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**STUDY GROUP (1st – 6th January 2024)**

**HOW TO BE A BLESSING TO YOUR LOCAL CHURCH CHAPTER 12**

**QESTION 1**

The local church is the gathering of believers in a particular place, at particular times as specified by the leadership of that local assembly

*1 Corinthians 14:23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? In these gatherings there would be activities performed therein by believers (both spiritual and natural).*

We see instances of this in the book of Acts

*Acts 2:42-46 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Vs43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. Vs44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; Vs45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. Vs46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*

From the above texts, it is evident that believers gathered To be taught by the Apostles,To pray, To fellowship.

From Paul's words in his first letter to Timothy

*1 Timothy 3:14-15 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: Vs15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

In essence, there is a way we all (believers) ought to conduct ourselves in the local assembly. Reading in context of Paul's explanation, he gave Timothy instructions concerning appointing believers to function is position of leadership (the office of the Bishop and deacon) in the local assembly, These were the same people he spoke about in Chapter 5

*1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine*.

He referred to them as "***elders***", who labour in word, and doctrine, Luke also wrote that Paul taught the same truth in the book of Acts

*Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church...Vs2 8 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

Peter also did in his first Epistle

*1st Peter 5:1-5 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Vs2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Vs3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. Vs4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Vs5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

**In essence, in the local assembly, there are those (the elders - the Bishops, and deacons who have been placed in positions of authority, by the leadership of that local assembly, from Paul, and Peter's explanation, it is evident that these people have spiritual oversight given to them by the leadership of the local assembly to teach (Feed) fellow believers.**

*1st Peter 5:1-5 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Vs2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Vs3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. Vs4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Vs5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

Observing Peter's words carefully; we can say that in other words, those who have been given the privilege by the leadership of the local assembly, to teach fellow believers, were taught and instructed by the Apostles, to submit to the leadership (the elder - Pastor) of the local assembly

Paul also taught concerning submission in his letters

*1st Corinthians 16:16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.*

Here it was for the believers in Corinth to submit to the leadership (those who labour) in the local assembly

*Ephesians 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

Here, Paul instructed believers at Ephesus, submit to one another, which is a display of our reverence to God. Now, the words ***'submit'*** and ***'submitting'*** in the texts above were translated from the Greek word ***'hupotasso***.' It ***implies to subject, yield oneself to another's control.***

**Therefore, one of such important attitudes in which I am a blessing to my local Church submission.**

The writer of the book of Hebrews taught the same truth in his Epistle

*Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

The word "***submit***" here, was translated from the Greek word ***'hupeiko***.', which ***implies to surrender; not to resist authority.***

In Paul's words in his letter to the Thessalonians

*1st Thessalonians 5:12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; Vs 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

The word ***'know'*** means to ***recognize***. In context, the parameters for recognition are to identify those who labour and are over us in the Lord, and admonish us.

The word ***'work'*** was translated from the Greek word ***'ergo’***, It ***is a word related to labour.***

In other words, Paul's explanation here, refers to those in authority. The scriptures instruct believers to submit to men in authority because of their work. This should be done in love. It implies that the parameters for the submission of believers to spiritual authority is their labour, and this should be done in love

***Thus in answering the vital question that comes to the fore of why is there need for submission?***

**In every institution whether spiritual or secular; authority is often evident. Authority implies to be in control or in charge. Hence in every institution there is always a leader; one who is in charge. Someone must have the final say in order for orderliness, peace and unity of purpose to prevail.**

**In the Marital Relationship**

*1st Corinthians 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.*

*Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Vs 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Vs 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Vs 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

*Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

**Clearly, the man is the head of marital relationship. Paul teaches the man to love his wife, and the submission of the wife to the husband in the marital institution as a godly act.**

Peter also wrote in the same light.

*1st Peter 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; Vs 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Vs 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; Vs 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Vs 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Vs 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.*

**Peter teaches wives to be in subjection to their own husbands. He used Sarah as an example of a woman who was in subjection to her husband and even called him lord.**

From Paul and Peter's explanation, in the marital institution the man is to love his wife, and the wife is to be in submission to her husband, which ought to be evident in all she does, because her husband is the head of that union.

