

Pastors' gatherings

Well run pastors' gatherings can release God's power and blessing over a town, city, and nation (Colossians 2:13-15). They also fulfil important purposes, including *fellowship, training, mutual encouragement, prayer*, and sharing information about upcoming *special events*.

Unfortunately, pastors' gatherings have ceased in some places or become largely ineffective. This may be because they are given low priority in pastors' schedules, or because critical and competitive attitudes have weakened them.

In His prayer in John 17, Jesus emphasises the need for oneness within His Body, the church. The word used for 'one' highlights the importance of unity. Today, the church can become divided over minor differences, even though we share so many essential beliefs. Let us focus on what unites us rather than what separates us.

When we gather, we must avoid imposing our own fixed traditions of the way we worship or pray. Instead, we should gently seek inclusive ways of worshipping and praying together. In doing so, we help fulfil the Lord's prayer that we may be 'one' in Spirit.

'My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me' John 17:20-22.

'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!' Psalm 133:1.

Pastors are like the Old Testament 'watchmen' called to alert God's people for spiritual battle. I have seen God's people strengthened and protected when pastors from different traditions unite. In my travels, particularly in South America, I have witnessed spiritual strongholds broken as pastors led their communities with one purpose, resulting in spiritual renewal and many people coming to know the Lord. God's power was released as men and women from different traditions gathered for heartfelt worship and fervent prayer.

Different Pastors' gatherings are at differing levels of trust and interaction. Some Associations just prefer to meet for lunch once a month. If that is the case, then why not have one pastor 'tell his/her story'. Have a different pastor for each month. Understanding where each person comes from, helps to build up trust.