

The Church

Objective: To study the concept of the “church” as presented in the New Testament, and to stimulate our thinking about it so that we will conform to the New Testament pattern in our attitudes, speech, and actions in regard to it.

2Th 2:15; 2Tim 1:13; 1Pt 4:11

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Each lesson has two parts—Part 1: Outline of study; Part 2: Questions and discussion.

Suggestions for study

- Before each lesson, look over the outline for that lesson. Read the verses and note how they relate to the point being made. Make notes as suitable, including questions that arise in your study.
- In class, as we study the outline, again make notes as suitable. You may find the questions you had are answered as we study.
- Use the notes you made to answer the questions and prepare for discussion.

Lesson 1: What is the “Church”?

Teaching, belief, and practice

Since *belief* is based upon *teaching*, if our *beliefs* are to be correct so must the *teaching* that produces it. **1Tim 4:16**.

What we *believe* is conveyed in our *speech*, **2Co 4:13**. If our *speech* about “the church” is to convey accurate concepts, then what we *believe* about “the church” must likewise be accurate.

Also, any *actions* in reference to “the church” are based upon what we *believe*, **Jam 2:14-26**. If what we *practice* is to be acceptable, then what we *believe* and have been *taught* about “the church” must be accurate.

I. Common Ideas

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2024

1. “a building for public and especially Christian worship” - [Some *churches* have steeples - srf]
2. “the clergy or officialdom of a religious body” - [The *church* ruled OK to eat meat on Friday - srf]
3. “a body or organization of religious believers as:
 - a. “the whole body of Christians” - [The *church* extols Christ - srf]
 - b. “denomination” - [The Methodist *church* - srf]
 - c. “congregation” - [*Church* of Christ in Humble]
4. “a public divine worship” - [Behave in *church* - srf]
5. “the clerical profession” - [Considered choosing *church* as a career]

II. The Term Itself

A. COLLECTIVE NOUN

1. “A collective noun is the name of a group or class considered as a unit; e.g., flock, class, group, crowd, gang.” *College Handbook of Composition*, Wooley, Scott, Bracher, 1958, p. 30.
2. “*n. Grammar*. A noun that denotes a collection of persons or things regarded as a unit.” *American Heritage Dictionary*, 1994.”
3. Examples:
 - a. One **link** is not a **chain**
 - b. One **cow** is not a **herd**
 - c. One **Christian** is not a **church!** **1Co 12:12,14...27-28**

B. UNITS of the Collective

1. Israelites - **Acts 7:38** (KJV, “church”; NASB, “congregation”—see marginal note in NASB)
2. Rioters - **Acts 19:32** (“assembly”—see NASB footnote)
3. Greek citizens - **Acts 19:39** (“assembly”—see NASB footnote)
4. Christians - **Acts 2:47** (KJV, NKJV); **1Co 1:2; 12:13,27ff**. This is the “church” we are studying.

C. Collected, or grouped, on the basis of SOMETHING COMMON BETWEEN THE UNITS COLLECTED

1. More than just plurality
 - a. Simply a plurality of **links** is not a **chain**
 - b. Simply a plurality of **cows** is not a **herd**
 - c. Simply a plurality of **Christians** is not a **church**. See **Mt 18:15-17**
2. Collective noun views something they have in common and groups them on that basis.
 - a. “Chain” collects links having in common a physical bond
 - b. “Herd” groups cows having in common an owner, or, a pasture, or, breed
 - c. So with other collective nouns, e.g. “class,” “family,” “fleet”
 - d. Likewise, “church” groups Christians according to something they have in common. What is it? That brings us to the various uses of the term “church” in the N.T.

III. The Church - Universal Sense**A. UNITS - Christians****B. COMMON CHARACTERISTIC - being in Christ**

C. *The whole body of Christians, comprising all those called out of the world by the gospel into the fellowship of Christ - Mt 16:18; Acts 2:41,47; Heb 12:23*

D. By Various Figures Likened Unto:

1. Body - **1Co 12:12-14,27; Eph 1:22-23; 2:16; 3:6**
2. Temple - **Eph 2:20-22**
3. Chosen Race; Royal Priesthood; Holy Nation; A People for God’s Own Possession - **1Pt 2:5**

E. To be a member of this “church” is to sustain a relationship to the Godhead wherein all spiritual blessings are found! Eph 1-3.

1. The “fullness” of Christ - **1:3-23**
2. Life - **2:1-10**
3. Reconciliation - **2:11-22**
4. Heirs - **3:1-14**
5. Truly, in the church is seen God’s manifold wisdom in redeeming man through His Son and it is through this relationship that God is glorified! **Eph 3:14-21**

IV. The Church District Sense

A. UNITS - Christians

B. COMMON CHARACTERISTIC - living in the same area or district

C. *The body of Christians living in a defined area or district - Acts 9:31 in NASB, ESV, ASV*

V. The Church Local Sense

A. UNITS - Christians

B. COMMON CHARACTERISTIC -a specific fellowship, i.e. worshiping and working together in a given locality.

C. *A body or group of Christians worshiping and working together in a given locality - Php 1:1...27...4:15; 1Co 1:2...10...11:20...14:26... 16:1-2*

Note: this is the local church according to God’s plan. However, since there is the element of human judgment that enters in as to who are considered members, a local church may have in it those who not truly Christians.

1. Not simply assembly (children, unbelievers, meetings, special classes)
2. Not simply geography (not all members live in the locality of the designated church)

D. Characteristics of this fellowship

1. Regular assembly for worship and edification (though not by itself sufficient to identify the fellowship)
2. Common oversight under which they operate
3. Common fund through which they work
4. Illustrations:
 - a. Philippi (see above)

- b. Corinth (see above)
 - c. Ephesus - **Acts 20:17,28; 1Tim 1:3...5:16**
 - d. Antioch - **Acts 11:26; 14:26,27; 15:3**
5. Note: A local “church” may exist without elders. **Acts 14:21-23**

VI. The Church Assembled Sense

- A. UNITS - Christians** (and others who “enter” - **1Co 14:23**)
- B. COMMON CHARACTERISTIC - Physical assembly of the local church**
- C. *A physical assembly of the local church* - 1Co 11:18,22; 14:4 (cmpr. vv. 23-25); 14:12 (note context, v. 16); 14:19,28,33,34,35**
- D. Important to distinguish these uses**, especially between the universal and the local as they are the ones we most deal with. This will be the subject of our next lesson.

