one another with a holy kiss. This wasn't just a custom of that day....Oh, no...the Romans would greet one another with an arm shake to indicate masculinlity...But Peter wrote that the

But Peter wrote that the greeting of the Christians was a kiss of love.

WHAT DO ALL THESE THINGS MEAN? I believe ~~they~~^{it} mean in our contemporary society that we as believers are being led to think that we can pull away from one another. We have our individual homes. We have individual bank accounts. We separate ourselves in life and practice. One of the hardest things in the world is to find time to get together with people. We are so busy doing our own thing, going our own way.

And it is in this very area that we experience a lot of defeat because we do not practice a basic principle of life: THE NEED FOR ONE ANOTHER.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth that everyone within the body is important. And the eye cannot say that It has no need of the ear. Listen, we need each other. The body must function as a unit. Ministry is sharing brother love one with another. It is your responsibility and it is mine.

Turn, please, to I Peter chapter 1....P Peter chapter 1 verse 22....
"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently (which is the word for hot..not cold) fervently love one another from the heart."

And Peter is saying that this love of the brethren is obeying the truth. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. ~~Purify~~ Purify your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.

Notice 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 7...In listing all the great virtues which should be part of our life as Christians, Peter writes in Vs 7: "and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, Christian love." Again it is brotherly love...expressing a friendship, a companionship with one another.

Now, let's come back to Hebrews 13. Vs 1 says: "Let love of the brethren continue." The nature of this love is friendship or companionship...a sharing of one's life, showing affection, treating another as though he or she were a member of your own family, simply because he or she is a believer. ^{A part of the} ~~Body of Christ~~

You know, one of the exciting things that I have experienced is that where ever I go I find other believers. Believers seem to know one another.

you are

my

Have you noticed that? You go to a strange store or another town, and ~~you are~~ in a market and you find yourself staring at someone. You feel funny. And they are looking at you...Do I know that person from somewhere...A conversation starts and all of a sudden it comes out....HAY, WE ARE CHRISTIANS....I think that is sort off exciting....No matter where you are it happens.

But do you know what the world is doing to us? It's getting us to stay in our homes and watch the ~~televi~~-tube..don't pay any attention to any one else. Go to your job...do your own thing...keep quite....stay to yourself....And it all becomes me..me...me; and mine...mine...mine. That's the philosophy. And it effects christians. We begin to have problems. We do need one another. "Let brotherly love continue and remain in your midst."

(2D) Now, the need for this love is expressed beautifully in Vs 2: "do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it."

(1E) Now, in understanding the need for brotherly love, I want you to see it, first of all, in terms of outreach... "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers." And by "outreach" I mean "out from your life"....Extending your life and ministry to others. Do not ~~W~~ neglect to show hospitality to stranger

Notice, it says: "do not neglect this"....Which means: that it is the easiest thing to do as a christian....It is easy to neglect this...

And that is the point: if you are really appling your life in commitment to Christ, one of the easiest things to do is to neglect hospitality to strangers....

Now, when you look at the words, "showing hospitality to strangers," you say, "You know, I don't even like to invite strangers into my house. I usually have a peep hole and say, 'who are you.'"

OK. This is not talking about strangers in the sense of unbelievers or someone you don't know..As a matter of fact, the root word is the word "guest". And a guest is usually one who is invited. But, as Christians would travel from place to place the regular Inns or Motels of that day were really not very safe places for a Christian to stay. They were rough places. ~~And so Christians~~ ~~and so Christians~~ ~~and so Christians~~

And so Christians throughout the Roman empire were encouraged to invite ~~it~~ other Christians to stay in their home.

E. H. H. H. In I John we have an example of a Christian who was rebuked by other Christians for refusing to allow a fellow believer to stay in his home. He was rebuked.

The word "hospitality" or "entertaining" is simply the word "to love strangers"...So, every time you see the word "hospitality" it is the root word "to love strangers."..And is is the same word found in Vs 1, "Brotherly Love." And the root of the word stranger is the word "guest." "Loving guest."