**In the Parent - Children Relationship**

*Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*

*Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Vs 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

**In this institution, parents by the virtue of birthing a child, and caring for the natural needs of the child, exercise authority over the child. The child's responsibility is to be respectful and submissive to the parent's guidance.**

**In the Master - Servant Relationship**

**This institution is birthed by the virtue of working or serving under someone either to earn an income or for the acquisition of skills. For instance, an apprentice serves under a master to acquire skills for a period of time, so he also can be a master at such a skill.**

*Colossians 3:22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:*

Servants are instructed to serve with singleness of heart and also be in subjection to their masters. Likewise, in the local assembly, we are taught and instructed by the Apostles to submit to spiritual authority of the leadership in that assembly, Jesus is the head of the church

*1 Corinthians 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.*

*Ephesians 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Vs 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*

*Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ*

*Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body*

The word ***'head'*** here, was translated from the Greek word ***'kephale***,' which ***implies authority***, it also implies source. Thus, this clearly implies that all authority flows from him, he has set authority in the local church as well. That is, Christ has put men in leadership in church, hence, in the local church there is spiritual authority. And the reason for spiritual authority in the local assembly is orderliness.

*1st Corinthians 11:34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

*1 Corinthians 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.*

The writers of the synoptic accounts, helps to see the importance of this

*Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Vs 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Clearly, the head of Church placed believers in charge of the spiritual growth of other believers.

*John 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. Vs 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Vs 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

The word ***'feed'*** in verse 16 was translated from the Greek word ***'poimaino'*** which ***implies to shepherd. It depicts responsibility and consequently authority.*** This was the same word that Peter taught with in his first Epistle

*1 Peter 5:1-4 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Vs2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Vs3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. Vs4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

And Paul in the book of Acts

*Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

**Therefore, the local church is an assembly of believers with men placed over us. These men are put in charge of believers to teach, which also involves instructions, corrections and rebuke in view of bringing believers to spiritual maturity. Thus, spiritual growth is ministered to us by Men.**

**QUESTION 2**

There is need for accountability in the local church, and we have examples from the New&Old Testament books as concerning this;

*1 Samuel 15:14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? Vs 15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Vs 16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. Vs 17 And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? Vs 18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Vs 19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? Vs 20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. Vs 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. Vs 22 And Samuel said, Hath 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 hearken than the fat of rams. Vs 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*

**The lesson to be drawn from the above example was that Saul modified the instruction he was given. This could not have been a sudden action. This could have been a thought he nurtured for a while in his heart. In practical terms today, lack of submission is seen when a member of the church begins to scout for other extraneous materials or teachings outside of what he (she) has been taught in the local assembly.**

This was what happened at Colossae

*Colossians 2:8-23 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Vs9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Vs10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: Vs11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Vs12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. Vs13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Vs14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; Vs15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Vs16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days Vs17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Vs18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, Vs19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Vs20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, Vs21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Vs22 Which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Vs23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.*

Clearly, they had been infected with syncretized knowledge. They were opened and consequently exposed to strange doctrines. Hence, Paul had to caution them. Believers, therefore, are to be vigilant and prevent such influence from spreading in the local assembly.

**a) Joshua**

*Exodus 24:13 And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.*

The word ***'minister' refers to one who serves another.*** Joshua was the one who served Moses. God's word shows us the sort of example he was when Moses was alive.

*Joshua 1:1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Vs 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Vs 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. Vs 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. Vs 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Vs 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.*

Joshua was faithful to Moses, and followed him closely, Joshua didn’t devise a means for himself, he was accountable unto Moses.

**b) Samuel**

Samuel was also a model of submission in the Old Testament books of the bible.