Lesson 1: What is the “Church”? (Questions & Discussion)

1. If you were the only Christian in a community, you would be the church in that community. True or False. Explain your answer: _____

2. Beside each of the following, indicate what it is made up of (what the units of the collective are):

| | Choices |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Church - Universal _____ | Bricks and mortar |
| Church - District _____ | People |
| Church - Local _____ | Churches (Congregations) |
| Church - Assembled _____ | Denominations |

3. **Matthew 18:15-17**
 - a. **Verse 15**, “if he does listen to _____”
 - b. **Verse 17**, “if he refuses to listen to _____”
 - c. **Verse 17**, “if he refuses to listen even to _____”

4. Anytime you have two or more Christians you have a local church. True or False. Explain your answer: _____

5. What makes one a part of, or unit in, each of the following collectives?
 - a. To be a part of the universal church one must _____
 - b. To be a part of the church in a district one must _____

 - c. To be a part of a local church one must _____
 - d. To be a part of a church in the assembled sense one must _____

6. What church was the Ethiopian eunuch a member of? (**Acts 8:26-29**) _____

7. You are a member of the “church” in how many senses? _____

8. Be specific in answering the following questions. Use words other than “church,” “body,” “kingdom,” etc.
 - a. WHAT did Saul persecute when he persecuted the “church” (**Acts 8:3**)

 - b. WHAT did Christ build when he built the “church”? (**Mt 16:18**)

- c. WHAT were people added to when the Lord added them to the “church”? (**Acts 2:47**)
-

9. Complete the chart:

| <u>What was done</u> | <u>Individual</u> | <u>Church</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| _____ | 1Co 6:11 | Eph 5:26 |
| _____ | Ac 22:16 | Eph 5:26 |
| _____ | Acts 2:47 | Eph 5:23 |
| _____ | 1Co 6:20 | Acts 20:28 |

10. In which sense is the church spoken of in the following passages?

- a. **Rom 16:16** _____
- b. **1Co 1:2** _____
- c. **1Co 14:28** _____
- d. **Eph 5:23** _____
- e. **Rev 1:4** _____

11. Write a definition of the “Humble Church of Christ?” (or, the congregation you are a member of) _____
-

12. Fill in the following chart. Give scripture to illustrate your answer, if applicable.

| <u>Singular</u> | <u>Plural</u> | <u>Collective</u> |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Christian | Christians | _____ |
| Church | Churches | _____ |

(Note: “denomination” - “3: a religious organization **uniting in a single** legal and **administrative body** a number of local **congregations.**” - *Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1970. “A large **group of** religious **congregations** united under a **common** faith and name and organized under a **single administrative** and legal hierarchy.” *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition. Copyright © 2009 by Houghton Mifflin Company.)

13. Do the following convey clear, scriptural, concepts of “the church”? Be sure you are able to give specific reasons for either agreeing or disagreeing.
- a. Question: “What are you religiously?” Answer: “I’m Church of Christ.”
- b. Question: “What does the church of Christ teach about the purpose of baptism?” Answer: “The church teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins.”
- c. “He is a true Church of Christ preacher.”
- d. “We all need to be more faithful to the church.”
- e. “In the Restoration Movement, the church was restored.”

- f. “All of brother and sister Smith’s children were raised in the church.”
- g. “John married in the church.”
- h. “The church needs to be painted.”
- i. “In our study the term **‘church’ and ‘churches’ are used interchangeably**. They are so used in the New Testament. Acts 9:31 uses it to refer to the entire universal body [1Co 14:33]. Acts 9:31 and **Galatians 1:2 refer to the entire body of Christ in a particular region**...In Romans 16:16 it is **used to include many (all?) individual congregations (churches) as they constitute the universal, combined church** (congregation).” Tom Estes, *Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ*, Bible and School Supply, Montgomery, Ala., 1972.
- j. “The local church and the universal church are as much a part of each other as the individual cell and the body of which it is a part are one with each other in the physical realm . . . **Are the ‘Churches of Christ’ the ‘Church of Christ’? If they are not then Christ has no organized body of people working under the authority of duly appointed leaders on this earth . . .the local congregation is a component and an extension of the universal church**, though by no means being its totality, of course . . . Just as ancient Israel was divided into tribes, families, and divisions and subdivisions of various kinds, so is spiritual Israel divided into congregations, and the congregations into groups and classes and committees...’ **The churches,’ meaning the various congregations, are spoken of in the scriptures synonymously with ‘the church’ meaning the universal body.**” Gaston D. Cogdell, *The Cogdell-Turner Discussion* (Guardian of Truth Foundation, 1983), pp. 4, 15.
- k. “Church of Christ Radio 06-03-08 ... At **Church of Christ Radio** ... These are some of the finest preachers in the church of Christ. ... get acquainted with the speakers at **Church of Christ Radio.**” <http://pleonast.com/group/ChurchofChristRadio?&entryID=52782>
14. The following is taken from a welcome brochure in a tract rack in a local church of Christ, 2009. Is the use of the word “church” clear throughout? Circle or highlight the phrases using “church” (“the church of Christ”; “churches of Christ”) and put a “U” beside the ones speaking of the church in the universal sense and an “L” beside the ones speaking of the church in the local sense. [bold mine in the quotes, srf]

The promise of the Lord in Matthew 16:18 was not to build a “building,” but an assembly or body of people who are in fellowship with Jesus the Son and God the Father. These are people who hear, obey and live by Christ’s teachings and the teachings of Jesus’ apostles, all found in the New Testament. These “Christians,” as they were later called, became the church of Christ - those “called out” of the world, and called into the service of Jesus Christ.

