

**Do we often have intimate and persistent fellowship and conversation with the Lord alone and with the saints around us, and produce a plan for our growth and that of the church testimony?**

\* The difference between fellowship (with prayers) and chatting (no prayers) with the saints

\* The difference between a church life with a service plan led by the Lord and that without Lord's leading

\* If many saints do not have a plan via fellowship with the Lord, how can the church have a most effective and blessed plan led the Lord to satisfy the need of the Lord for each saint?

## Do we often have intimate and persistent fellowship and conversation with the Lord alone and produce a plan for the growth of the church testimony?

Here is an example of Nehemiah who had intimate fellowship with the Lord and produced a plan for the building up the Jerusalem wall which was God's will

**Neh 2:1** In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.

**Neh 2:2** And **the king said to me**, "Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart." **Then I was very much afraid.**

**Neh 2:3** **I said to the king**, "Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

**Neh 2:4** Then **the king said to me**, "**What are you requesting?**" **So I prayed to the God of heaven.**

**Neh 2:5** And **I said to the king**, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that **you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it.**"

**Neh 2:6** And **the king said to me** (the queen sitting beside him), "**How long will you be gone, and when will you return?**" So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.

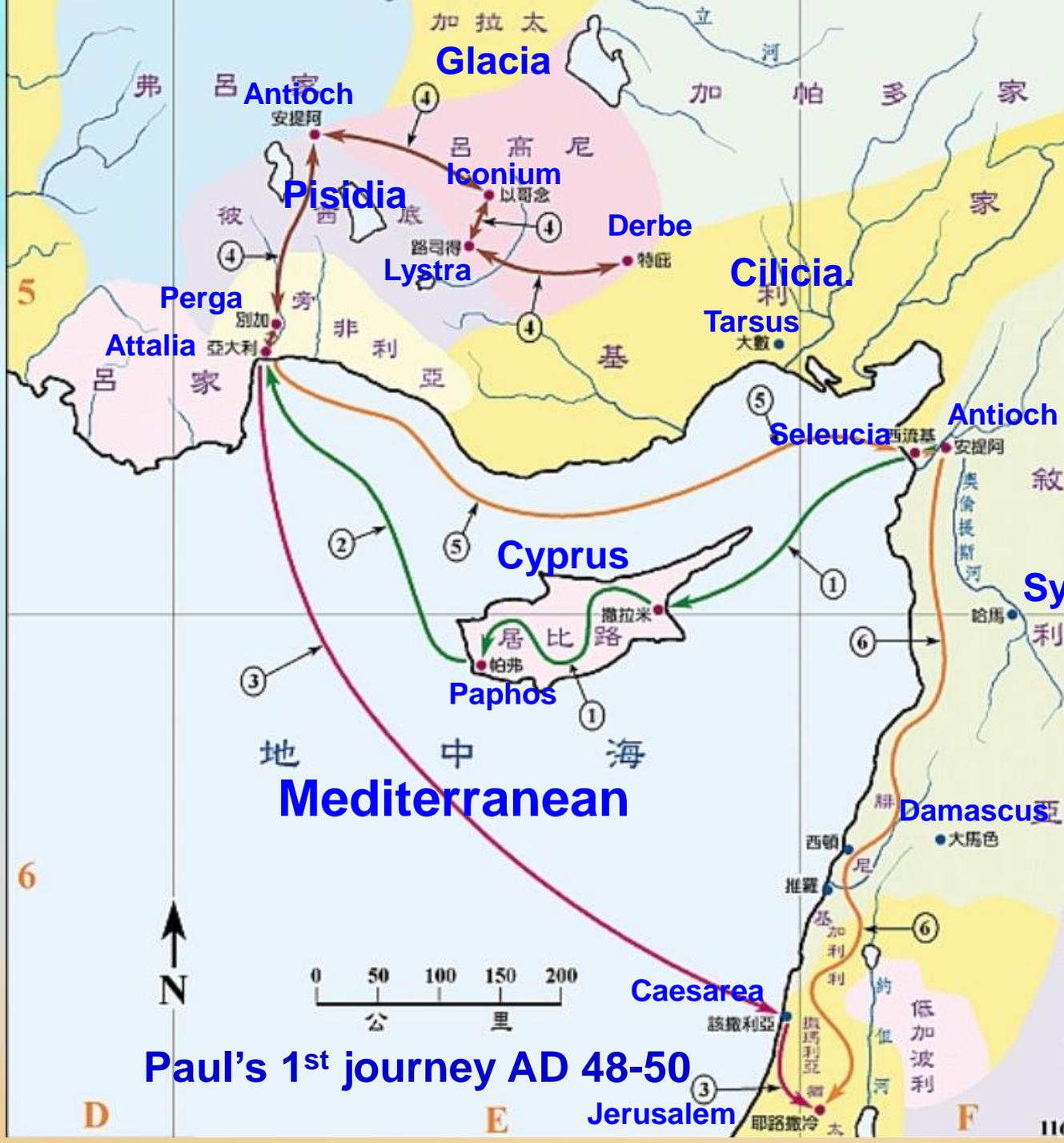
**Neh 2:7** And **I said to the king**, "If it pleases the king, **let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah,**

**Neh 2:8** **and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.**" **And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.**

## Do we often have intimate and persistent fellowship and conversation with the Lord alone and produce a plan for the growth of the church testimony?

Here is an example of Moses who desired the Lord's presence with the Israelis and see the Lord's glory.

