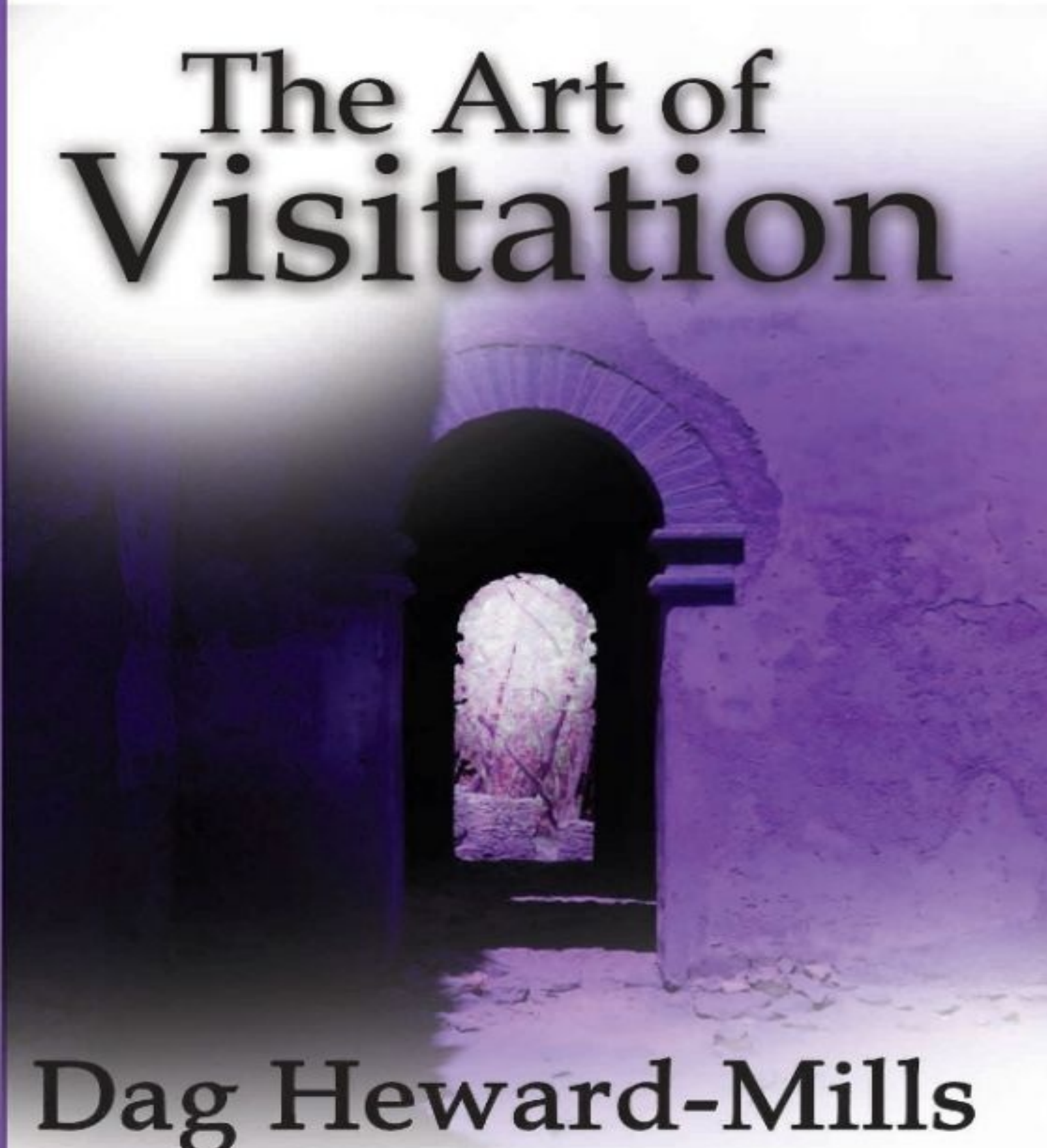
# The Art of Visitation



Dag Heward-Mills

**The Art Of Visitation**

by Dag Heward-Mills

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Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible

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# Chapter 1

## Twelve Reasons Why Pastors Must Visit Their Sheep

Pastors, visitation will transform your pastoral ministry! Visitation gives rise to explosive church growth. Visitation is all about going to people's homes and workplaces in order to minister to them. Ministering to people in their home settings is one of the greatest keys to an effective ministry.