Not a Denomination

The church of Christ is not a denomination. The **“churches of Christ”** (Romans 16:16) follow only the New Testament for its doctrine. The **church of Christ** does not follow human creeds, disciplines or manuals...

The Worship

The worship of the **church of Christ** is simple and spiritual. Men officiate at each part of the worship, just as done during New Testament times.

Lesson 2: Distinction in Universal and Local Church

It is important to determine whether the *universal* or *local* church is under consideration when reading the scriptures or when speaking about the church. A failure to distinguish between the two leads to confusion in concepts and unscriptural practices, e.g. “work of the ‘church’”? “oversight of the ‘church’”? “but one ‘church’”; “must be a member of the ‘church’ to be saved.”

Following are ten characteristics of the two that aid in distinguishing them from one another.

I. Entrance

A. Univ.: God adds. Acts 2:41,47

B. Local: Men receive. Acts 9:26; 18:27

II. Removal

A. Univ.: God removes apostate. Rev 3:16; Jn. 15:1-2,6

B. Local: Men remove. 1Co 5:2,7,13; 3Jn. 9,10

III. Fellowship

A. Univ.: With God. Mt 28:19; Acts 2:47...Eph 5:23; Gal 3:26,27; Ac 11:24; 1Co 1:9; Acts 8:38,39 (Ethiopian not a member of any local church)

B. Local: With men. Php 1:27; Acts 2:42; 9:26,28

IV. Membership & Salvation

A. Univ.: Membership = salvation. Acts 2:47; Eph 5:23

B. Local: Possible to be saved and NOT be member, Acts 8:38,39 Rev 1:9; also, possible to be a member and NOT be saved, 1Co 5

V. Scope

A. Univ.: All the saved. Acts 2:47

B. Local: Limited. Php 1:1; 1Th 1:1; 1Co 1:2

VI. Beginning

A. Univ.: AD 30. Mt 16:18...Acts 2:36,41

B. Local: Any time since. Acts 11:19,26

VII. Duration

A. Univ.: Never be destroyed. Php 1:23; Rev 6:9-11

B. Local: Can be destroyed. Acts 8:1; Rev 3:1,2

VIII. Number

A. Univ.: One. Eph 4:4

B. Local: Many. Rom 16:16

IX. Oversight

A. Univ.: No earthly. John 10:16; Eph 1:22; Mt 19:28; Acts 2:42

B. Local: Earthly. Ac 20:28; 1Pt 5:2

X. Treasury

A. Univ. None.

B. Local: Thru which to work. 1Co 16:1,2; Php 4:15,16

Lesson 2: Distinction In Universal And Local Church (Questions & Discussion)

1. When a person is scripturally baptized, he thereby becomes a member of
 - a. the universal church
 - b. the local church where he was baptized
 - c. both
 - d. neither

2. Do you believe that only members of the church of Christ are going to heaven? Explain. Give scripture for your answer.

3. A sign reads:
Church of Christ
3300 That St
Certain City, Kansas
Established 33 AD – Welcome

How is the word “church” used: Local or universal sense? Was it established 33 AD?

4. What work has God given the universal church to do? _____

5. God has provided a plan whereby Christians all over the earth may pool their resources in a common treasury to further the work of Christ. TRUE FALSE

6. Elders have oversight over the _____ church.

7. Is it proper to refer to other churches as “sister” churches? Explain your answer.

8. Is the church referred to in the local or universal sense in the following passages?
 - a. **Acts 20:28** _____
 - b. **1Co 12:28** _____
 - c. **Eph 1:22** _____
 - d. **Eph 3:10** _____
 - e. **Eph 3:21** _____
 - f. **1Tim 5:16** _____

9. Match:

Vertical fellowship (man with God)

Local church

Horizontal fellowship (man with man)

Universal church

10. In what sense (universal or local) is it true that:

a. There is only one church. _____

b. One must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved. _____

c. Being a member of the church will help one stay saved. _____

11. Sometimes we find a person who years after they were first baptized discovers that their baptism was not scriptural.

a. Were they members of the universal church all those years? _____

b. Were the members of the local church where they worked all those years? _____

12. Sometimes a person is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, but due to ignorance or other reasons he joins the fellowship of a group of people who teach and practice error. If, at a later date, this person realizes his error and repents, does he need to be baptized again to join the fellowship of a local church of Christ? Why?

13. Is “universal church” and “local church” terms you find in the Bible? _____

a. Do they describe Bible concepts? _____

b. Can you think of better terms to describe these? _____

14. Can we “join the church?” If yes, is it the universal or local church, and how do you join it?

15. Read carefully the following statements taken from the tract, “*Churches of Christ, Who are these people?*” by Joe R. Barnett (Pathway Pub. House, Lubbock, TX, 1979). Do they present clear and accurate concepts to the reader? Circle any pertinent phrases and be prepared to explain why you did.

“Worldwide there are some 20,000 congregations of churches of Christ...” (p. 2)

“Churches of Christ do not speak of membership in terms of some formula which must be followed for approved acceptance into the church. The New Testament gives certain steps which were taken by people in that day to become Christians. When a person became a Christian he automatically was a member of the church.

“The same is true of churches of Christ today. There is no separate set of rules or ceremonies which one must follow to be inducted into the church. When one becomes a Christian he, at the same time, becomes a member of the church. No further steps are required for church membership.” (pp. 12-13)

16. The following is taken from a popular tract. Does it present clear and accurate concepts of the church? Circle phrases that you believe may be confusing or misleading and be prepared to explain why you did.

