

2017 - SYNOD THEME: "Christian Fellowship", 1

John 1:3 - 7

It is necessary for us to have in-depth knowledge of the two words in our theme. We shall therefore define who is a Christian? And what is Fellowship?

Christian – This name, from very early times is the distinctive title of the followers of Jesus Christ, it occurred only thrice in New Testament (Acts 11:26, 26:28 and 1 Pet.4:16).

1. **Time and place of origin** – Our only information on this point comes from Acts 11:26. It was in Antioch, and in connection with the mission of Barnabas and Saul to that city, that the name arose. It has some-times been suggested that the infrequent use of 'Christian' in the New Testament points to a considerably later origin, and that the author of Acts had no better reason for assigning it to so early a date than the fact that the founding of the first Gentile church appeared to him to be an appropriate occasion for its coming into use. But apart from St. Luke's well-established claim, as the historian of Christ and early Christianity, to have traced the course of all things accurately from the first, 'his own non-employment of the word as a general designation for the disciples of Christ suggests that he had no reason other than a genuine historical one for referring to the origin of the name at all.
2. **Authors of the name** – (1) It is exceedingly un-likely that it was originally adopted by the Christians themselves. As the New Testament shows, they were in the habit of using other designations – 'the disciples' (Acts 11:26 and passim), 'the brethren' Acts 9:30, Rom.16:14 and constantly), 'the elect' (Rom.8:33, Col.3:12), 'the saints' (Acts 9:13, Rom.12:13), 'believers' (Acts 5:14, 1 Tim.4:12), 'the Way' (Acts 9:2, Acts 19:9). But in New Testament times we never find them calling themselves Christians. In Acts 26:28, it is king Agrippa who employs the name. And though in 1 Pet.4:16, it comes from the pen of an Apostle, the context shows that he is using it as a term of accusation on the lips of the Church's enemies. (2) It cannot have been applied to the followers of Jesus by the Jews. The Jews believed in 'the Christ,' i.e. 'the Anointed One,' the Messiah; and they ardently looked for Him to come. But it was their passionate contention that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Christ. To call His followers Christians was the last thing they would have thought of doing. They referred to them contemptuously as 'this sect' (Acts 28:22, cf 24:5, 14), and when contempt passed into hatred they called them 'Nazarenes' (Acts 24:5, cf. John 1:46). It is true that Agrippa, a Jewish king, makes use of the name; but this was nearly 20 years after, and when, in that Roman world with which he lived in close relations, it had become the recognized designation of the new faith. (3) Almost certainly the name owed its origin to the non-Christian Gentiles of Antioch. As these Anti-ochenes saw Barnabas and Saul standing day by day in the market-place or at the corners of the streets, and proclaiming that the Christ had come and that Jesus was the Christ, they caught up the word without understanding it, and bestowed the name of 'Christians' on these preachers and their followers. Probably, it was given, not as a mere nickname, but as a term of convenience. Yet, doubtless it carried with it a suggestion of contempt, and so may be compared to such titles as 'Puritan' and 'Methodist' originally applied by those who stood outside of the spiritual movements which the names were meant to characterize.
3. **The spread of the name** – Originating in this casual way, the name took deep root in the soil of human speech, and the three passages of the New Testament in which it occurs show how widely

it had spread within the course of a single generation. In Acts 26:28, we find it on the lips of a Jewish ruler, speaking in Caesarea before an audience of Roman officials and within 20 years later St. Peter writes to 'the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia' (1 Pet.1:1); and, without suggesting that 'Christian' was a name which the church had yet adopted as its own, he assumes that it was perfectly familiar to the 'elect' themselves over a vast region of the Dispersion; and further implies that by this time, the time probably of Nero's persecution (A.S.64). to be called a Christian was equivalent to being liable to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ (4:16). It was later still that St. Luke wrote the Book of Acts; and when he says that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26), he evidently means that this was a name by which they were now commonly known, though, his own usage does not suggest that they had even yet assumed it themselves.