*1 Samuel 3:2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; Vs 3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; Vs 4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. Vs 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am 1; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. Vs 6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am 1; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Vs 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. Vs 8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Vs 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth, So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Vs 10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.*

It is evident from the verses above that Samuel was used to the voice of Eli. He was an example of one who was submissive to the voice and training of his leader such that God spoke using the voice he was used to. Samuel could have missed hearing God if he was given to hearing or listening to different authors and speakers. He most likely would not have run to Eli based on the numerous options he might have had.

**Despite Eli's shortcomings, he was still the one through whom Samuel answered the call to the ministry, Believers, in submission, are to identify where God has placed them and choose to stay and submit to the authority there.**

**c) Elisha**

*1st Kings 19:19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. Vs 20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? Vs 21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.*

Elisha served Elijah faithfully and was in submission to him. However, scriptures also speak of Gehazi who was not exemplary.

*2nd Kings 5:20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. Vs 21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?... Vs 25 But he went in, and stood before his master, And Elisha said unto him, whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.*

Gehazi lied to Elisha and did not yield in obedience to his instructions.

**The art of submission is therefore not a suggestion but a clear instruction in the scriptures. As members of the flock of Christ, believers are therefore expected to trust and submit to the leadership of the Pastor of the Local church. By doing so, they are being a huge blessing.**

**d) The Seven, chosen to serve tables**

*Acts 6:1-3 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Vs2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables, Vs3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

**Observe what the Apostles said...seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. The phrase "look ye out among you" clearly implies that they were known in the local assembly as men of honest report, this means that they were examples of those who were accountable in the church.**

**e) Philip**

*Acts 8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Vs 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. Vs 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.*

Although he was not sent to preach in Samaria, the apostles in Jerusalem were aware of what he was doing.

*Acts 8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Vs 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: Vs 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)*

**Irrespective of the height Philip had gotten to in ministry, he didn’t lose the fact that he should be accountable about his activities in his ministry, he carried his leaders along with the work of the ministry.**

**f) Barnabas**

*Acts 4:36-37 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Vs37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

*Acts 11:22-24 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Vs23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. Vs24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

Observe how Luke described him...a good man and full of faith. This explains why the Apostles could entrust him with work of the ministry

**g) Philemon**

*Philemon 1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer,... Vs 7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother... Vs 21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.*

Historically, the penalty of a runaway slave like Onesimus was a death sentence, yet Paul could trust in Philemon's obedience. The mode of Paul's expression showed that he had total confidence in what Philemon would do.

*Philemon 1:21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.*

**Paul was confident that Philemon would do the right thing by accepting Onesimus, because Philemon was accountable to Paul.**

**g) Timothy**

Paul was so confident of Timothy's adherence to instructions.

*Philippians 2:19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. Vs 20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. Vs 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. Vs 22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.*

Timothy was a minister who served Paul diligently in the gospel and was in submission to him. Paul also gave several instructions to him because he was certain of his obedience (many of which have been examined earlier in this study).

**Therefore, in conclusion, to be a blessing to our local church, it is imperative to understand that submission to spiritual authority is of utmost importance in the local church. It helps us to receive the training of the spirit from those who oversee us. Submission provides an avenue to be corrected and instructed, so there can be orderliness both in the gathering of believers and also in our lives. No one gets to choose who to submit to, authority flows from Christ the head of the church and he alone decides who to bestow leadership to in the local church. The believer must therefore submit to a local church and be accountable there.**

**QUESTION 3**

In the epistles we have letters written to tackle peculiar issues addressed with respect to the church, we have instances of this in;

**a) At Corinth**

Taking a brief survey about the church in Corinth, the history of that church can be seen from Acts 18.

*Acts 18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; Vs 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. Vs 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. Vs 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. Vs 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. Vs 6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. Vs 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. Vs 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. Vs 9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: Vs 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. Vs 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. Vs 12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, Vs 13 Saying. This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. Vs 14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: Vs 15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. Vs 16 And he drove them from the judgment seat. Vs 17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before, the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things. Vs 18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.*

Paul started and established the church in Corinth, where he met Priscilla and Aquila, Justus, Crispus and Sosthenes, his first letter to them shows that they were exposed to the influence of other ministers who taught and preached in Corinth.