“THE ONE TRUE CHURCH”

Its Founder—Christ

He is the purchaser Acts 20:28

He is the builder Mt 16:18

He is the head Eph 5:23

He is Savior Eph 5:23

Did Jesus Christ establish your Church??

Its Origin—A.D. 33 in Jerusalem

While the apostles lived Mark 9:1

When the Holy Spirit came Mark 9:1, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:1

When the Word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem; Isa. 2:2, Luke 24:49

Did your Church begin at Jerusalem on Pentecost, A.D. 33??

Its Designations

Christ called it:

“My church” Mt 16:18

“My kingdom” Luke 22:30; Jn 18:36

Apostles called it:

“The church” Col 1:18; Eph 1:22; 3:10; 5:23-32

“The church of the Lord” Acts 20:28

“The church of God” 1Co 1:2; Gal 1:13

“Churches of Christ” (Sing. “church of Christ”) Rom 16:16

Is your church mentioned by the apostles?

Its Organization

Organically independent of every other local church

Self-governing under Christ, the heavenly Bishop, Acts 14:23; 1Pt 5:2-4; Php 1:1

With bishops (elders, pastors, presbyters) who feed, tend, oversee, and rule the flock among them Acts 20:17,28; 1Pt 5:2-4

With deacons to serve 1Tim 3:8-13

With members who minister in word and deed 1Co 12:24-27

Does your church have any organization greater than a localized arrangement?

Lesson 3: Work of the Local Church (Part 1)

Distinction in Church Action and Individual Action

The local church is God's provision through which Christians may work together. But, work together at WHAT? Just what are the fields of endeavor the local church can and should engage in?

One of the biggest mistakes made when endeavoring to establish what the work of the local church is to turn to passages authorizing individuals to act and then jump to the conclusion that since the individuals make up the church this certainly authorizes the church to act. Thus, a clear distinction between church action and individual action would go far in our understanding of what the work of the local church is.

NOTE: If no distinction exists between what members do individually and what they do as the Lord's collective, then the church has no distinctive work.

I. One Member (Acting) Is Not Necessarily The Church (Acting)

- A. Mt 18:15-18
- B. 3Jn 10
- C. Fishing, Boy Scout, etc.

II. Two Or Three Members (Acting) Are Not Necessarily The Church (Acting)

- A. Mt 18:15-18
- B. Acts 13:1-3...14:23
- C. Fishing, business, etc.

III. All Members (Acting) Are Not Necessarily The Church (Acting)

- A. 1Tim 5:16; 1Co 11:34
- B. 1Th 1:1...4:11
- C. Sleep, social get-together, etc.

IV. All Members (Acting) Collectively Is Not Necessarily The Church (Acting)

- A. Acts 19:39 - whole town converted...sit in city council
- B. Business, charitable organizations, etc.

V. All Members (Acting) Collectively In Christ Is The Church "Of Christ" (Acting)

- A. 1Tim 5:16 - "it" (note each part of the proposition)
- B. Php 4:15 - "communicated" (KJV); "had fellowship" (ASV); "shared" (NASB), sing, verb
- C. Note characteristics of what is "common" Acts 4:32-5:4. It is not one's "own," v32, neither as to: Possession, 5:4 or Control, 5:4; and thus must be administered by a "common oversight," 4:35. Would this not also be true of "common" ACTION ("collective action")?

Lesson 3: Work Of The Local Church (Part 1) (Questions & Discussion)

1. **Mt 18:15-18**

- a. How many Christians acting in v15? _____
- b. How many Christians acting in v16? _____
- c. Up to v17, has any church action taken place? _____
- d. This rebellious man was to “hear the church.” How could this be accomplished?
 - i. Text _____
 - ii. **Php 2:25; 4:18** _____
 - iii. **1Co 7:1** _____

2. If an American citizen goes to a foreign country and kills someone, they don’t declare war on America. But, if the USA officials send an American citizen to a foreign country in a USA Air Force plane and drops a bomb on them that we sent him with, that would likely start a war whether anyone was killed or not. Why? *What is the difference?*

3. **1Tim 5:16**

- a. How many members of a local Church are obligated to take care of their aged widows?

- b. If every member of a local church had a widow to whom they were obligated and were fulfilling this obligation, would this be church action? _____
- c. If every member of a church acting does not necessarily involve church action, what WOULD constitute church action in the relief of widows (“that it may relieve”)?

4. **Acts 4:32-35**

- a. “...not one *of them* claimed that anything belonging to him was his _____ ; but all things were _____ property to them.”
- b. Define “common”: _____
- c. What two things would NOT be true of Ananias’ money once it was put into the “common” fund? **(5:4)**
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____

5. The United States of America is made up of its citizens and its money comes from its citizens (taxes, etc.). A citizen may write a check on his bank account to buy himself a car, but if he attempted to use funds from a USA account to buy himself a car he would be thrown into the penitentiary. Why? *What's the difference?*
-
-

6. Could a United States citizen use a car purchased with government funds for a family vacation? Why? _____
-

7. **Php 1:5...2:25-30...4:14-16**

- a. What does the word “fellowship” mean? _____
- b. The church at Philippi had supplied service toward Paul, **2:25-30**. How had this work of that local church been accomplished?
-

- i. Note in ASV and NASB “your messenger and minister” and footnote on “messenger.”
- ii. Note in **4:15** the church “shared” (“had fellowship,” ASV; “communicated,” KJV) with Paul. This is a singular verb and indicates collective action. Now note that he says “Philippians” indicating that when church action takes place every member acts (as one) - but we have seen that the reverse is not necessarily true: that when each member acts it does NOT necessarily involve church action.

8. Think: If anything Christians are authorized to do the church can do, then,
- a. May the church “engage in business and make a profit?” **Jam 4:13; 1Th 4:11-12**
- b. Take a wife? (husband?) **1Co 9:5; 1Tim 4:1-5**
- c. Build health spas? **1Tim 4:8**

9. When a number of members send flowers together to a funeral, is it correct to say, “from the church of Christ”? _____

Lesson 4: Work of the Local Church (Part 2)

The Work of a church “of Christ”

The work of the church is distinguished not only by HOW Christians work together (Part 1), but also by the NATURE of that work.

