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THE IMPACT OF PASTORAL VISITATION ON RESTORATION OF BROKEN  
HOMES IN MARANATHA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, LAGOS

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## ABSTRACT

The research examined the impact of pastoral visitation on the restoration of broken homes in Maranatha Baptist Association, Lagos. The researcher observed that pastoral visitation could have positive impact on the restoration of broken homes. In order to achieve the purpose of this thesis and produce a solid academic work, the researcher interviewed some persons both clergymen and the laity alike. Some of who are serving as current workers and pastors of the Association to give accounts of their experiences as it concerned the impact of pastoral visitation on restoration of broken homes in Maranatha Baptist Association.

Findings revealed that Maranatha Baptist Association was established in 2006 out of Victory Baptist Association, they believe in their passion to mend and heal broken relationship, they believe that programmes should be organized in the church to sensitize couples of the prevailing Marriage-splitting factors, that church should set money aside to handle emergency cases, that the counseling unit should be strengthened so that members can get quick advice when in crisis.

The following major recommendations were made these are: there should be establishments of a very strong visitation team comprising the pastors, deacons and committed men and women in the Association. The congregation must see their Pastor as representative of God; who God has put in charge to watch over, protect and feed them so that they will not go astray. Also the congregation must cultivate the habit of openness to their pastor, doing this will go a long way to assist the pastor in the area of restoration of broken homes, Pastor should keep records of his visitation so as to enable him to have adequate follow-up of his work on individual family member of his church.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

The research is a critical study of the impact of pastoral visitation on restoration of broken homes in Maranatha Baptist Association in Lagos, so far, it has elucidated the meaning, challenges and relevance of pastoral visitation to broken homes as well as a look into what obtains in a broken home.

God instituted marriage to ensure stability and continuity of the Cosmos. System and rules may cease to obtain, and other institutions of human connection may fail but the home (marriage) is God's preservative for His blessing. Everybody is, and must be traced to a family or lineage and a united family can stand any tribulation. The disintegration of the family is the true signal of the fall of humanity (after Christ). This seems to be the major challenge confronting the church of God. Sadly, and in spite of the proliferation of churches and ministries, divorce is almost becoming a normal phenomenon in our society today, and the Maranatha Baptist Church is part of this larger society.

It is obvious that ministers of God especially those of the Pentecostal faith have reversed the Biblical principles of hardwork, honesty and patience in all human endeavours, especially marriage, to methodologies of quick-fixing. This, instead, has stripped couples of the means of crises management thus releasing them into irredeemable confusion and eventual separation. Sad. Again, the very harsh existential realities of the liberal economic formation of the world are putting strains to the stay-

together marriage agreement. Some couples live far apart from each other- sometimes in different countries. The fidelity of couples cannot be tested further than this. Finally, many couple were fool-hardy at the point of going into marriage. Due to impatience and lust, many got married to wrong partners and before long, jealousy would lead to communication breakdown and separation. Bad marriage is the next worse thing to hell fire.

The church is the most sacred institution which is responsible, foremost, for the spiritual needs of the people. The church seeks to transform and reform its member to make them fit for the kingdom of God. It does this by addressing the crises of the soul through prayers and divine interpretation of the word of God. Since the church addresses the soul and the subconscious from where every being flows, it is the most potent institution by which people are influenced, and the pastor who is God's representative naturally but understandably, commands a kind of euphoric reaction from the member whenever they have the privilege to be with him/her. Members see him/her as a super human through whom they can channel their burdens to God. The pastor needs to sustain the feelings by exuding very pure, honest and respectable qualities. The people are always eager to share their challenge, especially marital challenges with their pastor. Although, it is important that every church/pastor should have a counselling unit or office, it is always a privilege to host the pastor especially if the visit is propitious- in terms of time and purpose. There is no holds barred to what the people can share with their pastor. This is why pastoral visitation was a major aspect of both the Old Testament church and Jesus' ministry as well as the early churches and contemporary churches.

The empathy shown by pastors of the Maranatha Baptist Association churches, and by extension, the Baptist church, in the course of pastoral visitations, has brought healing to broken homes, restored and strengthened relationship especially among members and between members and the church. Today, there are very fewer cases of divorce involving Maranatha Baptist Association members. Many couples that should be broken by now are not just restored but they are happy living together.

In view of the foregoing, we can conclude by simply saying that the impact of pastoral visitation on restoration of broken homes in Maranatha Baptist Association Churches cannot be over emphasized

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Having seen the impact of pastoral visitation on broken home and their effect in Maranatha Baptist Association, this study recommends the following:

- i.** This study recommends the establishment of a very strong visitation team comprising the pastors, deacons, committed men and women in the church. The members of the team must possess attractive qualities that will make the people submissive.
- ii.** It has been the general opinion of all the pastors in Maranatha Baptist Association Lagos West conference interviewed that pastoral visitation be taken very serious in pastors' programme and this opinion was supported by the majority of people interviewed who are not pastors, they are all of the opinion that pastor should not neglect their responsibilities in restoring broken home relationship through pastoral visitation.

