## **GATE School of Ministry [DC] Bible Study Notes**

**Module** : Gathering

<u>Session 2</u>: Gathered and Positioned to Hear - Part 2



Continued directly from Session 1

The act of gathering is necessary to receive and hear the proclaimed proceeding Word of God.

Gen 49:2a GATHER together and HEAR

Luke 5:15b crowds were GATHERING to HEAR

**Deut. 4:10a ASSEMBLE** the people that they may **HEAR** 

# PRINCIPLE 10: AT TIMES, GATHERINGS WILL HAVE AN UNUSUAL PROTRACTED APOSTOLIC INTENSITY.

Recall that at Ephesus, Paul spoke daily in the synagogue for a period of two years (Acts 19:10). To the Ephesian elders he said he had delivered to them the whole counsel of God within the space of three years, reasoning daily in public and from house to house (Acts 19:20, 27,31). This is intense by any standard. These believers had the spiritual capacity/stamina to engage God's Word on a profound level. I believe that as the end of the age nears, that God's people will have to have more protracted times of interaction with His declared Word through authentic apostles.

AT Troas, Paul spoke the Word of God literally for a whole day and night to those gathered. This was literally an all-night meeting, in which Paul probably spoke doctrine.

## Acts 20:7-12

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together. And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead. But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, Do not be troubled, for his life is in him. When he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left. They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.

'Many lamps' is obviously literal, but could be applied symbolically as well. Lamps represent the Word of God. Many lamps indicated an enhanced level of brightness or revelation from the Word. Hence Paul needed much time in which to dispense of the Word. This was also because he was going to leave them the following day. As time with key apostles who dispense grace through the Word becomes limited, so will gatherings in which they share become all of the more critical and intense. Saints in this environment need to have great spiritual stamina to receive the Word.

In a season wherein God is restoring greater accuracy to the Body of Christ, there comes a need to give more earnest attention to the Word of God, the basis for restoration of all truth. Such was the case in Nehemiah's day. During the exile in Babylon, the people of God had no or little access to the Scriptures. So after their return to Jerusalem, there was much to be restored to the nation spiritually. Ezra and Nehemiah played a vital role in this regard.

#### Nehemiah 8:1-3

- And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to **bring the book of the law of Moses** which the Lord had given to Israel
- Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all **who could** listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.
- He read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law
- Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand; and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam on his left hand.
- 5 Ezra **opened the book in the sight of all the people** for he was standing above all the people; and when **he opened it, all the people stood up**.
- Then Ezra blessed the Lord the great God. And all the people answered, **Amen**, **Amen!** while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.
- 7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place.
- 8 They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading

Ezra read the Word of God and explained it for approximately six hours, and the people were fully attentive to it. This is supernatural – a sign and wonder. Gatherings of this nature are critical when there is the restoration of a key doctrine, practice or emphasis in the global church. In the context of Nehemiah chapter 8, the Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles was restored to the nation. This was last observed in the days of Joshua. See Nehemiah 8:13-18, where LEADERS (Heads of Households) met to receive INSIGHT and INSTRUCTION for this.

Also, when they celebrated the Feast, the Word of God was read publicly everyday for seven consecutive days (Neh.8:18). I believe that we ought to have seasons of intense protracted engagement in the Word of the Lord.

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#### PRINCIPLE 11: THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF GATHERINGS MUST BE THE WORD OF GOD

Rehearse Sessions 8 and 9 in this series, viz. 'The Word of God in the House of God'.

Refer to Acts 20:7-12 quoted in 'Principle 10' above. The gathering's focus was the hearing of the Word. The power of the Lord in His word was so strong, that when Eutychus fell from a window ledge at about midnight, Paul raised him from the dead and, without losing stride, focus and intensity, continued speaking until day break the next morning. Paul seemingly did not draw undue focus and emphasis on the fact that a powerful display of divine supernatural power was just performed in that a man was raised from the dead. He rather simply continued with his main agenda, viz. the teaching of God's Word.

Consider also how a paralytic was healed in the context of Jesus teaching the Word.

Mark 2:1-2 When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them

Note here that Jesus' priority was the teaching of the Word of God. A paralytic was brought in through the roof and Jesus healed him, and exited the house to the seashore where he continued teaching.

Mark 2:13 He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them.

He was not distracted by His own expression of power to heal. Many today become sidetracked away from the main agenda of the House of God and are detoured by an obsession on signs and wonders. Miracles are part of the culture of the Kingdom of God, and we must heal the sick, cast out demons, etc. But there is currently a tendency to prioritise this as the main focus of gatherings to the total neglect of the impartation of principles from the Word of God.