The phrase “church of Christ” is a descriptive phrase.

To call a church a “church of Christ” when its doctrines, organization, and practices are not “of Christ” is like calling a dog a “sheep” - it does not make it so. It is still a dog.

I. Duties are based on relationships

A. Luke 10:27-37

1. Duty: Benevolence to all men
2. Relationship based on: “neighbor” - fellow human being
3. Duties of a collective of neighbors based on this relationship... e.g., Cancer Society

B. Romans 13:6,7

1. Duty: Pay taxes
2. Relationship based on: “citizen”
3. Duties of a collective of citizens based on this relationship... e.g. Democratic Party

C. Ephesians 6:4; 1Tim 5:14

1. Duty: Train children
2. Relationship based on: “parent”

D. Heb 13:15

1. Duty: Offer praise through Christ (note also **Rom 16:3,9,12; Php 2:30**)
2. Relationship based on: being “in Christ”
3. Duties of collective of Christians based on this relationship??

II. Basic relationship underlying the existence of the local church

- A. Members are those “sanctified in Christ Jesus” - **1Co 1:2**
- B. Collectivity is “in Christ” - **1Th 1:1**
- C. This is why called churches “of Christ” - **Rom 16:16**
- D. Note other “churches”: **Acts 7:38; 19:32,39,41**

III. Authority for church work

- A. Saints (units of the collective) - **1Co 1:2**
- B. Acting together (purpose of the collective) - **1Co 11:17; Php 1:27**
- C. In Christ (nature of the collective) - **1Th 1:1; Rom 16:16**

“All duties of a Christian, which rest upon grounds peculiar to his being a Christian, and which are authorized for performance together with other Christians, are also duties for which a local congregation is authorized to make provisions.” W.L. Wharton, *Arlington Meeting*, p. 168

IV. Applied: its work

- A. **Edification “in Christ”**: **Col 3:16; 1Co 14:26**
- B. Evangelism “in Christ”: **Php 4:15,16**
- C. Benevolence to those “in Christ”: **Acts 6:1-6; 11:27-30; 1Tim 5:16**
- D. ****Note**: These scriptures illustrate the three areas of church work. There are no other fields of endeavor a church of Christ can scripturally engage in.

V. What difference does it make?

- A. Question of authority - **Luke 6:46; 2Tim 1:13**
- B. Confuses the mission of Christ, i.e., “church of Christ” - **Luke 19:10**
- C. Diverts the church from its real goal - **1Tim 3:15**

| THE INDIVIDUAL | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| SELF | HUMANITY | FAMILY | GOVERNMENT | CHRIST |
| Eph 5:28-29 Mt 16:25-26 | Luke 10:25-37 Rom 13:8-10 | Eph 5:22-6:4 1Tim 5:4,16 | Rom 13:1-7 Mt 22:17-21 | Col 3:16 1 Co. 10:16 1Th 5:17,18 2 Pt. 3:18 2 Co. 8:4,5 |
| <i>Personal</i> | <i>Social</i> | <i>Domestic</i> | <i>Civil</i> | <i>Spiritual</i> |

The church of Christ exists in reference to the new man in Christ. The duties in reference to self, humanity, family, and government are not based on relationship to Christ. The duties Christians perform together and provide for together in the church of Christ are those that grow out of that new and unique relationship they sustain to Christ.

Lesson 4: Work of the Local Church (Part 2) Questions & Discussion

1. The Thessalonians are charged to work to earn a living in **1Th 4:11,12**. (See **2Th 3:6-15**).
 - a. To whom is this letter written? (**1Th 1:1**) _____
 - b. Do these passages then authorize the church to engage in the kind of work that would provide sustainable income as referred to in 1Th 4 and 2Th 3? If not, why not? _____

2. Could two or three members of a local church combine their funds in a common fund and put them under a common oversight (one of them president, for example) and go into the grocery store business?
 - a. Would this be the local church in the grocery store business? _____
 - b. Could 75% of the members of a local church combine their resources into a common fund under a common oversight (two or three of them as a board of directors, for example) and go into the grocery store business? _____
 - c. Would this be the local church in the grocery store business? _____
 - d. Could ALL the members of a local church combine their resources under a common oversight in a grocery store business? _____
 - e. These *same 20 people* are the members of the local church and combine their resources under elders to provide for the preaching and teaching of the gospel. The same people are involved, the money comes from the same source, and they act collectively in both instances - yet, one time they are acting as a grocery store business and the other time as a local church of Christ. *WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?* (Yes, there IS one. A very important one.)

3. Describe the following as to (1) who comprised it and (2) the nature of it.
 - a. **Acts 7:38**, “congregation” (“church,” KJV)
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - b. **Acts 19:32**, “assembly”
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - c. **Acts 19:39**, “assembly”
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - d. *Note:* The three words above in the three separate passages are all from the same original word, the word from which “church” is translated throughout the N.T.: *ekklEsia*

4. What does it mean to say a church is “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” **1Th 1:1**? _____

5. Is the term “church of Christ” the divinely given title for a local church, or is it a term designating the nature of the collective? Explain your answer. _____

6. Read **1Co 16:1-3; 2Co 8,9; Rom 15:25-31**. All these verses involve the *same* contribution.
 - a. It was made up by the Gentile churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia (Corinth) for whom? _____
(See 1Co 16:1; 2Co 8:4; 9:1,12; Rom 15:25,26,27,31.)
 - b. Besides providing for the needs of the saints, what was the underlying motive in this contribution? (See **2Co 8:4,8,24; 9:12,13**). _____
 - c. *Note:* If you received several letters from a well known preacher in a foreign country requesting help for the brethren there who had suffered greatly due to a national disaster, and in his letters he emphasized that the contribution was for the Christians there, stating specifically no less than seven times it was for the “saints,” but you later found out he distributed your contribution to saints *and non-saints* —how would you feel?

