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Video 2: Biblical principles and history of the Church Meeting - https://youtu.be/F54bORADm_k

Slow wisdom book: see chapter 3 for more detail

'This' : local gathered church by Christ (Matthew 18) and Spirit (Acts 2) for mission.

'Body' : each member is part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12.4-27)

'Life' : the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2.4-5).

Persecution

- Early Baptists were persecuted by the state for asking for religious freedom.

Church as body

- Early Baptists met for worship and discernment together to be holy witnesses as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12.4-27) in the community (Haymes, Gouldbourne, Cross, 2008).
- In the 1700s Baptist churches were rural, small and poor. (Gill, 2003; Egner, 2008).
- By 1840 Baptist churches growing in numbers and wealth in cities.
- The Church Meeting remains a spiritual act.

Church as priesthood of all believers

- London 1644 confession of faith: 'All belevers are a holy and sanctified people, | and that sanctification is a spirituall grace of the new | Covenant ...' (reproduced Lumpkin, 1959).

Biblical basis for priesthood of all believers

- Exodus 19.5-6: Israel as both a priestly kingdom and a holy nation
- 1 Peter 2.4-5: Christians are made into a holy priesthood
- Revelation 5.9-15: Every nation to be kingdom of priests (Newman, 2005)

Link to covenant theology from Gainsborough church (1608) statement:

- Members 'joyned them selves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a Church estate, in the fellowship of the gospel, to walke in all his ways, made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them' (Fiddes, 2006).

Modern membership vows reflect these principles

- Will you, as the members of (this church) promise to share your lives and journey of faith with A, walking together in ways that are known and yet to be made known?
We will. (Gathering for Worship, 2005).

QUESTION: How does 'this body life' relate to Baptist church life for you?