Note also that whenever there is a priority on the teaching of the Word of God, the power of God will always manifest. Luke also records the account of the paralytic and points out that ...

Luke 5:17

On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.

And the power of the Lord was with him to heal

The relationship between the Word of God and the manifestation of the power of God will be explored in a subsequent study.

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# PRINCIPLE 12: THE NEED FOR LEADERS TO GATHER IN TIMES OF RESTORATION OF STRATEGIC DOCTRINE, SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY OR EMPHASES.

In reference to significant issues regarding direction and the configuring of the entire nation, God always addressed LEADERS first. Gatherings of strategic leaders is a prerequisite to them gaining greater insight into the Word of the Lord, as it prophetically unveils God's present intent and focus for the Body of Christ in the world .

Note in the book of Nehemiah chapter 8, the entire nation meets to hear the Word of the Lord on a particular day. But on the next day, only leaders met to receive INSIGHT into the Feast of Tabernacles, a practice lost for generations, and then also received INSTRUCTIONS as to how to implement and restore this practice to the nation.

#### **Nehemiah 8:13-18**

- Then on the **second day** the heads of fathers households of all the people, the priests and the Levites were **gathered to Ezra the scribe** that they might **gain insight into the words of the law.**
- 14 They found written in the law how the Lord had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month.
- So they **proclaimed and circulated a proclamation** in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written.
- So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim.
- 17 The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing.
- He read from the book of the law of God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly according to the ordinance

Again – God's strategic developments within the Church will be facilitated in and through leaders. Leaders need to meet regularly for GRACE impartation and spiritual development. Paul shared the whole counsel of God with the Ephesian elders. These would in turn dispense grace to their respective households of faith.

When God wants to transition Israel out from Egyptian slavery - the 'House of Bondage' - He communicates only with Moses, not the entire nation.

**Exod. 3:16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together** and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt.

[See also Numbers 10:4].

The regular gathering together of leaders is also necessary for the transfer of grace from the set-man or spiritual father to other leaders who function under him, to assist him in the task of providing spiritual oversight to a wider group. These leaders must operate within the same grace configuration and frequency as the set-man. For this to be realised, there must of necessity be regular times of engagement where all these meet together. At these meetings, not politics, but The WORD OF GOD must be taught. Moses was asked to gather the seventy elders and demonstrate before them how God communicates with him. In the context of this process the spirit on Moses was transferred to the seventy.

Num. 11:16,17

The LORD therefore said to Moses, "Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone

The constitution of this gathering is for impartation of grace and anointing to representative leadership that will be able be act vicariously or as an ambassador on behalf of the set-leader, so that they may function in the same frequency and power as he does. But note the environment in which impartation takes place - God clearly indicates to Moses that it occurs within the environment of God speaking to him. When strategic fathering leaders gather around an apostolic fathering grace from which they derive grace, and the apostolic father shares the Word - this is a visible demonstration of what he has received via God's communication with him.

Also, in the actual delivery of the teaching of the Word, there is prophetic and spontaneous speech as God speaks through His chosen representative. As those who listen attentively engage the Word released, there comes the impartation of the spirit of the apostolic fathering leader to other leaders under him. So grace is multiplied for the work of the Lord to be done effectively.

See also Josh 24:1; Chron. 23:1-3; Ezra 7:28

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# PRINCIPLE 13: GATHERING FACILITATES THE RAPID TRANSMISSION AND EQUALISATION OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

The circumcision issue that reared its head in the early church needed apostolic clarification (see Acts 15). Some held that Gentile believers needed to observe the practice of circumcision as the Jews did. The apostles and elders met to consider and clarify their position on this important issue. It was decided that circumcision need not be observed as a spiritual requirement, and this information needed to be distributed to all the churches. Paul and Barnabas were mandated to take this apostolic decree to every church. The fact that churches regularly gathered, facilitated a distribution of important doctrine with speed.

Gathering together, as demonstrated in Acts 15, facilitated the distribution of an apostolic report or decision on an important area of doctrine that had the potential to divide the early church. Once the

matter was clarified, there was an urgent need to disseminate the counsel and decision adopted by the apostles throughout the entire known region as quickly as possible, so as to bring doctrinal stability. Belief influences behaviour. The speed with which this was done was, amongst other things, because there was the strong element of gathering present in the churches.