7. To say “we” ought to do something does not necessarily imply collective action. But if collective action is involved, *which* collective? Put “YES” in the column of the collective through which “we” would provide for the listed duties. Put “NO” in the other columns.

| “WE” | CHURCH OF CHRIST Christ “co-op” | MARCH OF DIMES | FAMILY | HEART FUND |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|---------------|
| Raise children | | | | |
| Cripple children research | | | | |
| Heart research | | | | |
| Preach gospel | | | | |

8. **Gal 6:10**
 - a. To whom was this letter written? _____
 - b. Does it necessarily follow that everything in the letter authorizes church action? If not, why not? _____
 - c. Is “doing good to all men” based on the relationship I sustain to Christ or upon the relationship I sustain to all men as a “neighbor”? (Check context from **5:13ff.**) _____
 - d. Why would a Christian have a special (“especially”) duty toward other Christians? _____

 - e. Does this passage authorize the local church to practice benevolence to all men? If so, would it not also authorize the church to engage in employment services, medical

research, building parks and recreation centers, etc...for are not these “doing good?”
Whence comes the idea that benevolence is the primary idea in the passage anyway?

9. **James 1:27**

- a. Can you address a church without addressing individuals? (Compare **Rev 2:7**.)
- b. What relationship in life is the responsibility here given based on? _____
- c. Sometimes the question is asked: “What kind of religion is a church authorized to practice: pure and undefiled religion; impure and defiled religion; or no religion at all?” If you answer “pure and undefiled religion,” then the reply is that **Jam 1:27** says what “pure and undefiled religion” is and therefore the church may provide for that! But let us try this reasoning on another matter. Is a man leaving his father mother and cleaving unto his wife and becoming one flesh with her pure and undefiled religion, impure and defiled religion, or no religion at all? Read **Mt 19:4-6** (and this certainly involves the conjugal relations). Now the word “religion” does not merely have to do with the “five items of worship” as sometimes thought of (singing, praying, etc.), but with service proceeding from the fear of God even including benevolence and abstaining from worldliness as **Jam 1:27** clearly shows. Shall we say that a man cleaving to his wife as God instituted has NOTHING to do with respect and fear of God - no religion at all?? It certainly isn’t IMPURE religion. It must, therefore, be PURE and UNDEFILED religion! Now, if the church can practice anything that is pure and undefiled religion, may it provide for honeymoon cottages, etc.?? The fact is that any religion a church provides for must certainly be pure and undefiled, but not all pure and undefiled religion is that for which a church may provide.

10. In 1Pt 3:16, “good behavior in Christ” seems to include all discussed from 2:11-12, i.e., being a good citizen, servant, wife, husband, and neighbor. If these activities are “in Christ,” can the church make provision for them? No. “Sanctify Christ as Lord,” v15, demands we keep all these duties, but they are not peculiar to that relationship. These duties are based on the relationship to government, master, mate, neighbor. We had these duties before we were in Christ. Serving Christ as Lord underscores our responsibility to fulfill them. “In Christ” points to some connection; what that connection is must be determined by context and harmony. Compare Php 1:13, “my imprisonment in Christ” (NASB adds in italics, “the cause of” - imprisonment in the cause of Christ”).

11. In the table following, write parallel activities that are NOT peculiar to being in Christ. The first is given as an example. Would those in the right column be duties a church “of Christ” would be expected to engage in? _____

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Eat Lord’s Supper - 1Co 10:16 | Eat common meal |
| Grow in knowledge of Christ - 2Pt 3:18 | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Sing spiritual songs because of Christ – Col 3:16-17 | |
| Prayer in Christ - 1Th 5:17-18 | |
| Benevolence to needy saints - 2Co 8:4,5 | |
| Teach gospel of Christ – Acts 8:4 | |

Lesson 5: Purpose of the Local Church

For what purpose does the local church exist? What is its function? Is it something God has established merely to test our faith either attend its assemblies three times a week or go to hell? Is it needed to worship God?...to be saved?...to stay saved?...or for what?

I. As A Member Of The Universal Church

- A. Blessings: **Eph 1:3ff**
- B. Privileges:
 - 1. Sing - **Jam 5:13**
 - 2. Pray - **Heb 4:14-16**
 - 3. Give - **3Jn 5-8**
 - 4. Study - **Philemon, Timothy**
- C. Responsibilities: **Eph 4:1-3,11-15,17ff**
- D. Then why the local church??

II. Benefit Of Together Work As Recognized In Society

- A. AA; Weight Watchers; etc.
- B. People of like problems, goals, mind...share:
 - 1. Knowledge
 - 2. Strength
 - 3. Resources
 - 4. Abilities
- C. What society has recognized, God knew all along...

III. Purpose Of The Local Church

- A. As seen in its activities:
 - 1. Assembling - **Heb 10:24,25...26ff**
 - 2. Singing - **Col 3:16**
 - 3. Praying - **Acts 4:23,24...31**
 - 4. Giving - **2Co 8:1; 9:1,2**
 - 5. Studying - **1Co 14:26**
 - 6. The Lord's Supper - **1Co 11:17...26...30**
- B. Thus (practical applications):
 - 1. Its work to be in harmony with its purpose...last lesson
 - 2. Qualified oversight and competent teaching necessary to being the "pillar and ground of the truth," **1Tim 3:15** (see context)next lesson.

