



“A Place to Belong”, by Rev Samuel Mametsa, Sunday Service, the 19th of February 2012.

Sometimes in life people do not know where they belong but still those people are referred to as Christians and the bible is against this. We all need to have a place where we belong spiritually. We all need to have a spiritual home. You can visit all the spiritual places, e.g. churches, conferences etc but you need to have a particular place of belonging spiritually.

Ephesians 2:19 ***“19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,” Eph 2:19, NKJV.***

1 Tim 3:15 ***“15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” 1 Tim 3:15, NKJV.***

The bible says that we are the members of God's very own family and that is why the bible says we are the citizens of God's own country. When we are in church we belong somewhere. We are in the house of God. Church is paramount in our lives. We can't be called Christians if we don't belong somewhere. There are a lot of people who run around like headless chickens and they do not know where they belong and even if they are asked, they have no clear answer. We need to understand that we are God's own family.

When Jesus was on earth He did not come here and build a ministry, He built the church. We are the church of Christ. What is God's family? All Christians that belong to Jesus not just the believers of a particular church. It is not the name of your church. It is the church of Christ. It doesn't matter how many people you have in your church. The church of Christ refers to all the churches.

It matters where you pray Jesus. In every church of God when they are praying, their prayers together with those of the other churches are lifted up to God and Jesus is not looking at an individual church but the prayer of all the churches. Paul says being a member of a church means being a member of the body of Christ. A body is not complete if one part is missing. If we take your hand and put it in the wardrobe and we tell you to go to town and deposit money at the bank, you will experience problems as the hand that you need is left behind. You will end up asking somebody to help you fill the form. This means you need to respect your hand. The same goes for the body of Christ, if one church is limping and not functioning well then it means the body is suffering, it is not complete. Nowadays



KUTAMA PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH



we find that churches do not love one another and Christians are busy back biting one another and the non-believers are listening and this makes the non believers to say *"We will not become Christians, if it is like this."* This is why Jesus says *"Love one another."* When you are a member of a church it means you will have love. You must be a member from the depth of your heart.

Jesus says I will build my church and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. This means that the devil will not have a chance to conquer the church but nowadays we find that the devil is conquering the church as the Christians do not understand the word of God.

The reason why Jesus Christ died for us is love in itself and it is love coming from the depth of His heart. When he allowed Himself to die nobody promised Him that He would be resurrected. When God said *"Who can I send to earth?"* God wanted somebody to come down to earth to die for the people. Jesus responded and said *"Send me."* Why did Jesus agree to come and die without any promise that He would be resurrected? In other words Jesus was prepared to die forever but because of his humility He was surprised on the Sunday morning, God Himself with His mercy and grace came forth to the tomb and Jesus found Himself coming back to life. He was not sure what would happen. He was prophesied but not sure if the prophecy would be fulfilled.

The bible says that the church is the bride of Christ and so we can't say we love Jesus whereas we do not love the bride. We prove our love to Christ when we go to church. Jesus says we must have fellowship with one another. The bible says the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. How can your prayer be righteous if you do not have a spiritual home to belong to? Some people do not want to belong to any church. Some are very arrogant in this respect of not wanting to belong to any church.

Church is a congregation. A Christian without a visible church home is like a body partner without a body to belong to. Like I said above if your hand is in the wardrobe, you can't function properly. Some people are ignorant and they do not belong to any church but when death strikes in the family they now want a pastor but all along they felt they do not need a pastor.

They are not even shy to ask the pastor to bury their child. When you ask them *"Where was your child fellowshiping?"* They will say *"In Johannesburg"* and when you say *"Phone the pastor in Johannesburg to come and bury the person"* they think we are being rude. Some people carry the certificate of membership of a church but are never in church until death strikes and they come to the pastor for help.



KUTAMA PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH



In another instance, a corpse stayed in the mortuary for about three weeks because the family could not get a pastor to bury the deceased. The family said *"Our church is in the TV"* and one person asked them *"Call that pastor to come and bury your child"* they said *"it is too far, he is Nigeria."* He told them *"Use the telephone numbers on the TV screen and tell that pastor that you are his member and that he must come and bury your child"* We must not be ignorant of the fact that we need a place to belong to. If you can run around like a headless chicken without a home, God can't recognise you because He believes in the fellowship of the Christians.

Six reasons why we need a church family:

(1) **A church family identifies you as a genuine believer.** We can't claim to follow Christ when we do not have a specific place of fellowship. Jesus said you have to love one another. This proves that we are His disciples and for the world to see that we are His disciples, we need to have a place where we fellowship. We are not believers by being stand alone believers. We need each other. The problem is that people are in the same church but do not greet one another, they feel they do not need each other. We are in the same church where we pray the one God but we are busy hating each other. You can be a Christian for a long time but failing to repent of your sins and failures.

(2) **Church family moves us out of self centeredness.** In a family church you must not be self centered. We learn from each other how to pray, how to serve etc. The local church is the temptation in your life, as that is where you learn to love one another so that by the time you get to heaven you know how to love. In heaven you are going to meet Christians you never met before and you have to know how to love them. The bible says we must learn to love one another, carry one another, and protect one another. These days you find Christians supporting non believers to fight / criticize another Christian. The believers say that the Christians are eating each other. This is preventing other people from becoming born again. This Christian thinks that he will look good to the non believers when he criticizes the other Christian. The non believer now thinks it is useless to go to church when they see this. We must not criticize other churches, especially those churches that are calling on the name of Jesus Christ.

John 3:16 ***"16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*** John 3:16, NKJV.