Acts 15:30 So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

Consider also how the early church at Antioch were kept abreast as to regional apostolic growth and spiritual developments within Paul and Barnabas' ministry - and this was facilitated too, by their capacity to be assembled.

Acts 14:27 When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

Obviously today, we have modern systems of communications where we could easily and speedily distribute important information. These systems must be used as well, but they cannot be used as an excuse for not physically meeting together.

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#### PRINCIPLE 14: GATHERING ACTIVATES THE MIGHT OF GOD

The Body of Christ is organised by tribal affiliation. Two problems plagued the church, viz. division and disorganisation. We work in our various sectors, yet we are one - united. In the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, Nehemiah realised that the workers were positioned too far from each other, and so hence legislated that in the face of an enemy attack on a specific part of a wall, a prophetic trumpet was to be blown so that men could rally and assemble there to ward off an enemy attack, and thus consolidate and enforce the building endeavour which was being threatened.

Neh 4:19,20
I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall far from one another. "At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

The same should hold true for the Body of Christ. At short notice, we should be able to be summoned and support one another, especially in the face of challenges we might face that threaten to inhibit or abort the progress of God's will attendant with specific sectors of the Body of Christ. This is true at a local church and city church level, irrespective of which cluster of spiritual families we relate to.

Note Nehemiah is convinced "God will fight for us" - but only when there is an assembling or rallying together. Our assembling together will activate the right hand of our God to do extraordinary things for us.

# PRINCIPLE 15: GATHERING CREATES A SOUND IN THE SPIRIT SIGNALLING ENTRY INTO A NEW DIVINE PHASE

Micah 2:12 "I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture They will be noisy with men.

'Noisy' - indicates the sound of many hooves of sheep gathered in a fold. Gathering creates a sound that is impossible to create singularly. Note two things, which are prerequisite to this, viz.

- (1) there is an assembly or gathering;
- (2) this flock is in the midst of pasture, which is symbolic of nourishment from the Word of God.

A 'sound' or frequency is generated - an impact. 'Sound' also alludes to the announcement of a brand new era or season in God.

The next verse indicates the effect on the leader and the people:

Micah 2:13 "The breaker goes up before them; They break out, pass through the gate and go out by it. So their king goes on before them, And the LORD at their head."

Every accurately constituted gathering has the potential of activating the leader into the next level of God's purposes for the leaders life and for that of the group gathered under his oversight. Recall how that the gathering of the tribes unto David at Hebron prepared him for his next elevation to Zion, a place from which his kingship rule was to be expressed and executed.

Every gathering 'in HIS name' - in accordance with His nature and purpose - emits a sound in the spirit. The 120 were gathered as one on the day of Pentecost and it activated the release of a 'SOUND' like a mighty rushing wind from heaven. New seasons in God are ignited!

## PRINCIPLE 16: GATHERING MUST HAVE PURITY OF MOTIVE

Gathering must be accurate, Holy Spirit induced, built on pure motives. Otherwise, God Himself will instigate a scattering process that divides them (e.g. as at the Tower of Babel). He will do so by confusing their languages, so that they cannot as the scripture says, "speak the same thing" (1 Cor.1:10).

Acts 1:15 At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), ...

#### PRINCIPLE 17: GATHERING ENHANCES CORPORATE PRAYER POWER

Act 12:12 And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

Gathering together facilitates and accentuates the power of corporate agreement in prayer.

## PRINCIPLE 18: GATHERING AS ONE - A STANDARD BY WHICH GOD WILL JUDGE

Isaiah 11:12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

Part of the purpose of the gathering is so that God can set up a standard of divine principles within the life of His sons. God cannot judge men without a standard. The united church who gathers as one becomes the standard by which everything is measured.

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#### PRINCIPLE 19: GATHERING REMOVES REPROACH

## Zeph. 3:18-20

- 18 "I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts-- They came from you, O Zion; *The reproach of exile* is a burden on them.
- 19 "Behold, I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors, I will save the lame And gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth.
- "At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the LORD.

Gathering is the context in and through which God removes any reproach or shame attendant with His people.

## PRINCIPLE 20: GOD GATHERS MANY TO THE REMNANT ALREADY GATHERED

<u>Isaiah 56:8</u> The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered."

The gathering process already afoot is reflective of the compassion of God – (see Isaiah 54:7,8). Note that He gathers sons to those sons 'already gathered'. Never underestimate the power of oneness within a few – this is the remnant principle. The gathering of the first fruit remnant will be catalytic in its effect.

