

# THE MINISTRY OF REMINDING

## II Peter 3:1-2

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On June 9, 2022, a task was posted on the youths' WhatsApp group. The task was for each youth to check up on other youths - who are not family (either by blood or marriage), and who are not in one's circle of close friends. The checking-up can be through a phone call, or on social media platforms.



The objective is to extend fellowship beyond boundaries, to know how one is faring, and to remind each other of spiritual matters.

In performing a task, I reached a brother who attached membership to Grey congregation some time ago.

We discussed life, work, and faith. I asked him, why he has not been seen in worship for a while. He answered that he tentatively relocated to Akwa-Ibom in December 2021 to learn a skill. *It's just struck me that for solid six months* - I did not know where my youth brother was and how he was faring at his new location.

Maybe the zonal leader does not know where his zone brother was and his condition. Maybe the ministers do not know where their ministry brother was and his specific state. Maybe the elders do not know where their flock was and the status of his welfare.

What about those brethren who are still within the zones location of the church, who have not been seen in worship for a while? Do we know the cause of their absenteeism? Do we know their current spiritual state?

How many brethren must have slipped away from our fellowship (*two weeks, one month, six months, one year, three years, one decade, etc.*) because we did not remind them of the value of our fellowship in the shortest possible time?

Do we set out daily to know how we are faring in the Christian race; how we are coping with life and its struggles? Do we set out daily to remind ourselves that there is hope and God still cares? Do we set out daily to remind ourselves of the importance of holding on to our faith in God and cherishing the word of God?

Reminding is a great ministry. The word *ministry* simply means a duty, service, or function that one is to perform. As we go on, we will see *reminding* as a function of the Christian's life which we must perform.

The word reminding is from the Greek word ὑπόμνησις, εως, ἡ, transliterated as *hupomnēsis*, meaning a recollection, urging someone to recall a good memory, etc.

There are many ministries in the church. We have the ministry of reconciliation (**2 Cor. 5:18**), the ministry of edification (**1 Cor.16:15**), the ministry of evangelism (**2 Cor. 4:1**), the ministry of orphanage and widows (**James 1:27**), the ministry of welfare (**Matthew 25:34-40**), etc.

But often we neglect the ministry of reminding because we do not see it as part of our Christian life.

Jesus created the ministry of reminding as a powerful tool needed by the apostles.

**John 14:26** - *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

Apostle Jude directs our minds to the *ministry of reminding*. He reminded Christians about the warning from Jesus, which the apostles spoke about.

**Jude 17** - *But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Apostle Peter also performed the ministry of reminding. **II Peter 3:1-2** - *Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.*

Every day, Christians face a lot of dangers from trials (*faith threatened*), hardships (*hope weakened*), disappointments and failures (*zeal quenched, depression sets in*), temptations (*faith abandoned*), often yielding to sin (*resigned to ungodly living, hardness of heart*), and people who make a mockery of God's words and power (*doubts arise, easily deceived by error or falsehood*), etc.

The consequence of all these is to create gaps in fellowship among brethren, where one can easily slip away from fellowship almost unnoticed.

Apostle Peter strongly felt the urgency to perform the ministry of reminding. Through the ministry of reminding, he strongly urged the brethren to persevere no matter the circumstance.

*Ministry of Reminding* is part of the Christian's life. It is a very powerful tool for strengthening fellowship. It is an obligation to remind others of spiritual matters, showing concern and love.

It could be an uplifting or reviving visitation; a concerned phone call; an in-depth chat, etc.

It could be to contact absentee members, visit the sick, admonish an erring brother or sister, encourage an active member, visit leaders, etc.

The ministry of reminding should not be seen as an unpleasant and unnecessary task. We should not excuse ourselves from being involved in this ministry.

If the reminding is not performed, many will be discouraged and likely to be separated from God's presence.

**Hebrews 3:13** - *but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

## HOW DO WE PERFORM THIS MINISTRY EFFECTIVELY?

Peter reveals a simple formula that all can follow in order to perform this crucial ministry.

### We Must Have Fervent Love For Those We Want To Remind (II Peter 3:1)

*Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),*

Peter's use of the word *beloved* indicated that he genuinely loved the brethren.

The use of the word *beloved* should not be misunderstood to be just mere pronunciation of the word or just greetings. Otherwise, there would be no difference between worldly people and Christians.

**Matthew 5:47** - *And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?*

Peter affirmed his love beyond greetings. He reached out to them, not once but the second time. They share a strong love bond. It was easier for Peter to access and remind them. Love is described by action.

**1 Peter 4:8** - *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins.*

**1 John 4:20** - *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

How can we effectively remind brethren when we do not share a strong love that binds us together? How can we effectively remind brethren when there is *Am I Brother's Keeper Attitude*, malice, pride, and isolation among ourselves?

Can we humbly approach another Christian about a personal failing or not-edifying-act in spiritual matters? Can we remove bitterness and pride when someone approaches us too?

Or do we just keep silent and murmur within us, and hope the Holy Spirit will help us to do the reminding while we claim we love ourselves?

Paul reminded Peter of the need to stay faithful. He rebuked Peter under the bond of their love and they remained true Christian friends (*cf. Galatians 2:11ff.*).

We need to remind ourselves of our spiritual duties.

### We Must Establish Fellowship And Contact With Those We Want To Remind (II Peter 3:1)

We must have regular contact and fellowship with one another. Peter was in constant contact with the readers. He knew of their trials and temptations and was aware of their weaknesses and strengths. Because of constant association and intimate knowledge, he could remind them of duties and commitments to God.

How can we establish regular contact and fellowship with one another, when we are together only at *church services*?

We don't create and enjoy fellowship outside of *church services*. No get-together programs, no home fellowship, no visitation, no families and/or couples' program, no leaders retreat program, etc.

We are just bound by Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Open-Air Programs, etc.

Contact on a regular basis within and outside the church services is needed to effectively remind ourselves.

### We Must Use Uplifting Words On Those We Want To Remind (II Peter 3:1-2)

In the ministry of reminding, words determine how effective the reminding will be.

When we see brethren failing in spiritual matters, let us go gently, understanding the level of faith and maturity, and state of mind.

But, we should not lose the focus of the purpose of reminding. Speak the truth (*God's words*) but in love. Consider how the brother or sister can recover (*the way forward*). Consider that you too can be tempted (*Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:15, II Tim. 2:24-25*).

The conversation should be deep enough to awaken the mind of the person to what God requires of him or her.

## **CONCLUSION**

When we are reminding others of God's love, the brethren's concern, and eternity's destiny - we are revealing our true commitment to God!

The greatest kindness you can extend a fellow saint is a proper response in the urgent ministry of reminding ***(John Kachelman)***.

## **REFERENCES**

John Kachelman (1989, 2005), *The Ministry of Reminding* (Truth for Today).