Visitation is an essential part of real pastoral ministry. Visitation is not pseudo-ministry. It is the real thing. Regardless of how much you pray you must still visit the sheep.

Read your Bible and you will discover that God expects pastors to visit their sheep.

Dear pastor, choose to have more than a preaching centre where the sheep gather. Do not conduct yourself as an armchair executive or a Prime Minister. Be a real shepherd who seeks the lost sheep wherever they may be found. That is real pastoral ministry.

**Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and HAVE NOT VISITED THEM: behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.**

**Jeremiah 23:2**

### 12 Reasons Why Pastors Must Visit Their Sheep

1. Every church member needs a visit.
2. Every church member deserves a visit.
3. Every church member expects a visit.
4. The more visits a sheep has, the more healthy it will be.
5. A visit makes a sheep a permanent church member.
6. God expects every pastor to visit the sheep.
7. Every sheep needs a repeated visit from the same pastor.
8. Every sheep needs visits from other pastors and shepherds.

9. The sin of neglect is the failure to visit.

10. Totally neglecting the sheep is the sin of abandonment.

11. Many of the sheep will fall away without visitation.

12. The church will not grow without visitation.

Not every problem can be solved in the church service. Many problems cannot be solved by a phone call.

When you take care of God's flock you will realize how many problems people have. The book of Ezekiel tells us that many sheep were diseased, broken and driven away.

**The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was SICK, neither have ye bound up that which was BROKEN, neither have ye brought again that which was DRIVEN AWAY, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.**

**Ezekiel 34:4,5**

The preaching from the pulpit cannot solve all the problems of the sheep. Sheep must be sought out. "…neither have ye sought that which was lost" (Ezekiel 34:4). The members of your church deserve a visit because Jesus died for them. He gave His life for them. Today, people are concerned with building their companies, businesses, houses and empires. No one cares about the sheep.

Jesus asked Peter on three occasions, "Do you love me?" Peter said, "Of course I do!" That would have been our response too. But Jesus made it clear that if you love Him, you should feed His sheep.

Sometimes, people need repeated visits because one visit is not enough to solve the problem. There are times that I have visited someone and nothing happened. There were times when someone else visited the same person and there was a breakthrough!

Failure to visit the sheep is neglect! In some cases, it is actually abandonment. Do not be surprised when the wrath of God comes upon shepherds.

**Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.**

**Jeremiah 48:10**

# Chapter 2

## Three Secrets behind the Power of Visitation

Visits have life-changing power! Many pastors do not know the secret behind the power of visitation. In this chapter, I want you to understand why visitation, in the ministry of a pastor, is so powerful!

**Visitation Is a Powerful Mixture of**

**Three Forces**

***1. Visitation is an expression of LOVE.***

***2. Visitation involves the ministry of the WORD.***

***3. Visitation involves the ministry of PRAYER.***

The Word of God is powerful and life changing. The Bible says that it brings light where there is darkness. It is therefore no surprise that it has a powerful effect on people.

Prayer is also powerful. The Bible says that it availeth much. That means it has great effect. But the Bible also says that love never fails! There are many spiritual weapons that we use all the time. No weapon has been described as “never failing”. This makes love a very powerful weapon.

Sometimes, we minister the Word but the people don’t feel loved. **In visitation, there is a mixture of the Word, prayer and love.** The person who is being visited feels loved. For you to have gone to his home, you must really love him!

The act of journeying to someone’s house at an odd hour demonstrates great love. You cannot demonstrate love in words alone.

**My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in DEED and in truth.**

**1 John 3:18**

Loving in deed involves going to people’s homes. Loving in deed involves knowing the real life situations that people live in. Sometimes the person who is being visited does not even hear the words that you speak. What remains with him is the fact that you cared enough to come.

Dear minister, do not underestimate the effect of this powerful mixture - the Word, love and prayer!

# Chapter 3

## Eight Guidelines for Fruitful Visitation

1. Every visit must accomplish something.
2. Every visit must begin with a relaxing social segment.
3. Pastors must remember that shepherding visits are not social outings.
4. Every pastoral visit must be a spiritual event with a spiritual impact.
5. Every pastoral visit must include the ministering of the Word.
6. A visit becomes effective when the power of God is released through prayer.
7. Every pastoral visit must end with a powerful prayer.
8. A visit must have a powerful lasting impact.

