

the mode may in the end secure them all. Sometimes one plan can be adopted and sometimes another. There may be an attractive change produced by varying the subjects, the persons leading, the order of exercises, and even the kinds of exercises. It might be advantageous even to observe a rotation of modes of conducting the services. It would not be wise to publish such a plan, and so make it obligatory. But to guide the pastor in arranging for the meetings, to keep any of the methods from being omitted and to preserve an attractive variety, it would certainly be profitable. A plan for the successive meetings might be something like this: (a) Meeting conducted in the common method; (b) Bible exercise; (c) Prayers and remarks voluntary; (d) Services conducted by a new leader; (e) Papers from correspondents; (f) Subjects previously announced. It is believed that the adoption of some such scheme of exercises, to be continued in as regular succession as circumstances might admit, would add very much to both the pleasure and profit of the prayer-meeting. One departure from the ordinary method should here be specially recommended. It is that of occasional silent prayer. When there is an unusual degree of solemn feeling in a meeting such prayer will have a most happy effect. Sometimes it will do more than the most glowing eloquence. It should not, however, be too often resorted to—hardly ever unless when deep feeling prevails. Then it will deepen and improve that feeling.

15. *A sense of the Divine Presence should be cherished in every meeting.* This is our final and most important counsel. The presence and the blessed influence of the Holy Ghost should be so highly esteemed that there

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would be a most determined effort to secure them at every assembly of the people of God for prayer. Without this all other devices to make the meeting interesting and profitable will be in vain; with it, a holy influence will come down—a sweetness, a solemnity, a power which will impart a peculiar delight and make the spot the dearest on earth. That the presence of Christ by his Spirit, when it is prayed for and looked for, may certainly be expected, is made abundantly sure by his own promise: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Why should not this promise be fulfilled to the letter in every prayer-meeting? If it were believed, prayed for and expected, and the meeting entered upon in that spirit, it undoubtedly would; and it certainly should be aimed at with all intensity of desire and purpose in every assembly of the people of God for his worship of prayer, praise and holy meditation. The presence of the blessed Master! Oh, what an elevated and sacred tone it would give to all the services of the hour! what a sweetness it would impart to every element of the services, from first to last! Then the blessing would surely be realized—the blessing of peace, the blessing of pardon, the blessing of comfort, the blessing of strength, the blessings of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"—the blessing that would build up believers in their most holy faith, and the blessing that from time to time would bring the impenitent into the kingdom of our dear Lord. This would be to the prayer-meeting the crown of interest and profit and glory. The presence of Christ would make every prayer-meeting so sacred and happy that it would of a truth be a foretaste of heaven. It would in the end draw the attendance of the people of God, and others

too, as no other plan, no matter how well devised, possibly could.

(b) COTTAGE PRAYER-MEETINGS.

In addition to the weekly prayer-meeting held ordinarily in some apartment of the church, it is an excellent plan to sustain cottage prayer-meetings in private houses throughout the bounds of the congregation. The places for holding these meetings should be so selected that they would be held occasionally in every district covered by the territory of the church. All arrangements for them—such as the times and places of holding, and the persons to conduct them—should be in the hands of one of the elders. The same elder might be the leader, or he might appoint some other person to take that place, while the pastor, who should attend as often as possible, takes his seat with the audience and joins very briefly in the exercises of prayer or remark. When such meeting is appointed at the house of any family, that family should feel it a special duty to endeavor to secure the attendance of all its neighbors, whether worshipers in that particular church or not. Notice should be given from the pulpit every Sabbath of the place where this meeting is to be held.

The influence of such meetings would be very beneficial in many ways. Holding them with families which perhaps had become somewhat cold or alienated would be likely to restore them to new interest. Families or individuals that could not otherwise be persuaded to put themselves under the sound of the gospel might in this way be induced to go to the house of a neighbor and there hear of its priceless blessings. There could be no better opportunity than is thus furnished for young and diffident men to begin to take part in the exercises of