

Hello,

We want to ask you to be praying for us and the church here in the next couple of days. This is in regards to the adultery situation in the church. It seems that things are not at all what we were told at first. It is possible that this was an affair that went on for a year or so. The woman involved was just as complicit as the man. We have requested that both couples and some of the church leaders meet with us on Thursday night. I will be trying to see if we can get the man and woman to clearly admit what they did. Then what we are hoping for is true repentance. After that they need to begin to repair the relationship with their spouses. Also, they will need to clearly confess in church. In a small village like this, the confession in church is not to let people know what happened. I am sure everyone here already knows. But it will indicate that they have truly repented and are asking the church for forgiveness. I know this may not be normal in many churches, but this is what we believe and what we teach. In a situation like this where offenses have been committed against others, and it is widely known in the village, we teach that they need to confess their sin to God, then to the person they sinned against, and ask their forgiveness. And then so that the church knows they are dealing with their sin, the need to confess and ask the church for forgiveness. What we are hoping for is an openness on the part of the two people who had the affair, and a beginning of healing in their families. We realize that this might not go exactly how we are hoping. So please pray that God will be working in their hearts and that the situation will be handled in a way that is honoring to God. Thanks so much.

Paul

Yes, we want to thank you for praying about the adultery situation in the church here. We were very aware of God's presence and His working in hearts as we met with the folks last night. The short version is that everyone confessed their sins and there seemed to be true repentance. The guilty parties asked for forgiveness, and they each agreed to confess their sin before the church. The longer version is below.

We asked both couples and the church leaders to meet at our house last night. The two couples came and two of the leaders came. After praying, I asked them to tell us what happened. We had been hearing some pretty serious things via the rumor mill. Thankfully many of these things were not true. What is true is that they had consensual liaisons for about a week back in January. The woman finally said that she wouldn't do it anymore and it stopped. The man told her to keep quiet about things, and she did that for several months. But finally, she couldn't keep it in anymore and she told her husband some of the truth. That is what got me involved. It really seems that no one knew what they had done until the woman came forward. All of this happened out in a rubber garden in the jungle.

The hardest person to deal with in all of this is the wife of the man who was caught in adultery. She isn't hard hearted, but she is very hurt and feels rejected. We listened to her tell us about her process of talking to God about this and over and over again forgiving her husband, only to have the anger come back and overwhelm her. She was pretty honest about all of that, and we did address this and tell her that this will be a process. She had to continue to confess her anger as sin, and continue to forgive her husband, just as God for Christ's sake has forgiven her.

The most touching moment was when the husband of the woman who committed adultery got up and apologized to each person in the room. You might wonder why HE would apologize. I did. He

is an extremely tender-hearted man. In doing this it opened the door for the others to apologize. He wife went up and kneeled before the other wife put her arms around her and cried as she asked for forgiveness. All of them expressed remorse for that they did. All of them agreed to confess to the church and ask their forgiveness for their actions that brought shame on all of us. We believe that this is important when everyone has heard what happened. It shows the church that they have dealt with the sin. It will also, hopefully, stop some of the rumors that are being spread. The truth was bad enough, the rumors are worse. We have found through experience that some people like lying and making things worse than they are.

I want to say here that my wife, Bella, was amazing in this meeting. She is a very empathetic person and everything she said and did help this to come to a good conclusion. Some of you don't know my wife well. I know some folks think she is just a really friendly person without knowing the depth of her character. I have said over and over again that she and I are partners as we work together here. If anything, she has been more fruitful than me. I am extremely fortunate to have her as my wife. The Lord brought is together 49 years ago, and I continually thank him for that.

Thank you all for your prayers. For those of you who are willing to continue to pray, there is still a long way to go for these two families.

Paul