**He came unto his own…But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:**

**John 1:11,12**

Jesus accomplished a lot in His three-year visit to the earth. You will notice that Jesus did not waste time doodling in the ministry. He preached, taught and ministered to people. The first part of Jesus' visit to the earth was a relaxing social segment. He fitted into the society and became one of their own.

**And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And**

**Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.**

**Luke 2:51,52**

But Jesus remembered that He was not just paying a social visit to the earth. He preached and blessed the people. His prayers were so powerful that they raised the dead and cast out devils. After that visit, this

earth has never been the same again.

**And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.**

**John 21:25**

# Chapter 4

## Ten Rules for Visitation

**1. A pastor must never refuse a request for a visit.**

It is not always that a sheep will cry for help. When they do, make sure that you respond. Paul did not ignore the cry for help.

…**There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.**

**Acts 16:9**

**2. Every pastor must discern the unspoken request for a visit.**

Whenever a church member is in difficulty, you must discern the need for attention. The song says, “His eyes are on the sparrow”. Just as His eyes are on the sparrow, your eyes must be on the sheep. Just as God has numbered your hair, you must number your sheep and look out for them. The anger of the Lord is upon the shepherds who ignore the problems of the sheep.

**The DISEASED have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was SICK, neither have ye bound up that which was BROKEN, neither have ye brought again that which was DRIVEN AWAY, neither have ye sought that which was LOST; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were SCATTERED, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.**

**Ezekiel 34:4,5**

This Scripture highlights the problems of church members: diseased, sick, broken, lost, driven away, scattered, etc. May God open your eyes to see when there is a need. May God give you the heart to care for His people.

**3. Every pastor or shepherd must practise both routine and special circumstance visitation.**

Every shepherd must have a routine for visiting his or her sheep. When I

was sixteen years old I drew up a list of members in my fellowship. I decided to visit every one of them during the holidays. I drew maps to everyone's house. There was nothing particularly wrong with anyone. As a shepherd, I had decided to visit the sheep routinely. The shepherd's heart roams the field! He wonders where everyone is. He wonders whether they are all right.

However, there are special circumstances that arise. These special circumstances such as: death, sickness, bereavement, birth of a child, marital crisis, etc. also call for extra visits.

**4. Special circumstances in a church member's life is a call for urgent pastoral action.**

**And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept thy father's sheep and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I WENT OUT AFTER HIM and smote him, and delivered it out of its mouth, and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and slew him.**

**1 Samuel 17:34**

When a lion attacks the sheep, it is definitely an emergency for the shepherd. This is not a routine event. It calls for rapid action. Whenever there is a special circumstance in someone's life, the pastor must be quick to respond. Your church member may be in the mouth of a roaring lion. Just like David the shepherd, you must go out after him.

In every field of endeavour there are emergencies. Even in the field of medicine there are categorized emergencies. For instance, there are surgical emergencies, gynaecological emergencies, and so on. A doctor is trained to diagnose and react rapidly to these emergencies.

When people are broken by circumstances, it is a spiritual emergency. When people are lost and are at the mercy of wolves, it is a spiritual emergency.

I can just picture a member of mine in the realm of the Spirit. I see him in the mouth of the lion. How urgently he needs help. But this is just a picture of where many sheep are.

**The DISEASED have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was SICK, neither have ye bound up that which was BROKEN, neither have ye brought again that which was DRIVEN AWAY, neither have ye sought that which was LOST; but with force**

**and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were SCATTERED, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.**

**Ezekiel 34:4,5**

In the ministry world, these special circumstances are our emergencies. We must respond rapidly if we want to save our sheep's lives.

**5. Every pastor must practise both surprise and expected visits.**

Surprise and expected visits have different effects. They are both important and must both be practised.

**6. Surprise visits reveal the real circumstances of your church members lives.**

Surprise visits often show the real state of affairs in people's homes. I have walked into people's houses and found them smoking away. At other times, I have found people living together when they were not really married.

I have discovered members living in abject poverty and misery. They looked so nice and polished in church. You would never imagine the circumstances of the person's home.