Outside of the New Testament we find Tacitus and Suetonius testifying that the designation Christian (or 'Chrestian') was popularly used in Rome at the time of the Neronian persecution; while from Pliny, early in the 2nd century, we learn that by his day it was employed in Roman courts of law. 'Are you a Christian?' was the question he was himself accustomed to put to persons brought before him on a charge of being followers of Christ. By the time of Polycarp's martyrdom (soon after the middle of the 2nd century), the term of accusation and cross-examination has become one of joyful profession. 'I am a Christian' was Polycarp's repeated answer to those who urged him to recant. It was natural that those who were called 'to suffer as Christians' should come to glory in the name that brought the call and the opportunity to confess Christ. And so a name given by the outside world in a casual fashion was adopted by the Church as a title of glory and pride.

4. ***The meaning attached to the name*** – The original meaning was simply 'a follower of Christ.' The Antiochenes did not know who this Christ was of whom the preachers spoke; so little did they know that they mistook for a proper name what was really a designation of Jesus. But, taking it to be His personal name, they called Christ's disciples 'Christians,' just as Pompey's followers had been called 'Pompeians,' or the adherents of herod's dynasty 'Herodians.' No doubt they used the word with a touch of good-humoured contempt – the Christians were the followers of somebody or other called Christ. It is contempt again, but of an intenser kind, that seems to be conveyed by Agrippa's words to St. Paul, 'With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian!' (Ac 26:28). In 1 Peter a darker shadow has fallen upon the name. Nero has made it criminal to be a Christian, and the word is now one not of scorn merely, but of hatred and fear. The State ranks a Christian with murderers and thieves and other malefactors (cf. 1 Pet.4:14 with v.15). On its adoption by the church, deeper meanings began to be read into it. It testified to the dignity of the Church's Lord – 'the Anointed One,' the rightful King of that Kingdom which hath no end. It proclaimed the privileges that belonged to Christians themselves; for they too were anointed with the oil of God to be a holy generation, a royal priesthood. Moreover, in Greek the word Christos ('anointed') suggested the more familiar word chrestos ('gracious'). The Christians were often misnamed 'Chrestians' from an idea that the founder of their religion was 'one Chrestos.' And this heathen blunder conveyed a happy and beautiful suggestion. It is possible that St. Peter himself is playing on the word 'Christ' when he writes (1 Pet.2:3), 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious (chrestos).' And by and by we find Tertullian reminding the enemies of the Church that the very name 'Chrestians,' which they gave to Christ's people in error, is one that speaks of sweetness and benignity.

5. ***The historical significance of the name*** – (1) It marked the distinct emergence of Christianity from Judaism, and the recognition of its right to a separate place among the religions of the world. Hitherto, to outsiders, Christianity had been only a Jewish sect (cf. the words of Gallio, Acts 18:14, 15), nor had the first Apostles themselves dreamt of breaking away from synagogue and Temple. But the Antiochenes saw that Christ's disciples must be distinguished from the Jews and put into a category of their own. They understood, however dimly, that a new religion had sprung up on the earth, and by giving its followers this new name, they helped to quicken in the mind of the Church itself the consciousness of a separate existence. (2) It marked the fact, not heretofore realized, that Christianity was a religion for the Gentiles. Probably it was because the missionaries to Antioch not only preached Christ, but preached Him 'unto the Greeks also' (Acts 11:20), that the inhabitants discerned in these men the heralds of a new faith. It was not the way of Jewish Rabbis to proffer Judaism to Greeks in the market-place. Christianity appeared in Antioch as a universal religion, making no distinction between Jew and Gentile. (3) It is not without significance that it was first in Antioch that the Christians received this name. It shows how the Church's centre of gravity was shifting. Up to this time Christians as well as Jews looked to Jerusalem in everything as the mother of them all. But Jerusalem was not fitted to be the chief city of a universal faith. Paul saw this clearly – helped to it without doubt by his experiences at this very time. And so Antioch became the headquarters of aggressive Christianity in the early Apostolic age (13:1ff, 14:26f, 15:1ff, 22ff, 35ff, 18:22ff). It served as a stepping-stone for that movement, inevitable from the day when Christianity was first preached unto the Gentiles, which by and by made Rome, the metropolis of the world and mother-city also of the universal Church. (4) The name marked the fact that Christianity was not the religion of a book or a dogma, an idea or an institution, but a faith that centred in a Person. The men of Antioch were mistaken when they supposed that Christ was a personal name, but they made no mistake in thinking that He whose name they took to be Christos was the foundation-stone of this new faith. By calling the disciples Christians they became unconscious prophets of the truth that Christianity, whether regarded from the side of historical revelation or of personal experience, is all summed up in the Person of Jesus Christ.