1 John 3:16 ***"16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."*** 1 John 3:16, NKJV. The bible says we need to sacrifice our lives for others just like Jesus



sacrificed His life for you and me. We must learn to die for somebody, even when you are not wrong just admit being wrong so that it can free somebody. This is a form of sacrifice. That is why even when Jesus was not wrong He agreed to die for us. What about you and me? Even when you are not wrong, let it go and ask for forgiveness. You are not going to lose anything. Even if you fight, some will come with very serious false evidence against you and you will find that they are working for the devil. As long as you know that God knows the truth and one day God will reveal the truth. One day the truth will come out. Don't argue with the devil. The devil has thousands of years arguing with people and you can't fight against him. Rest assured that if you are being accused for a false thing, heaven knows the truth and one day the truth will come out. Today the truth is failing, even in court. A lot of people are in jail today because of false witnesses. The bible says sacrifice for somebody, as long as the judge of the world (God) will one day judge. We do not know what those people will do on the Day of Judgment.

(3) **A church family helps you to develop spiritual muscles.** In a church you must have muscles to stand on. You get those muscles from the local church. If the local church doesn't give you muscles, and tomorrow the pastor sends you to another church to preach, there will be chaos. For e.g. say you are not used to stand in front of people and preach from the pulpit, you will struggle and the people will see it but if you are sent out there and you stand up and they see you speaking and preaching with confidence then they will know that you come from a strong local church. The local church must have strong muscles and must build the members of the church. The local church must teach people how to do things. The pastor must not be greedy as the pastor will not live forever and must pass on the skills and knowledge to others. When the pastor dies the church must continue and not start from scratch. In many churches, when the pastor dies, the church dies as he was a greedy pastor who never taught anybody anything. That is why it is important in church that we develop pastors. The church must train pastors. In some churches, when the pastor is not around they close the church and wait for him to come back. Church must continue whether or not the pastor is there or not. You find that pastor praying that God must give him long life so that he can bury others, whilst he lives longer than the rest.

You can't grow spiritually if you just come to church and you do not participate in church. Some people just sit in church even when they have gifts and they do not participate in anything, some end up falling asleep in church. They become spectators in church but they are blind spectators. A local church builds the spiritual muscles of its members. In the New Testament the phrases "one another" and "each other" are used more than 50 times. This is to show Christians that we must bear each other's (one another's) burdens.



(4) **The body of Christ needs you.** That is why the gifts of the body of Christ are given to each one of us so we can help each other, and thereby strengthening the body of Christ. If we do not love each other, we will end up being jealous of each other. That is why when new members come to a church and start to serve the Lord you find the old members complaining and getting jealous of what the people are doing in the house of God. Nobody can hold God ransom. If you don't want to do something God will bring somebody to do the work. If you sit down with your gift, God will bring somebody else who is even better than you in that gift. That is why in the local church we need people who are active and when you are working in the local church don't think you are doing it for the pastor to see you. The pastor can't give you anything but God in heaven is the one who can give you something. It is important to work for the Lord and not to do it to impress the pastor. Work for the Lord. As God sends people into the church the pastor can't stop people from working in the church. If the pastor stops people from working, He might stop the plans and purposes of God. When somebody is working in church, people will talk as they have mouths and they use those mouths to speak. Funny enough those people do not talk about their laziness, they talk about other people. *"I have been in this church for more than twenty years."* We are here to serve, worship and pray God not to speak about people or hear people speaking about themselves.

The local church is to grow and develop your gift. Jesus Christ never promised to build your ministry but His church.

(5) **You will share in Christ's mission in the world.** When Jesus was here God worked through the physical body of Christ; today He uses His spiritual body. The church is God's instrument on earth. We are not just to model God's love by loving each other as a church but to carry it together to the rest of the world.

The aim of God to bring us to this world is not only to preach to your own church but to also go and preach to the other churches and to the nations. You are not destined only to preach in your church but all over the world, the other denominations must hear the word of God in you. The local church is your home base but you must serve the body of Christ not just your church. You can't say because I am Pentecostal I can't go to Baptist church or to Roman Catholic. None of the churches have their own bibles. We use the bible of the living God. We need to love one another as a church and we need to work in the world with our gifts which were given to each of us. See in this respect Mathew 28:18-20 ***"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am***



with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen". Matt 28:18-20, NKJV.

(6) **Church family will help keep you from backsliding.** Most people are backsliding because a person can't fellowship on their own. Iron sharpens iron. When people back slide you hear Christians say *"That one is a Christian, he or she knows what must be done"* and they leave that person alone. It is a wrong mentality as you don't know what lighting has struck that person. The bible says none of us is above temptation. We are all capable of all kinds of sins and we must encourage each other. When you don't see your brethren in church, you must find out what is the problem, unless in your heart you are saying *"Good riddens"*. You can visit that person at home to find out why the person is not coming to church. As you do not know the challenges they are facing, you must try and help out your fellow brother. You find people are in the same church and do not even have each other's phone numbers and so when the person is not coming to church they can't even phone as they do not know how to contact each other. This is not love. We must take care of each other.

We must always be there for each other so that we can uphold each other in our fight against sin and the devil. We must know one another's place of residences so that we can better take care of each other. The church is our sanctuary in God, to help each other and not to demoralize each other. Where necessary, we need to start to repent.

If you know somebody who is wavering in the Lord, you need to go out and help them out to come back to the Lord. It doesn't matter how strong that person was one time. Maybe something happened to that person that made his or her to fall. Apostle James says *"If you know people who have wandered off from God's truth, don't write them off from God's truth, and don't write them off. Go after them- Get them back."*

Do not write people off and say that they are beyond restoration. They are not cars that we should write them off. People can lack wisdom but your wisdom can help them.