Surprise visits help you to know who you are pastoring. They even help you to preach and minister aright.

**7. Expected visits give church members the chance to show their best.**

When someone is expecting a visitor, he prepares the home. This enables the church members to put up their best. This gives them a sense of accomplishment as the pastor sees the best of them.

**8. Pastors must protect themselves by visiting in pairs.**

…**and send them two and two before his face into every city…**

**Luke 10:1**

Two are better than one. One strengthens the other. You help each other to preach and to share the Word. One puts to flight a thousand and two put to flight ten thousand. That is why Jesus sent them out in "twos".

As you visit people of the opposite sex, they cannot easily claim that you are coming with ulterior motives because you do not come alone. This is the advantage of visiting in pairs.

**9. It is safer for two ministers of the same sex to go on visitation.**

As you frequently visit, you will find yourself bonding with your partner. You may not wish to bond with the person with whom you are doing visitation.

**10. Pastors must not visit more than is necessary, to avoid giving the wrong impression.**

**Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbours house; lest he be wary of thee and so hate thee.**

**Proverbs 25:17**

If you constantly visit a particular person, the mood of that person will change from exhilaration to uncertainty to irritation to anger. Do not let your church members hate you because you visit them too often.

They will begin to wonder what your motives are. “Is the pastor hungry? Does he want some food? Does he want something from us?”, they will ask themselves.

# Chapter 5

## Seven Tips That Make Visitation Easier

**1. Combine your journey to and from church with a visit.**

…**Redeeming the time…**

**Ephesians 5:16**

I like the way someone comments about this Scripture. He says, *"Buying up those moments which others throw away."* When you buy up those moments that others throw away, you will achieve great things for God.

**2. Combine your journey to and from work with a visit.**

…**buy up those moments…**

**Ephesians 5:16**

**3. Always do multiple visits in one trip.**

…**buy up those moments…**

**Ephesians 5:16**

There are often a number of people who can be visited on one journey. I often try to visit several people on one journey.

**4. Visit all the people living in the same area in one trip.**

A good pastor must know the people who live in an area. Anytime that you are in that area, you must know the potential visits you can make.

**5. Visit people at work or in school when you cannot get them at home.**

**See then that ye walk circumspectly… as wise…**

**Ephesians 5:15**

Some people do not have a home that can be visited. Sometimes they are living with uncles and aunts. Sometimes they sleep outside on the street. Perhaps you can visit them at their workplaces or schools. I have made many successful visits to people in school and at work.

**6. Use Sundays as your most valuable day for visitation.**

…**Redeeming the time…[buying up those moments]**

**Ephesians 5:16**

Sundays are great days for visitation. Most people relax at home on Sunday afternoons. Make the most of your Sundays. Sundays are working days for pastors.

Pastors must work on Sundays and rest on Mondays.

**7. Do not be afraid of visiting late in the night.**

**Blessed are the people whom the master will find working in the second and third watches of the night. The second and third watches of the night were nine p.m. and twelve midnight respectively. This is the stamp of approval for servants who do God's work as late as 9.00 p.m. or midnight.**

…**and if ye shall come in the SECOND WATCH, or in the THIRD WATCH, and find them so, BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS.**

**Luke 12:38**

Many people sleep late anyway. Television keeps people awake in their homes. *There are many people you will never reach unless you visit them at a late hour.* But make sure you visit in pairs. This provides safety in case someone thinks you have the wrong motive.

Chapter 6

# Five Visits That Have Life-Changing Power

## The Visits of Jehovah

### 1. A visit to solve marital problems

God visited Adam and Eve.

**And they HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.**

**Genesis 3:8**

The Lord God visited Adam and Eve in the midst of a crisis. They were having problems because they had done something wrong. Adam was blaming Eve for talking to the serpent. Eve was blaming Adam for not spending time with her. It was a veritable marriage crisis - they didn't have clothes to wear and they didn't have any money. The Lord walked in at the right time. He showed them the consequences of their actions. He ministered the Word of God to them. Then He organised some new clothes for the family. What a visit! This visit changed the course of human history.

**Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.**

**Genesis 3:21**

### 2. A visit to encourage people

God visited Abraham.

