

The Book of First Peter
"An Urgent Appeal"
1 Peter 4:7-11

Intro. 1. Submission is one of the forceful thoughts which provoked Peter to write. It started back at 2:11 and continues through the current section of his letter.

2. The submission mentioned here concerns one's contribution to the local assembly. It is a timeless situation indeed.

3. How may a believer help in the local group? Several topics come to the fore as the apostle writes.

4. But, there is a matter which casts its spell over the discussion. The time to serve is short. Suffering will soon be over. Peter affirms: "But the end of all things is at hand. . . ." This is no time for anything but the best.

5. In what ways, therefore, does he suggest we may help in the assembly?

1. SUPPLICATION

It is noteworthy that the noun prayer is in the plural. This marks out that prayers of all kinds and prayers of all acts are in the apostle's mind.

How are prayers to be entered into? Two verbs seem to point the direction:

a. "Be sober." It presses the idea of self control. One is to live above sensuality and worldliness. Etymologically, the verb is related to the mind, hence, the command: be sober in mind! Only such can really enter into prayers.

b. "Be watchful." Although prayers are mentioned only with this verb in the A. V., it is better to take prayers as conjoined with both verbs. This verb urges feelings and conduct which are in harmony with the sober mind mentioned above.

2. AFFECTION

There are three statements made about love in the assembly! Here they are:

a. Its supremacy. Before all things, love must take a dominant position.

b. Its fervency. The idea is one of extending oneself in love. Not just a passing thought, but doing something about it. Cf. 1:22

c. Its efficacy. Words are quoted from Proverbs 10:12. Love hides the faults of the brethren.

3. ASSOCIATION

In the early days, believers shrunk from the contamination of heathen inns and from the insults and outrages suffered there. This promoted Christian hospitality. Peter avers:

a. Its place. The word means "friendly to strangers." This is needed!

b. Its promotion. The Bible urges it upon leaders (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). But all believers also (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 3 John 5, 6).

c. Its practice. Must be without complaint. To complain is to spoil hospitality. Whatever expense or trouble is involved must be forgotten.

4. MINISTRATION

Here is a precious summary on gifts in the local assembly. Four important items are given:

a. Explanation of gifts. The gifts are:

1) Received--at new birth.

2) Ministered to one another--during one's lifetime.

3) Accepted--as a trust from God.

4) Demonstrated--as the grace of God.

b. Elucidation of gifts. Two are mentioned:

1) Speaking--let it be done as the mouth of God.

2) Ministry--let it be done with the ability of God.

c. Exhortation of gifts. One is in mind: All to the end that God gets the glory!

d. Evaluation of gifts. Here a peon of praise goes out to the Lord in the form of a doxology.

Conclusion: Whenever one finds a local assembly involved in a wonderful manifestation of these ways to positively help, he has found a group which is giving the Lord glory and praise. Then too, souls on the outside will be touched and brought to Him!