3. “Fellowship” = the assembly itself, not the before and after. Affects our attitude toward it - preparation, appreciation, consideration
4. Make assemblies conducive to its goals - **1Co 11:17; 14:5-6, 17-19,40**
5. Primary goal *not* “evangelism”
6. Rather than “we need you”...You need it!!
7. Encourage one another - **Heb 3:12; Gal 6:1**
8. People who “have it made” - NO - just opposite!
9. Remove from its membership those who tear down - **1Co 5; 2Th 3**

Lesson 5: Purpose of the Local Church Questions & Discussion

1. Is being “in Christ” equivalent to being a member of the church (universal)? _____
 2. When a man is “in Christ”, how many of the blessings of Ephesians, chapter one, are his? See v. 3. List at least five:
 - a. v4 _____
 - b. v5 _____
 - c. v7 _____
 - d. v11 _____
 - e. v13 _____
 3. **Rev 1:9.**
 - a. “Moffatt, relying upon Pliny (*Historia Naturalis* IV. 12, 23), says the Roman authorities sometimes banished criminals to this island. Eusebius, relying on traditions of his day, says John was condemned to exile on Patmos during the reign of Domitian (E.H., III, p. 18)” *Revelation*, Homer Hailey, p. 105.
 - b. If (and this is not certain) John was exiled to Patmos, separated from other Christians, did he enjoy these blessings (of **Eph 1**)? _____
 4. **Acts 8:26-39**
 - a. Did the Ethiopian have the right to contribute to Philip’s support if he wished, and then as he rode on home in his chariot to sing a hymn of praise to his newfound Savior, and to utter a prayer of thanksgiving for learning the truth? _____
 - b. What local church was he a member of? _____
 5. Why is a Christian obligated to the duties of **Eph 4:2ff, 17ff**? See v1. _____

- Are these duties contingent on being a member of a local church? _____
6. Think: Why do such organizations as AA, Weight Watchers, etc. have success? Can not a person lose weight by himself? Quit drinking by himself? Why do sales organizations have sales meetings for the salesmen? Why do people attend seminars or enroll in college when they could be “self taught,” especially in view of the research facilities available today? _____

 7. Read **Heb 10:23-26**. These verses urge to steadfastness and warn against apostasy. What action did the writer say could help them? _____
 8. Why sing with others? **Col 3:16** _____
 9. Read **Acts 4:23-24...31**. Note the context, **vv13-22**.
 - a. What does “their own company,” v23, refer to? _____

- b. If you were in the same position as these men, could you see any benefit in praying with those who felt as you did, suffered as you suffer, and were in sympathy and support of you? _____
10. Read **1Co 16:1-2 with 2Co 8:8 and 9:2**.
- a. Was Paul commanding them to give in 1Co 16, or, had they already determined to do that and he was giving them directions as to when and how? (These two letters were written less than a year apart, probably three to six months apart). _____
- a. Did Paul believe one's giving might stimulate another's giving? **2Co 8:1-6; 9:1-2** _____
11. What was the purpose of the assembly of **1Co 14**? See **v26**. _____
12. When we observe the Lord's Supper, we "_____ " the Lord's death, **1Co 11:26**.
- a. What is the intended result of this assembly? **v17**. _____
- b. What was the result to those not partaking with the proper attitude? **v30**. _____
- c. State in your own words the purpose of the local church. _____
- d. Can you think of other applications than those on the outline? _____

Lesson 6: Oversight of the Local Church

I. God Appointed Oversight

A. Apostles

1. **Acts 2:42**
2. No more apostles on earth, but must still respect their authority – **Mt 19:28; 1Co 4:17; 14:37,38**

B. Elders

1. **Acts 20:17,28; 1Pt 5:1,2**
2. Terms designating:
 - a. **Elders - Presbytery**
 - i. By definition refers to older men - suggestive of experience and maturity
 - ii. Would rule out the young, inexperienced
 - b. **Bishop - Overseer**
 - i. By definition refers to one who watches over or superintends - see in this partially the nature of their work
 - ii. Would rule out women – **1 Ti. 2:12**
 - c. **Pastor - Shepherd**
 - i. By definition one who tends or rules (including feeding) a flock - see again partially the nature of their work
 - ii. Would rule out the ignorant and indifferent
3. Proof that all terms refer to the same men – **Acts 20:17,28; 1Pt 5:1-2**
4. Plurality in each congregation - **Acts 14:23; 15:4; 20:17; 1Th 5:12; Tit. 1:5; Jam 5:14**
5. Oversight limited to local congregation – **Acts 20:17,28; 1Pt 5:1-2**
6. Character qualifications: **1 Ti. 3; Tit. 1**
7. Work (note terms above) – **Acts 11:30; 20:17-35; 1Th 5:12-22; 1 Ti. 3:1,5,14-15; Tit. 1:9; Heb 13:17; 1Pt 5:1-4**

C. Congregational meetings

1. Churches existed without elders – **Acts 14:23**
2. The common fund (and that purchased with it) belongs to all – **Acts 4:32**.
3. Note: The church is a “team” - **Php 1:27**.

4. Therefore, in the absence of a designated common oversight (elders) the control of the fund remains in the hands of those to whom it belongs—the congregation.
 5. As a unity of mind must be reached in regard to the use of said fund (see **Acts 5:4,5**), the congregational meeting provides a means for that to be accomplished.
 6. Examples of congregational meetings - **Acts 6:1-6; 15:12...22**
 7. What other alternatives are there without letting certain ones be the designated overseers... elders??
- D. Need for elders – **Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5; 1 Ti. 3:15**
- E. Why some local churches do not have elders
1. None qualified
 2. Young church; older disqualified
 3. No preparation
 4. Unreasonable expectations
 5. No one cares - satisfied with present arrangement. Fail to realize the need and seriousness of such need.
 6. Some like to have their say.
 7. Burned by evil elders - afraid.

