

Group average

Whilst in the Army, we learnt a technique for evaluating the distance from where you were to another distant point. Each member of the group would estimate the distance by employing various techniques. Then the leader of the group would add all the distances together and divide by the number of the estimates. This would produce a group average which would be fairly close, because some people go too far and others don't go far enough. I see the same principle applied when the Hebrews gathered manna in the wilderness.

"This is the thing which the Lord has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent.' " Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. (Exo 16:16-18)

(An omer is approximately 2,2 litres or 4 pints.)

In Corinthians, Paul is talking about giving and sharing between groups of Christians; so that there are not rich groups and poor groups, but all groups have sufficient to meet their basic needs. He refers to the collection of manna as an example, which ensured that each person had sufficient food.

For if there is a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have. For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack - that there may be equality. As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack." (2Co 8:12-15)

The idea being, that by sharing in times of shortage and abundance, an adequate sufficiency is maintained within all groups of Christians. I believe this principle to apply to the knowledge of God's Word, within groups of Christians. Due to circumstance, lack or abundance, different principles of understanding are highlighted from scripture. It is important to share this revelation knowledge between groups of Christians to ensure a balanced understanding of the scriptures, when measured against God's Word. For the same reasons as wealth and need, some people go too far, and others don't go far enough.

Although Paul was talking about order in the church, I feel 1Co 14:26 also applies to participation in a group, to prevent the situation, where some do everything and others do nothing.

How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. (1Co 14:26)

We all have different giftings, talents, skills and different points of view developed from personal experiences. Participation and sharing is the key to a healthy group in an unbalanced environment. It also produces the maximum benefit from limited resources of material and intellect.

One of the dangers of organised religion is that people will say, "It's not my job, let them do it." If there is no sharing of knowledge, ideas etc. then an unbalanced situation can easily develop. Stubbornness to entertain a different point of view and an unwillingness to share in revelation knowledge can lead to a new church denomination being created.

I think people forget what Joseph said;
"Do not interpretations belong to God?" (Gen 40:8)

Some will receive a revelation and then take it to the marketplace, with CD's DVD's and books etc.

I recently heard a preacher talking about *'the cloud of witnesses'* (Heb 12:1) who testify of faith; and thought about the condemned rich man's argument with Abraham. The rich man wanted Abraham to send someone from the dead, to warn his five brothers about Hell. Abraham said, *"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."* (Luk 16:31)

We now have something far more powerful in the compiled Word of God, the Bible, and therefore have no excuse for not reading, sharing and understanding the Word.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (Jam 1:5)

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