



# *INSTRUCTIONS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS*

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Entry 7 - 3

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## A New Testament Church Home

Your home is your base camp, your springboard, your castle of refuge and your mission command center. It is the place where you have government and it should be dedicated to the Lord. The home was the ministry hub of the New Testament Church. A life-flow of ministry emanated from it. Regardless of your culture or background, if you serve the Lord, you should aim to have a home of ministry. It begins with a good marriage and relationships full of love, faith and sacrificial service. Even the home of a single adult can be this kind of lighthouse if it is used to serve others with compassion and faith. If you have a New Testament church home you have reached a very high standard. You are already fulfilling an important part of your calling. This might be the appointed time to change the purpose of your home in order to fulfill the call of God for your life.

An open home is like an open heart. Wherever the hearts of people are open, the wind of the Holy Spirit will find purpose. In the Bible, Lydia, Cornelius, Martha and even Zacchaeus opened their homes and the work of the ministry rushed in like a river. Besides these start-up homes, the New Testament reveals many that became established churches. When a new church was to be planted or the Gospel was initiated in a region, the ministers were instructed to look for a worthy home to start the work. In this way, the Gospel spread throughout the ancient world, one home at a time. The doorway to nations opened through homes. The sick were healed, leaders were trained and Christians became lifelong coworkers and friends as they ate meals, worshiped, prayed, studied and enjoyed fellowship together in their homes. There are many outstanding aspects to a New Testament ministry home. Here are four key elements:

### **1. Hospitality**

A New Testament home is known for its hospitality. This was so important to the apostles that it became a qualification for leadership in the early church.

Hospitality literally means, “the love of strangers.” Elders and deacons must be given to hospitality. That means that pastors and church leaders should invite folks to their home for meals and refreshments. If the church has thousands of people, the senior pastor cannot possibly invite everyone into his home, but he can still invite some, especially his closest disciples. Those disciples in turn, can invite others into their homes and the hospitality ministry can blossom until every home in the church becomes a lighthouse of loving hospitality. Pastors, elders and disciples must be hospitable. They are not called to live in an ivory tower so that they are isolated from fellowship or personal interaction with the people of God. The breaking of bread, in the New Testament sense of the word, is more than having communion or sharing the sacraments during a Sunday morning church service. It involves eating meals together in our homes.

### **2. Fellowship**

Hospitality is essential, but serving food and having fun - in and of itself - does not constitute a New Testament home. The focus of this home must be

godly fellowship. Fellowship means having things in common, or sharing life together and Bible-type fellowship is always God-centered. There are 5 levels of fellowship mentioned in the Bible. They are; the fellowship of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Gospel, the fellowship of the mystery (the work of the cross), the fellowship of ministering to the saints (charitable giving), and the fellowship of His suffering. These fellowship themes plunge us into the depths of Christian care and ministry. They lead us to share our dreams and our pains with each other. They focus on our unified mission and spreading the Gospel. Sometimes, our fellowship will be joyous and exciting. Other times it will involve deep revelation, compassionate care, or creative plans to help the poor. Real fellowship is a life-flow of the Holy Spirit. It cannot remain superficial, but must always lead to the sharing of our hearts and lives with each other.

### 3. Teaching

A serious New Testament ministry home will, at least from time to time, make room for sessions of teaching. Paul went from house to house, teaching and instructing God's word. The ministry home may initiate a weekly Bible study, or simply gather folks together for a focused teaching every once in a while. The Hebrew model for teaching in the home is more spontaneous than planned. The teaching

just flows from father, mother, uncle, grandparent, older sibling or a visiting rabbi. Often, in our home, we sit around the table for 30 minutes at the end of a meal to spontaneously teach and discuss the word of God. We may go out on the back deck with a glass of ice tea and find ourselves discussing the gifts of the Holy Spirit or what the Bible teaches about marriage or raising children. God's word brings guidance; it changes our lives and makes the crooked paths straight. These times of Holy Spirit led teaching are among the best times in our lives. On the Emmaus road the disciples were taught by the Lord. They went into a house as the teaching continued. Later, they said that their hearts burned within them as they listened to the teachings. The fellowship of love, the hospitality, the prayers and the teaching of God's word will become a magnet that will draw people back to your home, time and time again. Then your home will become holy ground where miracles happen and friends come to find salvation.

### 4. Refuge

A New Testament ministry home will become a refuge for the wounded and the weary. It will be a shelter for those who are threatened and a hiding place for those who are hunted. The story of the Jews being hidden from the Nazis in the home of Corrie Ten Boom is a classic example of protection that God provided in a home. Today, we pray and give counsel to those who are distressed. We encourage and give hope to the weary. We extend fatherhood and

motherhood to the forsaken. In this way, God uses our homes to bring the solitary into families. It is common practice for a Christian home to welcome a single person to come and live with the family for a season. This service helps young or displaced people get on their feet. It can provide a good godly environment for spiritual growth and fellowship. This home may extend itself to foster displaced children or reach out to adopt others. Our homes become mini-hospitals, churches and boarding facilities for those whom God connects us with.

There are limitations and warnings about opening our homes. Speaking of those who teach heresy or live a wicked lifestyle the Bible says,

***“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.”***  
2Jn. 1:10 (see also Deut. 7:26)

Our first responsibility is to care for our own families, but opening our home to others is a great example for our children. It brings joy and purpose to our families and helps equip our children for the future. An insular, isolated home is not healthy or Biblical. Let us ask the Lord to teach us how we can have a New Testament church home. We will find ourselves partnering with heaven and entering a new world of spiritual training and adventure. AΩ



## Christians for Messiah Ministries

**Instructions in Righteousness** is produced monthly by "Christians for Messiah Ministries (CFM)." Dr. Peter D. Wyns is the President of CFM. After 40 years of extensive ministry in more than 35 nations, he is now based in the USA. This ministry continues because of your prayers and financial support. Your partnership is greatly appreciated. For information of Dr. Wyns availability to minister at your church, contact "Christians for Messiah Ministries."

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