FELLOWSHIP: The word fellowship means friendly association, companionship and number of persons associated together, group or society or position of a college fellowship. The aforesaid definitions give a note of communion. It means people or group or society who associates together with a common philosophy of life, with a common hope, goal and destiny. You will agree with me then that the fellowship we are talking about connotes unity. (Gr. Koinonia), - In EV koinonia is tr. 'communion' in only 3 passages (1 Cor.10:16, 2 Cor.6:14, 13:14), while it is frequently rendered '**fellowship**' (AV 12, RV 15 times), and twice 'contribution' or 'distribution' (Ro.15:26, 2 Cor.9:13 [RV has 'contrib.' in both cases; AV 'contrib.' in the first passage, 'distrib.' in the second]). But it is 'communion' that brings us nearest to the original, and sets us in the path of the right interpretation of the word on every occasion when it is used in the New Testament. The word 'fellowship' is the Greek word koinonia. So, in this piece we shall use both words, koinonia and fellowship interchangeably.

Koinonia comes from an adj. which means 'common,' and, like 'communion,' its literal meaning is a common participation or sharing in anything. Similarly, in the NT the concrete noun koinonos is used of a partner in the ownership of a fishing-boat (Lk.5:10); the verb koinonein of sharing something with another, whether by way of giving (Ro.12:13, Gal.6:6) or of receiving (Ro.15:27, 1 Ti.5:22); and the adj. koinonikos (1 Ti.6:18) is rendered 'willing to communicate.'

1. Koinonia meets us first in Acts 2:42, where RV as well as AV obscures the meaning not only by using the word 'fellowship,' but by omitting the def. article. The verse ought to read, 'And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and the communion, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.' And the meaning of 'communion' in this case can hardly be doubtful. The reference evidently is to that 'having all things in common' which is referred to immediately after (v.44f.), and the nature and extent of which St. Luke explains more fully at a later stage (4:32 – 5:4). It appears that 'the communion' was the regular expression for that '**community of goods**' which was so marked a feature of the Christianity of the first days, and which owed its origin not only to the unselfish enthusiasm of that Pentecostal period and the expectation of the Lord's immediate return, but to the actual needs of the poorer Christians in Jerusalem, cut off from the means of self-support by the social ostracism attendant on ex-communication from the synagogue (Jn 9:22, 34, 12:42, 16:2).
2. The type of koinonia in Jerusalem described in Acts 2:42 - 47 seems to have disappeared very soon, but its place was taken by an organized diakonia, a daily 'ministration' to the poor (6:1,2). And when the Church spread into a larger world free from the hostile influences of the synagogue, those social conditions were absent which in Jerusalem had seemed to make it necessary that Christ's followers should have all things common. But it was a special feature of St. Paul's teaching that Christians everywhere were members one of another, sharers in each other's wealth whether material or spiritual. And in particular he pressed constantly upon the wealthier Gentile churches the duty of taking part in the diakonia carried on in Jerusalem on behalf of the poor saints. In this connection we find him in 2 Cor 8:4 using the striking expression 'the koinonia of the diakonia [the communion of the ministration] to the saints.' The Christians of Corinth might have communion with their brethren in Jerusalem by imparting to them out of their own abundance. Hence, by a natural process in the development of speech, the koinonia, from meaning a common participation, came to be applied to the gifts which enabled that participation to be realized. In Ro.15:26 and 2 Cor.9:13, accordingly, the word is properly enough rendered 'contribution.' And yet, in the Apostolic Church it could never be forgotten that a contribution or collection for the poor brethren was a form of Christian communion.
3. From the first, however, 'communion' undoubtedly had a larger and deeper sense than those technical ones on which we have been dwelling. It was out of the consciousness of a common participation in certain great spiritual blessings that Christians were impelled to manifest their partnership in these specific ways. According to St. Paul's teaching, those who believed in Christ enjoyed a common participation in Christ Himself which bound them to one another in a holy unity (1 Cor.1:9, cf. v.10ff.). In the great central rite of their faith this common participation in Christ, and above all in His death and its fruits, was visibly set forth: the cup of blessing was a communion of the blood of Christ; the broken bread a communion of the body of Christ (1 Cor.10:16). Flowing again from this common participation in Christ there was a common participation in the Holy Spirit, for it is from the love of God as manifested in the grace of Christ that there results that 'communion of the Holy Ghost' which is the strongest bond of unity and peace (2 Cor.13:14; cf. v.11., Ph 21f.). Thus, the communion of the Christian Church came to mean a fund of spiritual privilege which was common to all the members but also peculiar to them, so that the admission of a man to the communion or his exclusion from it was his admission to, or exclusion from, the Church of Christ itself. When the Jerusalem Apostles gave 'the right hands of communion' to Paul and Barnabas (Gal.2:9), that was a symbolic recognition on their part that these missionaries to the