**And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, THE LORD APPEARED to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect… THOU SHALT BE A FATHER of many nations. Neither shall thy name anymore be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham…**

**Genesis 17:1,5**

Abraham had been married for many years and had not been able to

have a child. This was a great problem for his family. During a visitation by Jehovah, a word of encouragement was spoken, “You are going to be a father!” Dear pastor, can you imagine the encouraging effect of those words on your life if you were in Abraham’s situation?

Many times when I have visited people, they have said, “I feel so encouraged.” *The combination of love, prayer and the Word is an unbeatable mixture.*

**3. A visit to bring advice and guidance**

God visited Isaac.

**And THE LORD APPEARED unto him, and said,**

**Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:**

**Genesis 26:2**

There was an economic crisis in Isaac’s city. As he prepared to get a visa to travel, he received a visitation. During the visitation he received advice.

The Lord told him, “Don’t travel like everyone else.”

God will look after you! Isaac’s life was changed forever because of that piece of advice! Many people’s lives are changed forever because of a visit that brings advice.

As you go out on visitation, see yourself as someone bringing advice and guidance to God’s people.

**4. A visit that makes a sheep committed, anointed and a tithe payer**

God visited Jacob.

**And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said,**

**Surely THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE; and I knew it not.**

**Genesis 28:16**

Jacob received a visitation from the Lord. He was a backslidden person who had cheated many people. That night, his life was changed forever - a crooked person was made straight. From then on, he became a committed Christian. He decided to pay tithes and to help build the church. What a difference visitation can make. Do you see what a powerful weapon visitation is in the ministry of a pastor?

**And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and**

**raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.**

**Genesis 28:20-22**

Dear friend, when you go on visitation, talk to your members about commitment. Teach them to pay their tithes. Teach them the blessings of divine protection and provisions. Your visit will have a permanent effect on their lives.

**5. A visit to get a member's attention so God can speak to him**

**And the angel of THE LORD APPEARED unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.**

**Exodus 3:2**

God visited Moses. Moses was experiencing a "wilderness season" in his life. Things had not gone well with him for over forty years. One visit changed all of that.

Sometimes a visit by the pastor can draw the attention of a church member to the fact that God knows him personally.

The impact of this is often remarkable! There is a dramatic change as people realize that God has them in mind. As it was with Moses, a long season of backsliding can end through one visit.

# Chapter 7

## Five Visits That Bring a Permanent Change

### The Visits of Jesus Christ

**1. A visit that brings salvation to many lives**

Jesus visited the world.

**But AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:**

**John 1:12**

This is my favourite example of a powerful visit - three and a half years that changed the world forever. This is the most phenomenal visit of all time. This is the mother of all visits - the visit that changed the world forever!

Thank God that Jesus came. He could have written a letter to us. He could have sent an angel. But He came Himself. That demonstrated the love of God to mankind.

Many people have responded to this love. The fruits of this visit are everywhere. Every church building you see is a result of this visit. Every Christian you see is a fruit of this visit. Every minister of the Gospel is a product of Jesus' three-and-a-half year visit to the world.

A visit can bring salvation. Christ's visit to the earth brought salvation to millions. There are many times that I have led people to Christ during a visit.

I have seen some of these people permanently established in Christ. I have seen people weep as they gave their lives to Christ in their living rooms.

As you go on visitation, make sure you minister to everyone who is not saved in the household. Always remember to lead people to Christ during your visits.

**2. A visit that brings healing**

Jesus visited Peter's house.

**And when JESUS WAS COME INTO PETER'S HOUSE, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.**

**Matthew 8:14,15**

During visitation, you can also pray for the sick. Believe God for the anointing to flow through you. Visitation may be your only opportunity to try out the gift of healing.

**3. A visit (on request) that yielded miracles**

Jesus visited Jarius' house.

**And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and BESOUGHT HIM THAT HE WOULD COME INTO HIS HOUSE:**

**Luke 8:41**

We are so used to seeing the power of God in a packed service. We think that God can only move when there are thousands of people present.

Let me share a secret with you. Did you know that Jesus reserved the best miracles for the eyes of a few?

Why didn't he walk on the water before thousands of people? When He rebuked the storm, why did He do it before only twelve people who were already committed to Him?