- Exo 33:9** When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses.
- Exo 33:10** And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door.
- Exo 33:11** **Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.** When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.
- Exo 33:12** **Moses said to the LORD**, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.'
- Exo 33:13** Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people."
- Exo 33:14** And **He said**, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
- Exo 33:15** **And he said to Him**, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.
- Exo 33:16** For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"
- Exo 33:17** And **the LORD said to Moses**, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."
- Exo 33:18** **Moses said**, "Please show me your glory."
- Exo 33:19** And **He said**, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.
- Exo 33:20** But," **He said**, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."
- Exo 33:21** And **the LORD said**, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock,
- Exo 33:22** and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.
- Exo 33:23** Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."



1. Acts 13:1-12
2. Acts 13:13
3. Acts 13:13
4. Acts 13:14-14:23
5. Acts 14:24-26
6. Acts 15:1-5

**Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> journey AD 48-50**

Jerusalem

After the intimate and persistent fellowship of individuals and the church service team members with the Lord, does the Lord grant a plan to lead?

**Acts 13:1** Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

**Acts 13:2** While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

**Acts 13:3** Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

**Acts 13:4** So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. AD 48

**Acts 13:5** When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them.

**Acts 13:6** When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. AD 48

## Why did Banabas and Saul firstly go to Cyprus during the 1<sup>st</sup> journey?

I believe that brother Barnabas who was a native of Cyprus and had the burden to preach gospel to the people in that island and had fellowship with brother Saul and Lord honored his burden (maybe proved by Acts 15:39) and grant their trip to Cyprus.

**Acts 4:36** Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas, a Levite, a native of Cyprus,

**Acts 15:38** But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

**Acts 15:39** And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, AD 51



**Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> journey AD 51-54**



**Gal 1:21** Then I went into the regions of **Syria and Cilicia**. **AD 41-45**

**Acts 9:30** And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to **Caesarea** and sent him off to **Tarsus**. **AD 41**

**Gal 1:17** nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned **again to Damascus**. **AD 39-40**

**Acts 9:3** Now as he went on his way, he approached **Damascus**, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. **AD 38**

**Gal 1:18** Then after three years I went up to **Jerusalem** to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. **AD 41**

## Why did Paul and Silas firstly go through Syria and Cilicia 1<sup>st</sup> During the 2<sup>nd</sup> journey?

**Acts 15:40** but **Paul chose Silas** and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. **he went through Syria and Cilicia**

**Acts 15:41** And, **strengthening the churches**. **AD 51**

**Acts 15:36** And after some days **Paul said** to Barnabas, **“Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.”** **AD 51**

**Gal 1:21** Then I (Paul) went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. **AD 41- 45**

During **AD 41-45** when Saul (Paul) was living in Tarsus, according to **Gal 1:21** he was preaching gospel often in Cilicia and Syria. Therefore based on **Acts 15:36** and **Acts 15:41 Paul had a burden with a plan** to visit the brothers and sisters in every city where he proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are.

**He must have fellowship with the Lord and Silas and other saints** and Lord honored his burden and during the 2<sup>nd</sup> journey granted Paul and Silas firstly to visit Syria and Cilicia in **AD 51**.

**After the intimate and persistent fellowship of Paul and his co-workers, at different time, did the Lord grant a plan to lead them?**

**Acts 16:6** And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, **having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia (their burden and plan).**

**Acts 16:7** And when they had come up to Mysia, **they attempted to go into Bithynia (their burden and plan)., but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.**

**Acts 16:8** So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.

**Acts 16:9** And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

**Acts 16:10** **And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought (I imagine that both Silas and young Timothy also had their burdens put into fellowship with Paul and Luke) to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them (After their intimate fellowship Lord granted a plan which was the most fresh leading of the Lord).**

**Rom 12:3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

## **To exercise intimate and persistent fellowship in the church life**

In any city, like Montreal, the services of the church service team needs to be led by the Lord resulting from the intimate and persistent fellowship and conversation of each saint with the Lord and the corporate prayers and fellowship of many saints in one accord. However, sadly, often only a few saints (mostly in the church life for some years) have plans after prayers and fellowship with the Lord and they are not so much aware of the needs of many saints, since all saints in the church are an organic body of Christ, how can the church service team receive more practical and blessed way (plan) led by the Lord?

Please see the Bible homework “Introduce a practice on how to remember the inspiration that the Lord has given us for a long time”

## To exercise intimate and persistent fellowship in the church life

**1<sup>st</sup> Cor 12:22** On the contrary, **the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,**

**1<sup>st</sup> Cor 12:23** and **on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor,** and **our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,**

In the church life, very often young people or people just entering into the church life are not used to ask questions concerning their living (human need) and our Lord (spiritual need), nor they offer suggestions for the church to elevate church testimony (the church actually very much needs, appreciates and values each saint's burden; please see Bible homework "Three organic orders in the church life"), because they often think that they are too weak or too young, and the church serving ones are also not used to encourage and emphasize this exercise. In addition, serving ones may not often carefully ask the saints concerning their needs (humanly and spiritually), therefore the services of the church often deviate from a very needed and God blessed serving direction.

We may "know" **1<sup>st</sup> Cor 12:22-23** the church should and desires to take care of the members of the body who are considered weak and less honorable, but if those who are considered weak and less honorable often do not raise their questions, and the church servicing ones also do not have clearly understanding of the saints' needs humanly and spiritually, then how can the church effectively and timely to have prayers and fellowship, so that God can timely grant an effectively and blessing plan to take care of the saints' needs?

Thank the Lord that the church has many prayers and fellowship during 3 to 5-person groups meetings and many-saints church gatherings, some of which can take care of some needs of the weak and less honorable saints, and such exercises bring in the blessing of the leading of the Lord. But there is still a lot of room for such practices. If more saints exercise intimate and persistent fellowship individually (according to their measure of faith; Rom 12:3) and among the church servicing ones with the Lord, surely the Lord will grant us a plan to effectively and blessingly to advance the church testimony for His pleasure and glory.

Rom 12:3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, **each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.**