

## Exhortation at the send-forth for Minister: Bro. Marshall Udoh AKPAN

by O.S. Asaolu @ COC UNILAG [May 28, 2023]

**Introduction:** We somehow hoped this day would come, when the Minister would depart from this congregation peacefully to continue his sojourn and work elsewhere. It is with mixed feelings we send him forth as he relocates to another land with his family. One would have wished it is primarily on mission work but we trust God that with time, such opportunities will also arise for him in Britain. “Japa” or relocation of young professional to seek better life abroad due to the state of the nation is a reality. His is the fifth within the last two years in this church (Bro Aniefok, A Sis, Bro Olumide, Sis Ukit), aside others which are still under processing. Such people are broadly obeying scriptural principles that permit us to labour but put God in our plans about going to get gain in another land, flee a land of persecution or insecurity as well as provide for our family and give them good things of life. Let us not give up praying for our country as the wish of many would be to return home in the long run.

**Thesis:** This homily is to encourage us to take heart as we reminiscent and begin to miss one another, NOT to fear because the Lord has better things in store for each group involved; as individuals, families and congregation.

**The Preacher:** I am glad he has a relatively successful spiritual career in this church, it took our working together in love to achieve that and for this, I thank God and every family for their cooperation. Wherever he goes;

*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:1).*

His wife and children have given good account of themselves while in our midst and we encourage them to continue in faith and to encourage him in spiritual service, they remain his first testimonial anywhere. **Let us also give Bro. Marshall a plaque of commendation which will be akin to the letter of recommendation in Acts 18:27.**

**The Church:** We are to acknowledge leaders amongst us, whether ordained or aspiring, and keep up the good work and fellowship. It is even imperative now that the minister is leaving, lets ensure a vacuum is not so manifest. Till the Lord’s replacement for the post resumes, we have an obligation to keep the unity of the faith in peace!

*And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. **In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you** (1 Thessalonians 5:12-18).*

**The Parting:** Such is emotional but girded by prayers, life will continue so each should try to leave good memories.

*I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and **prayed** with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship. (Acts 20:35-38)...*

*And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and **prayed**. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again (Acts 21:5).*

**Conclusion:** We only part physically for now, we may meet again in this world and hopefully will reunite in heaven. Thus, let us make use of technology to continue mutual prayers, fellowship, giving, edification, etc.