uncircumcision were true disciples and Apostles of Christ, sharers with themselves in all the blessings of the Christian faith.

4. We have seen that in its root-meaning koinonia is a partnership either in giving or in receiving. Hence, it was applied to Christian duties and obligations as well as to Christian privileges. The right hands of communion given to Paul and Barnabas were not only a recognition of grace received in common, but mutual pledges of an Apostolic service to the circumcision on the one hand and the heathen on the other (Gal.2:9). St. Paul thanked God for the 'communion' of the Philippians in the furtherance of the gospel (Ph 1:5), and prayed on behalf of Philemon that the 'communion' of his faith might become effectual (Philemon 6), i.e. that the Christian sympathies and charities inspired by his faith may come into full operation. It is the same use of koinonia that we find in Heb.13:16, where the proper rendering is 'forget not the well-doing and the communion.' Here also the communion means the acts of charity that spring from Christian faith, with a special reference perhaps to the technical sense of koinonia referred to above, as a sharing of one's material wealth with the poorer brethren.
5. In all the foregoing passages the koinonia seems to denote a mutual sharing, whether in privilege or in duty, of Christians with one another. But there are some cases where the communion evidently denotes a more exalted partnership, the partnership of a Christian with Christ or with God. This is what meets us when St. Paul speaks in Ph 3:10 of the communion of Christ's sufferings. He means a drinking of the cup of which Christ drank (cf. Mt.20:22f.), a moral partnership with the Redeemer in His pains and tears (cf. Ro 8:17). But it is St. John who brings this higher koinonia before us in the most absolute way when he writes, 'Our communion is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ' (1 Jn 1:3, cf. v.6), and makes our communion one with another depend upon this previous communion with God Himself (v.7, cf. v.6). Yet, though, the koinonia or communion is now raised to a higher power, it has still the same meaning as before. It is a mutual sharing, a reciprocal giving and receiving. And in his Gospel, St. John sets the law of this communion clearly before us when he records the words of the Lord Himself, 'Abide in me, and I in you' (Jn.15:4). The communion of the human and the Divine is a mutual activity, which may be summed up in the two words grace and faith. For grace is the spontaneous and unstinted Divine giving as revealed and mediated by Jesus Christ, while faith in its ideal form is the action of a soul which, receiving the Divine grace, surrenders itself without any reserve unto the Lord.