#### The Representative Remnant

Dew, amongst other things, is symbolic of ONE-NESS (Psalm 133) - which implies an ease of the gathering process.

Micah 5:7 Then the remnant of Jacob will be among many peoples like dew from the LORD, Like

showers on vegetation Which do <u>not wait for man</u> Or <u>delay for the sons of men.</u>

And the rest of Jacob will be among the mass of peoples like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass, which may not be kept back by man, or be waiting for the

sons of men.

**ERV** But those from Jacob who are still living and scattered among the nations

Will be <u>like dew from the LORD</u> that does <u>not depend on anyone</u>. They will

be like rain on the grass that does not wait for anyone.

We need to develop a standard of unity and one-ness within a core group (remnant) that will act as an infectious yeast to positively influence and impact the rest. This is the remnant principle. Note here in the verse above that the 'rest from Jacob' will be among 'MANY people' like dew from the Lord. So you have a small group manifesting all the qualities of DEW – and these are positioned 'among' many people/ among the mass of people/ among nations.

DEW is also indicative of the Word of God. A gathered people must ultimately engage the Word of God and ultimately become the embodiment of that Word.

Deut. 32:2 "Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew,

As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb.

There is a level of God's speaking that only comes to a united people. On the day of Pentecost, they were all in one place, in one accord. Also - Acts 13:1-3: Prophets and Teachers of Antioch ministering to the Lord --- and God spoke.

**Teaching (Doctrine)** = **legach** = something received, instruction

**Speech** = imrah = commandment, voice

Teaching or Doctrine relates to the broad framework of belief. 'Speech' – 'voice' refers to the specific speaking of the Lord in a specific context, time or to specific persons. His speech is like dew!

Back to the remnant principle:

Act 2:1,2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were <u>all together</u> in <u>one place</u>. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it <u>filled the</u> whole house where they were sitting.

On the day of Pentecost - all it took was just 120 people in one accord, in one place, strategically positioned on a right day - 'when the day of Pentecost had fully come'. God did not wait for the entire nation to be gathered in unity - all He needed was a sufficiently representative remnant. A brand new era in church history - Pentecost was birthed. Similarly, we too, if we have a sufficiently representative expression of oneness in our churches and then in our city, we could activate the initialisation of significant moves of God for the earth.

## PRINCIPLE 21: GATHERING IN ITS MANY FORMS IS A PROPHETIC CERTAINTY

#### Isaiah 43:5-9

- 5 "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west.
- 6 "I will say to the north, 'Give *them* up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold *them* back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth,
- 7 Everyone who is <u>called by My name</u>, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."
- 8 Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, And the deaf, even though they have ears.
- 9a All the nations have gathered together So that the peoples may be assembled.

Note again: - Sons gather; these sons are called by His name (Father).

This is a prophetic promise and decree that sons globally will gather within the context of accurate households of faith headed by authentic spiritual fathers.

Note verse 9a: the nations gather to be assembled.

**Gather** = qabats = to grasp, that is, collect: - assemble (selves), gather (bring)

Assemble = 'asaph = to gather for any purpose; hence to receive, take away, that

is, remove; also implies the removal of reproach

Sons which are held in captivity - blind and deaf even though they have eyes and ears - having the structural and all the spiritual capacity - yet untapped - represent a deficiency of some kind. These captive sons whose spiritual potential is being kept capped, are being called out as part of a general and powerful call of God for His church to 'gather together'.

The scripture above also alludes to the exodus of people from inaccurate places of religion that bind and imprison God's purpose and potential in them. Take a moment to pray prophetically using the principle embedded in Isaiah 43:5-9 quoted above.

## Consider also:

<u>Isa 60:4</u>
"Lift up your eyes round about and see; They all **gather together**, they come to you.

Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be carried in the arms.

#### QUESTIONS AND ISSUES FOR PERSONAL REVIEW AND GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1. What should be the primary focus at the gatherings of families of God's people in their respective groupings/jurisdictions?
- 2. Is there a biblical basis for having seasons of protracted times of intensified apostolic instruction? If so, suggest in what instances these occur.
- 3. Why and when is it essential for leaders/spiritual fathers for meet/gather?
- 4. How does the element of a gathered group facilitate the swift and efficient transmission of key apostolic doctrine?
- 5. From your study of this session, extrapolate a few hindrances to an authentic Christ-like gathering process.

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