*2nd Corinthians 11:1-7 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. Vs2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. Vs3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Vs4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. Vs5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. Vs6 But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been throughly made manifest among you in all things. Vs7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?*

**Thus, a major cause of division in the local church is the allowance of multiple influences. Hence, when believers expose themselves to other ministers out of curiosity, outside the Pastor or minister in their direct local churches, it results in multiple belief systems and practices.**

They even questioned Paul's Apostleship

*1 Corinthians 9:1-3 Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? Vs2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Vs3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,*

**This was a result of multiple influences in the church in Corinth. Hence, Paul had to remind them of the fact that he is their father (spiritually speaking).**

**1st Corinthians 4:14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. Vs 15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Vs 16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. Vs 17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.**

Therefore, a local church member must learn to follow his Pastor faithfully and loyally. Joining online groups outside local church platforms (e.g. WhatsApp church groups) leads to being exposed to multiple influences, which can be detrimental to one's spiritual growth.

**b) At Colossae**

*Colossians 2:4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

Historical accounts indicate that Paul had not been in Colossae before he wrote this letter. However, he emphatically warns them not to be beguiled with enticing words (teachings). This explains why he taught further in context

*Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

The word ***'beware'*** was translated from the Greek word ***'paralogizomai***.' It ***implies to act beside oneself. James taught with the same word in his Epistle.***

*James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearersonly, deceiving your own selves.*

**This shows that lack of submission to the teaching of those God has placed over us in the local assembly, would lead to acting beside oneself. Lack of submission does not necessarily have to be in the big things; it could just be as subtle as modifying an instruction given or looking for easier ways to carry out instructions from the leadership of the local assembly**

**QUESTION 4**

A believer has certain responsibility to authority in the Local church, which includes;

**To Identify Men in Authority in the Local Church.**

Paul teaches this in his letters;

*1st Thesalonians 5:12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; Vs 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Vs 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.*

**Those who labour and admonish you.**

He taught similarly in his first letter to Timothy

*1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

**Those who labour in word and doctrine.**

The writer of Hebrews also

*Hebrews 13:7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

**Those who speak the word of God to us.**

From the above texts, it is evident that those who arduously feed and nurture us with God's word are those being spoken of. This shows that one who does not have a local church or is not consistent with the gathering of believers would have a hard time recognizing who these people are, and also find it difficult to grow spiritually. The pattern of the scriptures therefore confirms that a believer ought to have a local church, where we submit to the authority of the leadership (of that local assembly) who have the responsibility from the Lord Jesus, to feed us with the word, to the end that we grow spiritually.

Therefore, to be a blessing to our local church, it is imperative to understand how the scriptures instruct to act towards such men.

**We must honour**

It is important to know that 'honour' plays an important role in submission.

*1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

The word ***'honour*** was translated from the Greek word ***'time***,' it ***implies to place value on or show reverence. That is, to treat as special or uncommon.***

***1 Thessalonians 5:13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.***

It is impossible to be in submission to what is not valued because submission starts from the heart. When submission is not from the heart it is hypocritical and eye service. Therefore, honour precedes submission and for men who oversee our lives it must be doubled, that is, honour to these men should supersede honour for other men. It must be noted that a believer's attitude and manner to leadership shows attitude and manner to God's word.

**Accountability**

Accountability is a very crucial conduct in submission.

***Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.***

It involves taking the consent of one's Pastor (shepherd; leader) when making crucial life decisions. It depicts transparency. Anyone who is submissive to his local church would be accountable. Accountability does not only show honour and respect it, also makes the work of our leaders easier since they are also to give account of our lives to God.

**Obedience**

*Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

We are to specifically obey and submit to our spiritual leaders and not be unruly. Obedience would mean, to do what you are told, when and how you were told. In essence, partial disobedience, that is 99.9% obedience is disobedience.

The scriptures warn concerning being unruly

*1st Thessalonians 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.*

The word ***'unruly*** *depicts the opposite of submission and* there are different lessons from the scriptures.