

The Church and You

TEXT: Eph. 3:20-21

INTRODUCTION:

- A. WE ARE NOT EXPECTED TO SERVE GOD BY OURSELVES.
- B. FELLOWSHIP IN THE CHURCH IS MEANT TO ENHANCE OUR SERVICE.
- C. WE CAN BETTER SERVE WITH OUR BRETHREN WHEN WE KNOW:
 1. What the church is, both in its universal and local sense.
 2. What our responsibilities are toward the church.

I. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

- A. ALL PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN SAVED(**Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23**).
- B. THE WORD "CHURCH" IS USED PRIMARILY IN **TWO SENSES**.
 1. The **UNIVERSAL** sense: **All** the saved(**Mat. 16:18; Col. 1:18**).
 - a. There is only **ONE** church(**Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:4**).
 - b. There is no organization, never meets, has no officers.
 2. The **LOCAL** sense: The saved in one locale(**1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 16:16**).
 - a. In the "local" sense there are **MANY** churches(**Gal. 1:2**).
 - c. Ideally, each church has elders and deacons(**Phil. 1:1**).
 - d. Churches may exist until men can be appointed(**Acts 14:23**).
 - e. Local churches meet regularly; and Christians have responsibilities in connection with their brethren in the local church

II. RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH.

- A. WE SHOULD "JOIN OURSELVES" TO A LOCAL CHURCH.
 1. Paul's example. One **should** join himself to a local church(**Acts 9:26-28**).
 2. Membership is an opportunity to mutually benefit(**Heb. 3:12-14; 10:24-25**).
 3. Some duties you can't fulfill alone; i. e., the Lord's Supper(**Acts 20:7**).
- B. WE SHOULD COOPERATE WITH THE "LEADERS."
 1. In a fully developed local church, there will be "ELDERS."
 2. "Elder, pastor, bishop," are same(**Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Pet. 5:1-2**).
 - 3.. Their qualifications are found in **1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**.
 4. Our responsibilities to them are as follows:
 - a. To respect them(**1 Thes. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17-20**).
 - b. To obey when they lead scripturally (**Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:2-3**).
 5. There will also be "DEACONS" to serve the people of God
 - a. These are "servants" who assist the elders in the work of the church.
 - b. Their qualifications are found in **1 Tim. 3:8-13**.
 6. There may also be EVANGELISTS and TEACHERS(**Eph. 4:11**).
- C. WE ARE TO CONTRIBUTE REGULARLY TO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH
 1. The work of the church can be divided into three areas:
 - a. Evangelism(**1 Tim. 3:15; Phil. 1:3-6; 1 Thess. 1:8**).
 - b. Edification(**Eph. 4:11-16**).
 - c. Benevolence(**1 Cor. 16:1-2**).
 2. How the local church can raise funds to do its work(**1 Cor. 16:1-2**).
- D. WE SHOULD **DO OUR PART** IN THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.
 1. A strong church is one where **every** member is doing his part(**Eph. 4:15-16**).

2. There are different kinds of functions we might perform(**Rom. 12:3-8**).
 3. We must do what we can with **zeal** and **enthusiasm**(**1 Pet. 4:10-11**).
- E. WE SHOULD HELP KEEP THE CHURCH **UNITED**.
1. Unity among believers is very important to Jesus(**John 17:20-21**).
 2. Division is condemned in the Scriptures(**1 Cor. 1:10-13**).
 3. What does maintaining unity require of us(**Eph. 4:1-3**).
 4. Here are some things we can do:
 - a. Be peacemakers when brethren have disagreements(**Matt. 5:9**).
 - b. Avoid gossip(**2 Thess. 3:12; 1 Thess. 4:9-12; Phil. 2:14-15**).
 - c. Avoid speculative questions(**1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:23**).
 - d. Avoid partiality(**1 Tim. 5:21**).
- F. WE SHOULD LIVE A LIFE THAT SPEAKS WELL OF THE CHURCH.
1. Be an example to others(**1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8**).
 2. Give no occasion to the enemy(**Titus 2:8; 1 Pet. 2:12**).

CONCLUSION:

- A. THE BLESSINGS OF FELLOWSHIP COME WITH RESPONSIBILITY.
- B. GOD'S WILL IS THAT WE SERVE AS PART OF A BODY
(**Rom. 12:4-5; 14:17-19**).