Christian fellowship could therefore be defined as Christian unity. This unity was the goal of Jesus' prayer for his disciples in the Gospel according to John chapter 17. In this prayer Jesus' main focus is that His disciples may be one. John 17:1 reading further Jesus brought the whole essence of the prayer out in verses 20 – 23:

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. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

The above quotation shows that the original purpose of Jesus Christ for His church is for her unity. In fact, he said that “May they be brought to complete unity...” This unity of purpose was further strengthened by the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to His disciples as it is recorded in Matthew 28:16 – 20:

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said; “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This commission of Jesus Christ was carried out by the church after the Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost and years after we have the recorded here quoted:

Those who accepted his message were baptized and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Acts 2:41 & 42.

The outcome of the above practice of the church was that many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. The result was that I quote:

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods they gave to everyone as he had need ...and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Acts 2:44 – 47, cf. Acts 4:32 – 35.

The above was the normal practice of the early church. We have the tremendous result of this act by the increase in the number of believers as we have in Acts 4:4, **“But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.”** In Acts 5:14, we also have the record **“Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.”** In Acts 6:1, we have the following; **“In those days when the number of disciples was increasing the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.”** Thus, population explosion brought to being the ministry of the first seven deacons.

The name Christian as we mentioned earlier came to being by the observance of the gentiles who saw the group fellowshiping together, I quote:

“Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” (Acts 11:25 & 26).

Thus it was the fellowship of the early church that brought to them the name Christians. Paul placed importance of this fellowship and encouraged the Christians in Ephesus, thus:

As prisoner for the Lord, then I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love, make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (*Ephesians 4:1 – 5*).

He has earlier appealed to the Christian in Corinth to maintain this unity by directing the church to focus on Jesus Christ rather than Paul or Apollos. He said:

What after all is, Apollos and what is Paul? Only servants through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task. Paul planted the seed, Apollos watered it; but God made it grow ... For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (*1 Cor.3:5 – 11*).

The early disciples made efforts to maintain the Christian fellowship by emphasizing that they were mere servants and stewards in Jesus Christ's church. They emphasized the fact that it is through the coming together of the Christians that Jesus Christ's mission could be achieved. In Hebrews chapter 10 verse 25, we have this record:

“Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

Christian fellowship is very important to the Christian growth as through it one realizes that he or she is not alone facing trials and tribulations because when we share in Jesus Christ's suffering we shall certainly share in his glory and eternity. Jesus Christ encouraged this unity of purpose when He said;

“I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two or three of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (*Matthew 18:18 – 20*). Proverbs 27:17 reads “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another”.

Christian Fellowship today:

Christian fellowship today has been corroded with class distinction which the early church fought against. The class distinction which Paul spoke against is evident in all church denominations both in the small unit and the bigger unit. Paul said in Galatians 3:26 – 29 thus:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (cf. Eph. 1:23, Col.3:11).

Lyric:-

"We are heirs of the Father

We are joint heir with the Son,

We are children of the kingdom

We are family, we are one"

Today the church is far from the above mission. Hence the **challenges of the 21st Century Christian Fellowship**. The problem faced by the disciples i.e. of who would be greatest among them which Jesus rebuked is the same problem which gives challenges to Christian Fellowship today. Jesus Christ was faced by his impending crucifixion, death and resurrection but what was paramount in the hearts of the disciples was the position of honour." (Mark 9:30 – 37; cf. Matt.20:17-28. Of course, it is all too easy to criticize the disciples; but how often are we too, caught out in our pride and competitiveness and power struggles, even as we profess to be following a Master who humbled Himself to serve. Jesus taught the disciples by telling them to adopt the children attitude in order to follow His example. In infancy a child depends on his parents for everything – bring me, fetch me; give me; feed me and so on. It is John Stott who said, "Children are rightly called 'dependants' for what they know; they depend on what they have been taught and for what they have, they depend on what they have been given." Humility and dependence are to be the pre-eminent characteristics of those who are followers of Jesus Christ. If all of us have these two great virtues – P.C.C, Synod, C.C.N, CAN. BSN and other Christian fellowship will epitomize God's presence. If these are absent in those who answer to the name Christians then we have not fully understood the nature of our call to be Christians.

