

June 24, 2018
KIBC Sunday Worship Service
Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda
Title of the Message: "Building Relationships of Understanding"
—Prayers are the Real Key—

Text: Hebrews 13:17~19

13:17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

13:18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

13:19 I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

Introduction

Many Japanese companies started business overseas during Japan's period of rapid economic growth. At that time, many Japanese lived in Dusseldorf in Germany, where I used to live, so that it was referred to as a Japanese colony. More than 460 Japanese companies once had offices there and some of the leading companies became overseas-affiliated companies and many Japanese people worked in them.

I sometimes visited Mr. K who was a Christian and the president of a certain leading electric company. I was surprised to see his staff of 26 different nationalities were working at that time, and Mr. K, who kept English and German secretaries, was extremely busy.

I said to him, "You must work very hard as the company president." He answered, "My staff works to make the profits. The most important job of a president is to build good interpersonal relationships in the office." I agreed that the interpersonal relationships between his office staff members was very important.

When I thought about his answer, it reminded me of one of the points that the Bible teaches on. The Bible teaches us how to build good relationships of understanding.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews records as below —

13:17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

The verse above teaches us about the importance of interpersonal relationships as a Christians of a church. This passage addresses the relationships between church leaders and church members. Being entrusted by God, church leaders should exercise their spiritual authority as spiritual leaders. But, they must not show off their authority. It doesn't mean to boast in their authority.

I think that the church leaders above were a pastor of today and also church deacons and leaders of each cell group in church.

Then what should we do to build blessed relationships in which we understand each other?

Let's study according the following two points today.

Main Points

1. Correct Understanding of the Scripture

1) What the Leaders Should Do

The leaders of the church of God need to correctly understand the Word of God. If they teach the Word of God irresponsibly, they will lead the church to serious trouble.

Therefore, the leaders need to understand correctly what the Bible teaches. The first priority is to read the Bible well.

However, it is not sufficient for them to read the Bible well, but they should holistically understand the Bible. They should learn and be equipped by the knowledge of the profound truths of the Bible. It is necessary for us to constantly study the Bible. If someone says that he or she already understands the Bible, it is dangerous. We need an attitude of willingness to continue to learn the Bible all of our lives.

Paul taught Timothy, a young leader as below—

1 Timothy 4:16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

The leaders should lead people by using the Word of God. It is important for them to master the Word of God, however, it is more important to willingly to live by following the Word that they taught.

James 3:1 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

Like this the Word of God teaches the leaders. Then, what should those who are taught to do?

2) What the Believers Should Do

13:17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority,

Athletes should follow what their manager and coaches teach. No one can be a first-class player without following the guidance of managers and coaches.

Generally, the word of managers and coaches are very strict, and it doesn't sound good. However, when they continually listen to their guidance and practice according to it, they will eventually become successful. Like this, those who listen to the instruction of the church leaders and follow it, they will grow in faith.

13:17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

As the athletes practice hard by following the managers and coaches, church leaders keep watching over church members, brothers and sisters, who are entrusted by God and take care each of them. They think about them as if they are their children. However, children usually think as if they became adults by themselves; no child knows how dear he is to his parents.

Parents' tasks are not easy ones. We first understand that when we have children. KIBC has a church school. Children come to church every Sunday. We pray to God for them every Sunday. On top of that, we should pray for its leaders (staff) every week. When we pray for leaders of the church school, God blesses it.

We need not only pray for leaders of the church school, but also we need to pray for our pastor, deacons, music directors, praise team and each leader of the cell groups. Each leader should consider his or her group members and pray for them to grow in faith.

Then, what about those who are not leaders?

13:17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority...for that would

be of no benefit to you.

The relationships between leaders and church members are very important. Churches that do this well will always grow, because the Lord with them. First, if the leaders sincerely consider and pray for church members and lead them, then church will grow.

Like this, the attitude of church members who organize church is very important. Their ability to give prayers for each other is not superficial, it is the first step where God, who is alive, can work on them. If church leaders and brothers and sisters follow the Word of God, He will absolutely bless their church.

2. The Relationships that the Bible Teaches Us to Have

1) The Relationships Between Church Leaders and the Brothers and Sisters

113:18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

The verse above teaches us not only the relationships between leaders and members but also teaches about prayer. The author records, "Pray for us." When we carefully read the verse, it doesn't mean that church leaders don't pray for church members. The church leaders ask their brothers and sisters to pray for them.

The short sentence, "Pray for us" ("Betet fuer uns!" in German) that is made with only three words has very significant meaning.

Of course, church leaders sincerely pray for their church members. God ordered them to do intercessional prayers for church members. No one can consider the others without giving prayers for them to God. Church leaders should always pray for their brothers and sisters and likewise, brothers and sisters should always pray for their church leaders. The author of the Epistle asked them again, "Pray for us." (The sentence is written in plural form.)

When leaders and members build mutual relationships through prayer, their relationships become beautiful ones of love and trust.

The church leaders should not boast their authority and brothers and sisters also should not complain about their leaders. If they do, such church is not a sound church.

When the church leaders cannot communicate with church members, because they are also human beings and gradually bear complaint in mind, then they should not keep the complaint inside but instead speak to God in their prayers. It is the key to solve the problem.

On the other hand, brothers and sisters may have complaint about their leaders. They also should speak to God in prayer. They should not directly get angry each other. If we pray to God for others' faults, God will surely solve such problems.

13:18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

2) The Attitude of the Leaders

The author records the attitude of the leaders in Verse 18. He, therefore, asked them to pray for them so that they are able to complete it. The church leaders and pastors need to have "a clear conscience" (a pure conscience) and desire "to live honorably in every way" (to correctly do everything). It means to live before God. We may be able to cheat people, but we can't deceive God's eye, who looks through everything.

My friends, we Christians often say, "I'll pray for you." It is very blessed thing, however, do we really pray for them? We may pray that day or for a few days. When we think about it honestly, it has become a mere greeting word of Christians, hasn't it? When we say, "I will pray", we should do what we say, for we are speaking to the Almighty God.

Then, what should we do if we don't want to merely say it as Christian greeting word? ⇒
Make a prayer notebook

It will make us very happy when we pray for the leaders who live like this. The spiritual authority is first given by God to those who have attitudes like this. Brothers and sisters listen to the Word from such leaders and they willingly follow them. As a result, the beautiful relationships (to understand each other) between church leaders and church members are built.

Finally, the author records as below—

13:19 I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

The verse above seems to be very personal, but it refers to the beautiful relationships between church leaders and the brothers and sisters. The author lived far from his readers, therefore, he wanted to see them as soon as possible. It expresses his simple feeling of longing. It is natural that those who have same faith will want to meet again.

Therefore, he asked them to, "Pray for us" so that they would be able to see each other again. When many people pray with one heart, many people come together with joy.

Our Christian hearts are united into one with prayer. God who replies to our prayer fulfills it. Therefore, it is very important to pray for each other in the church. The Christian Church has placed more importance on it. It means that the saints of Christ live in relationships of understanding.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Building Relationships of Understanding"

—Prayers are the Real Key—

We studied the secret of the interpersonal relationships that is very important for our Christian life. That is to build relationships of understanding through prayer. God wants the Church, His Body, to have understanding relationships with one another.

What do you think about today's message? What kind of relationships do we have? We studied the relationships between leaders, each leader of cell groups, and brothers and sisters. It is very difficult to restore a relationship once it is broken. However, the Bible teaches the secret to restore it: we are able to pray for each other.

Let's remember the conclusion of today's message.

© The leaders and brothers and sisters should pray for each other.

13:18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

* God Bless You