S. In terms of outreach, therefore, the Bible is telling us to go outside of our ~~own~~ immediate family and receive other christians as guest ^{without} our home. That is the application for today *New church people*
New people in Community

I Peter 4:9 says, "Use hospitality one to another without complaint." "Without complaint" meaning "don't grumble about it." You know, someone comes to visit you and you say, "Boy, it is great to have you."....Then, on the side you say to your wife, "I hope they don't stay to long."....Use hospitality without complaint.

The Bible says that if the love of Christ is in our hearts we are going to open up our lives and our homes to other Christians. "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers.

(2E) Secondly, the need for brotherly love is seen in terms of opportunity.

Vs 2 says, "for by ~~this~~ some have entertained angels without knowing it."

Does that mean that we are going to acturally have angeles in our homes?

YES.....I believe that is exactly what it means.....

But, also, it is referring to the blessings that will come your way simply by being hospitable. There are several examples in the Bible.

Abraham in Genesis 19.....Lot in Genese 19.....Giddeon in Judges 6.

mit All were visited by ~~in~~ angels....But, the application is the idea of unexpected blessings as a result of showing hospitality. You know, you never give as a christian without, somehow, God giving back.....

Unexpected blessings....I wonder, how many blessings are we missing by not showing hospitality....^{and} And the Bible is telling Christian to open up your lives to others. Be hospitable...have guest to your home...minister to one *you see a new person in church, or neighborhood, invite them to your home* another....WHY?....Because you are going to be amazed at what God is going to do through that in your own life. Unexpected blessings will come your way....

(3D) Now, let's talk for a moment about the necessity of ministering to others....Vs 3.."Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them: and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body."
(Who Paul is talking about.) - Christian who are thrown in prison because of their faith
 talking about the necessity of ministering to each other brings up *some* some severe problems.... *They who are in prison because they are believers*

(1E) Let's look at it, first of all, in terms of remembering those who are suffering or in difficult circumstances. Remember...don't forget...don't neglect. Well, how could the christian remember those in prison?

Easy...they could visit them. They could pray for them. They could meet needs by taking care of their families, etc... *Prayer*

It is saying, don't forget those who are believers in christ who are suffering and in difficult circumstances/ The word "ill-treated" is the word for suffering. Yes...we are to pray for them. But, also, do everything possible to show brotherly kindness. *Prison*

(2E) And in terms of relating to them in their suffering, notice, two phrases in this verse.

(1F) In Vs 3, it says "a though in prison with them". Your KJV says "bond with them"...What a great principle because in I Cor 12:26 we read that when one member suffers in the body all the members suffer with him. You see, we are together in Christ. We have been made one in the Lord. We share a common life.

The Bible says when one suffers all suffer. We are ~~not~~ bound with them in the Lord.....

(2F) And the second phrases which you should notice in terms of relating

Now, in relating to

Notice The phrase vs 3

to those who are suffering ~~says~~, "since you yourselves also are in the body."

~~Now~~, **is** that talking about the body of Christ?....NO..it is talking about your physical body.

The point is" Be understanding about others who suffer because you yourselves are not free from suffering. There could be similar troubles in your life in the future. And you will then need others to minister to you.

Boy, what a tremendous principle that is. We are not free from ~~difficulties~~ difficulties and trails and sufferings. It may come our way. And then we are going to need other christians to minister to us in our time of need.

I don't know whether you have noticed or not but America is really isolated in terms of suffering Christianity. ~~Now~~, we have our own ways of suffering...physical...emotional pressures when we try to witness...some are even thought of as wried or different...And Christians are declining in numbers, by the way, according to a recent report. ~~We are no longer a majority~~

~~We are not in the minor group?~~ Religious afiliation in American has dropped to an all time low of ~~60%~~ ^{54%}. That means that ~~46%~~ ^{46%} of Americans claim to having nothing to do with religion. And out-off that ~~60%~~ ^{54%} are all the forms of religion...not just Christianity. And myabe some day we will also

experience with so ~~many~~ ^{many} precious believers throughout the world, direct physical suffering for our faith. It is going on in other parts of the world. Why not the U.S. *But no one in the U.S. is being put into prison because of their faith. But it could happen.*

And that is why this is so important. While we have the opportunity of freedom, let's use it to minister to one another and to testify to our faith. Let's be fervent in and out of season, loving the brethren continually.. And by our love they(the unbelievers) will know that we are christians....



Love means

Not criticism

No being the worst for anyone