In the year 2000 the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) came out with the following vision statement – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) shall be spiritually dynamic, united, disciplined, self supporting, committed to pragmatic evangelism, education, health care and shall exemplify true love to all." (pg.7 of Vision of the Church of Nigeria).

As beautiful as this mission statement appears, eighteen years after we are still too far from the reality of the same. The only way to make the statement a reality is to follow Jesus Christ's style of servant leadership. How can we be loving, sharing what we have with others and caring for others if we have not first shed our carnality and surrender all to Jesus Christ as Paul did? (Gal. 2:20).

John the elder writes about having fellowship with other believers. There are 3 principles behind true Christian fellowship:-

- (i) Our fellowship is grounded in the testimony of God's word. Without this underlying strength, togetherness is impossible.

- (ii) It is mutual, depending on the unity of believers.
- (iii) It is renewed daily through the Holy Spirit.

True fellowship combines social and spiritual interaction, and is made possible only through a living relationship with Christ.

The fellowship that Jesus Christ desired which John the elder highlighted is achievable only when we subject our body to the spirit through humility and dependence on God through Jesus Christ for all we have, all we are and we shall be. Then we shall experience eternity here and now and here after. The fellowship we discussed above is spelt out in the vision of our beloved Diocese; which reads:-

- (i) To prepare children of God for heaven by encouraging a worshipping community.
- (ii) To prepare a community united in spirit and committed to pragmatic evangelism and
- (iii) To stimulate a community with a resolve to propagate the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the nook and cranny of the world.

Christian fellowship is achievable today if the church will follow the following guidelines:

- 1) Doing God's work in the way God wants us to do it, not in our ways. Like the first disciples we must devote ourselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers. (Acts 2:42 – 47)
- 2) Every Christian must be his brother's keeper and her sister's keeper. We must be ready to release our possessions for the work of God in order to meet the needs of fellow Christians. (Gal. 6:1 - 10)
- 3) In the church, class distinction must be discouraged. Colossians 3:11 reads; Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free but Christ is all in all. (cf. Gal.3:28)
- 4) Every Christian must be ready to attend weekly programmes, i.e. Bible study, Wednesday fasting and prayer program, Special prayer program, Communicant classes, e.t.c. The word of God says in Hebrews 10:25, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching."
- 5) We must be willing to fully obey God's commandments. All Christians must yearn to do God's will as it is recorded in the Bible. Obedience to God's will must be total not partial. We must follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ at the Garden of Gethsemane when he prayed –Matt.26:39 reads, "Jesus going little further, he fell to the ground and prayed "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."
- 6) Finally, we must subject our bodies to God's Holy Spirit leading. We must abhor sinful thoughts, words, and actions. We can do this if we follow the Psalmist in Psalm 1:1 – 3:

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water; which yield its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”

Hymns – God is working His purpose out as year succeeds to year (A&M 271)

1. GOD is working his purpose out as
 year succeeds to year,
God is working his purpose out and
the time is drawing near;
Nearer and nearer draws the time, the
 time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the
glory of God as the waters cover the sea.
2. From utmost east to utmost west
 where'er man's foot hath trod,
By the mouth of many messengers
 goes forth the voice of God
Give ear to me, ye continents, ye isles,
 give ear to me.
That the earth may be filled with the
 Glory of God as the waters covers the sea.'
3. What can we do to work God's work,
 to prosper and increase
The brotherhood of all mankind, the
 reign of the Prince of Peace?
What can we do to hasten the time,
 the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the
 glory of God as the waters cover the sea?
4. March we forth in the strength of
 God with the banner of Christ unfurled.
That the light of the glorious Gospel
 Of truth may shine throughout the world,
Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin,
 To set their captives free,
That the earth may be filled with the
 Glory of God as the waters cover the sea.
5. All we can do is nothing worth un-
 less God blesses the deed;
Vainly we hope for the harvest-tide

till God gives life to the seed;
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the
glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

Your Bishop & Friend,
+ *Olubayo Ilesa.*