

Using the Hymns in the Lord's Table Meeting

Scripture Reading: Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16

- I. The Lord's table meeting is the most important meeting of a local church; it is for remembering the Lord, with the remembrance of the Lord as the center for the Lord's enjoyment:**
 - A. Everything done in the meeting—whether the singing and speaking of the hymns, prayer and praise, Bible reading, or words of inspiration—should take the Lord as the center.
 - B. The attendants in the meeting should speak concerning the Lord's person and work, His love and virtues, His living and suffering on the earth, or His glory and honor in heaven, so that others may consider or realize these things in order to remember the Lord Himself.
 - C. All distractions from the focus of the Lord's table should be avoided:
 1. Hymns on fighting the spiritual warfare or testimonies concerning our being rescued from suffering are not fitting at the Lord's table meeting.
 2. Prayers that ask the Lord to do something for us also are not appropriate in the Lord's table meeting.
 - D. The Lord's table meeting of a local church must be proper and adequate:
 1. An improper meeting shows that the church has not received the necessary training.
 2. An inadequate meeting shows that the church is immature.
 3. A strong meeting indicates that a local church bears a prevailing testimony of the Lord.
- II. In order for us to enrich, strengthen, enliven, refresh, and uplift our meetings, we need to use the hymns—1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.**
- III. Every hymn that is up to the standard must meet three basic requirements:**
 - A. First, the words of a hymn must be based on the truth; singing hymns that contain errors in truth leads God's children into error and into improper sentiments.
 - B. Second, a hymn needs to be poetic in its form and structure; all the songs in the Psalms are poetry.
 - C. Third, a hymn needs to provide spiritual impact; it must lead us to the spiritual reality behind the words, to touch what the hymn says (for example, Psalm 51).
- IV. In order to select hymns in the Lord's table meeting, we must first know the purpose of hymns:**
 - A. A hymn is a poem, and a poem is for the expression of feelings.
 - B. Songs are the expression of man's finest feelings; God wants to lead His children toward a walk of finer, tenderer, and more song-like feelings.
 - C. A poem, a hymn, is the expression of our feeling; when we come together to choose hymns, we must hold firmly to this secret.
- V. We need to learn the principle of selecting hymns:**
 - A. The principle of choosing hymns is that we should choose a hymn according to the feeling that we sense in the meeting.
 - B. When we touch a certain atmosphere according to the prevailing feeling in the meeting, we should select a hymn from the hymnal that expresses that feeling best.
 - C. We must come out of our personal feelings and touch the feeling and atmosphere in the meeting and follow the flow of the Holy Spirit.

- D. Leading the meetings is not the responsibility of the elders and deacons only; it is the responsibility of all the saints; hence, we have an obligation to learn to select hymns.

VI. In selecting hymns, we must be clear concerning the different categories of hymns; we must also know their contents, focus, sensation, taste, and tune:

- A. First, we must have knowledge of the different categories of the hymns; the table of contents in our hymnal can help us with this, since it categorizes all the hymns.
- B. Then we need to read and even to study the contents of the hymns.
- C. We also need to find out the central thought, the focus, of each hymn.
- D. Finally, we need to know the hymns in their sensation and taste; each hymn has its own sensation, so it has its own taste:
 - 1. We should care for the standard of the hymns; we can know the standard by sensing the hymns; the sensation of a hymn is based upon the thought in the hymn and also refers to its taste.
 - 2. Two examples of the standard of the hymns are as follows:
 - a. Hymns on faithfulness of the Father God—*Hymns*, #19 (not so solid, complete, and perfect) and #18 (full of truth).
 - b. Hymns concerning our love for the Lord and His love for us—*Hymns*, #70 (low in life, truth, experience, and revelation), #154 (a much higher standard), and #152 (the highest standard).
- E. In addition, we should know the tune of the hymns; many good hymns can be killed by a poor melody.

VII. In order to remember the Lord in the Lord's table meeting, we need to see that it is the Lord's person and work that are worthy of our remembrance:

- A. First, we need to see the person of the Lord, to see who He is; we must see the two aspects of His person: He is God yet man; He is the Creator yet a creature—*Hymns*, #56-64.
- B. Second, we need to see the Lord's living on earth; this includes His humbling Himself, His humiliation, and His human virtues—*Hymns*, #86-90.
- C. Third, we need to remember the Lord's suffering and death; this is to remember the Lord's work in redemption—*Hymns*, # 91-116.
- D. Fourth, we need to remember the Lord's exaltation, including His ascension and glorification—*Hymns*, #117-144.

VIII. Every Lord's table meeting should be focused:

- A. If we touch the Lord's love in the atmosphere of the meeting, our focus should be the Lord's love.
- B. The focus may also be the Lord's name, His death, His humbling Himself, His living on the earth, His sufferings, His ascension and glorification, His splendor, or His sweetness.
- C. Regardless of the focus, the selecting of hymns, praising, and sharing should point to this focus.

IX. We also need to learn how to apply the hymns at the appropriate time:

- A. Certain hymns are good for certain times in the meeting, so we need to know the hymns first and apply them at the proper time.
- B. Certain hymns may be good to start a certain section of the meeting; after a section of the meeting has been started, we may need another hymn to strengthen and enrich the started section; also a hymn may be needed to prolong and uplift the same section.

- C. One person starts, and all the others have to continue to strengthen and enrich what has been started; teamwork is involved here.
- D. To apply the hymns at the appropriate time, we need to sense and follow the atmosphere of the meeting.

X. We need to learn to praise the Lord with the hymns:

- A. We should not merely shout, declare, and quote from the hymnal in a mechanical way.
- B. We should praise the Lord with the thought of the hymns, recomposing some of the terms and phrases.
- C. Our praising should go beyond merely reading from the hymnal; our praising should be our digesting of the hymns and making them a living praise to the Lord.

XI. We need to consider our calling of hymns in the section of worshipping the Father at the Lord's table:

- A. When we worship the Father, we do not need a new beginning; we simply need to make a turn; the section of the Lord's table meeting on the worship of the Father should be linked to the section on the remembrance of the Lord.
- B. We need to call hymns according to the Father's being, the Father's person (see *Hymns*, #10-13):
- C. We also need to call hymns according to the Father's attributes, such as His love, His kindness, His faithfulness, His greatness, His wisdom, His mercy, and His glory (see *Hymns*, #14-31).

XII. We need to be deeply impressed that the crucial point in our service to the Lord is life:

- A. Life is the Spirit, and the Spirit is the reality of the living Christ—Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17.
- B. If we help the saints get on the track of life, all the details of our practice will be spontaneously regulated by life.
- C. We need some regulation, and regulation helps, but we need to be careful; a situation that is fully regulated can become like a cemetery, a situation of death.
- D. Brother Nee took the lead to practice the truth with life; we must make it clear to the saints that we are not for the regulations but for life.
- E. If the saints grow in life adequately, spontaneously they will be regulated.