Did you know that when Jesus filled Peter's boat with so much fish that it began to sink, it was only Peter, Andrew, James and John who saw it? When He rose from the dead why didn't He show Himself to thousands of people?

Dear friend, learn the mystery of godliness! *God does not need to impress anyone.* God can do the greatest miracles in the privacy of someone's home.

Feel free to minister the power of God. The first time I experienced someone falling under the power of the Holy Spirit was in a bedroom (not in a church hall). I was ministering to a young man and he collapsed under the power. There was no one there to see it happen but it was real! As you go on visitation, get ready for God's power!

**4. A visit that brought teaching and domestic advice**

Jesus visited Mary and Martha.

**Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha RECEIVED HIM INTO HER HOUSE.**

**Luke 10:38**

Jesus practised all kinds of visits. He visited two ladies and gave them good domestic advice. He told Martha that she was too involved in the kitchen. In other words, He advised her to become more spiritual. It is not everything you can comment about in someone's home. If you have the right relationship with the person you may be able to speak. If not, keep your mouth shut and move on! You may get into trouble by speaking about things you have no business commenting on.

…**A fool uttereth all his mind…**

**Proverbs 29:11**

**5. A visit for general interaction and direct rebukes**

Jesus visited a Pharisee.

**And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: AND HE WENT IN, AND SAT DOWN TO MEAT.**

**Luke 11:37**

The Lord visited all kinds of people and therefore you must visit all kinds of people. This visit turned out into one of the strongest rebukes that Jesus ever meted out to hypocrites. Jesus told His hosts that they were fools.

**And when the Pharisees saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; BUT YOUR INWARD PART IS FULL OF RAVENING AND WICKEDNESS, YE FOOLS…**

**Luke 11:38**

When He visited this Pharisee, there were a lot of rebukes. Jesus was not intimidated by the dinner that was set before him, neither should you be.

# Chapter 8

## Five - Visits That Establish Church Members

**The Pauline Visits**

**1. A visit that leads to the Holy Spirit baptism**

Paul visited the Ephesus Christians.

**And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts CAME TO EPHESUS: AND FINDING CERTAIN DISCIPLES, And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them and they spake with tongues and prophesied.**

**Acts 19:1,6**

Do not hesitate to minister the baptism of the Holy Spirit when you are on visitation. **A visiting minister is a mobile church service.** Good things can happen when you are anointed of the Spirit. I remember ministering the baptism of the Holy Spirit in someone's home. This person was so happy. He continued speaking in tongues for over one hour. If I had waited for this fellow to come to church, he may never have had the power of the Holy Spirit.

**2. Visitation to build a relationship**

Paul visited the church at Tyre.

…**and LANDED AT TYRE: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days…And when we had ACCOMPLISHED THOSE DAYS, we departed…**

**Acts 21:3-5**

Sometimes a visit must be made to build a relationship. It is important for a pastor to build relationships with all or some of his church members. Visitation is one of the effective ways for building relationships. Paul had no other reason than to accomplish certain days at certain places.

**3. A visit to recruit pastors**

Paul visited Derbe and Lystra.

**THEN CAME HE TO DERBE AND LYSTRA: and, behold, a certain disciple was there named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman… Him would Paul have to go forth with him…**

**Acts 16:1,3**

Amazing things can happen during visitation. It was during visitation that Paul identified a potential pastor. Who was this pastor? It turned out to be Timothy. If Paul had not done the visit to Derbe and Lystra, some people would not have had a pastor and the book of Timothy would never have been written.

Some years ago, I remember visiting a family that lived two hours away from the church. As I set out, I had no idea what that visit would lead to. Today, I have a whole church that is pastored by someone who joined the church as a result of that visit. I have also recruited a “Timothy” during a visit. I see you recruiting pastors as you go on visitation!

**4. A visit to strengthen church members**

Paul visited Galatia and Phrygia.

**And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and WENT OVER ALL THE COUNTRY OF GALATIA AND PHRYGIA in order, strengthening all the disciples.**

**Acts 18:23**

Thank God for the life of the apostle Paul. Can you see how many different places and people he visited? If he had not done this work, what would have become of the church? Every time you go on a visit, you strengthen the sheep. Jesus smiles on you lovingly as you strengthen His little lambs.

*******

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