II. Substitutions

- A. Preacher rule (“Pastor system”)
- B. Dominant, influential individuals (men or women)
- C. Voting (Democratic rule, majority rule)
- D. Objector rule (minority rule)
- E. Sponsoring “elders” (“elders” functioning as overseers over something other than the congregation to which they are related as bishops)
- F. Board of directors, committee
 1. Missionary society
 2. Orphan homes under boards
 3. Colleges

III. Rejection Of God Appointed Oversight And Apostasy

- A. Israel - **1Sam 8:4-8**
- B. Second century - Result...Roman Catholic Church
- C. Nineteenth century - Result...Christian Church
- D. Twentieth century - Result...???

Lesson 6: Oversight of the Local Church (Questions & Discussion)

1. The early church followed the _____ doctrine. **Ac 2:42**
2. Match:

| | |
|-----------|------------|
| Elders | Bishops |
| Overseers | Pastors |
| Shepherds | Presbyters |
3. **Ac 20:17,28**. Paul calls for the _____
 - a. Addressing the men whom the Holy Spirit had made _____, he told them that they were to feed the flock.
 - b. Feeding the flock is the work of _____.
4. In **1Pt 5:1,2**, Peter wrote to the _____ and told them to feed the flock, which is what _____ do. Then he tells these men to exercise oversight, or in other words, be _____.
5. How many elders in the following churches? Give book, chapter, and verse for each answer

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Lystra | | Jerusalem | |
| Iconium | _____ | Ephesus | _____ |
| Antioch of Pisidia | _____ | Thessalonica | _____ |
| | | Philippi | _____ |
6. Bishops have scriptural authority to oversee: (Be prepared to give a scriptural reason for your choice or choices.)
 - a. Christians in general
 - b. The local church of which they are members
 - c. The local church of which they are members and other local churches in that area that have no bishops
 - d. As much as they have the natural ability to oversee
 - e. Any work they choose to sponsor
7. Something is _____ where there are no elders. **Tit 1:5**.
8. Congregational meetings
 - a. To whom do the collected funds of a congregation belong? **Acts 4:32**. _____
 - i. Discuss: Do you think those to whom the funds belong should be consulted as to how those funds are spent? Be prepared to explain why you believe as you do.
 - ii. If a husband consults his wife before buying a new house, has he forfeited his authority? _____

- b. A congregational meeting, **Acts 6:1-6**
- Who was present during this meeting? _____
 - Who was in charge during this meeting? _____
- c. A congregational meeting, **Acts 15:7-29**
- Who was present during this meeting? **vv. 12,22.** _____
 - Who was in charge during this meeting? _____
 - Was any decision made in this meeting that involved the cognizance and approval of the whole church, and if so, what decision? _____
- d. Write the scripture that discusses a men's business meeting to decide the affairs of the church. _____
9. Fill in:
- "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock _____ the Holy Spirit has made you overseers . . ." **Acts 20:28.**
 - "Shepherd the flock of God _____" **1Pt 5:2.**
10. Where are the character qualifications for elders found? _____
11. Write the verse that authorizes a preacher to oversee a church under certain conditions:

12. Oversight may be lost by being forcibly taken away. What other way can it be lost?

13. The following is from a letter to David Bonner from Porter Routh of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee: "The primary purpose of the Southern Baptist Convention is to serve as a channel through which churches can do collectively or corporately that which they cannot do individually...I most certainly believe in the autonomy of each church and do not believe that the Convention should take action which should seek to regulate or control the church in any way."
- When Baptist churches voluntarily contribute to the Southern Baptist Convention, do those churches retain control over the distribution of those funds? _____
 - When churches of Christ voluntarily contribute to a "sponsoring church," do they retain control over the distribution of those funds? _____
 - How much of the work of local churches can elders voluntarily give up? _____
14. When men who are "elders" function over something other than the local church to which they are related, are they doing so as "elders?" Explain. _____

15. Do you agree or disagree with the following practices? Be prepared to give a *scriptural* reason for your answer.
- Explo '72 - "...in an effort to study this question, we, *the elders of the Pipeline Road church in Hurst, have invited all preachers and elders in these two counties to meet together...*At these studies, several conclusions seemed evident, including the following: (1) *It was felt that the brethren need to be informed* concerning this giant interdenominational campaign *and advised* as to its probable power in the lives of our members, especially the youth...(2) *Agreement that churches of Christ* must not have fellowship...(3) proposals were advanced for literature and personal evangelism drives *conducted by churches of Christ...* (6) **AGREEMENT THAT A FEW MEN BE CHOSEN TO WORK OUT DETAILS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE OVERSEEING ELDERSHIP.**" *Christian Journal*, April, 1972, (italics and caps mine, srf).
 - "World Radio...is an evangelistic effort *under the oversight of the White's Ferry Road Church* in West Monroe, Louisiana. *Sister congregations and interested individuals from all over the world* participate in various parts of the work...The elders of the White's Ferry road congregation wish to make it known to all Christians that their prayers and *financial help* are welcomed." Taken from *World Radio News*. (italics mine, srf)
 - Herald of Truth - c. 1,500 churches contribute..."The Herald of Truth radio program is a work of the church of Christ at 5th and Highland, Abilene, Texas. *The elders of this congregation direct and oversee every phase of this work* from the preparation of the sermons to the mailing of printed copies of these sermons." Quoted from a book put out by Highland, *That The Brethren May Know* (italics mine, srf).
 - "The Highland elders have TWO major responsibilities: the shepherding of a large local congregation and the oversight of the international Herald of Truth ministry. While the two are closely related, *what happens in one of the two areas should not adversely affect the other.*" Philip E. Morrison, "Report from the Herald of Truth Workshop," *Christian Chronicle*, Sept. 25, 1973. (italics and caps mine, srf)
16. Some brethren believe churches of Christ may build and maintain orphan homes if they are under elders; others believe they must be under a board of directors; still others believe churches of Christ have no authority to build and maintain orphan homes at all. What do you think? Be prepared to give scriptural support for your view.

17. If churches can combine their resources under one eldership to preach the gospel, can 30 churches do so? _____ 300 churches? _____ 3,000 churches? _____ All the churches in the world? _____ If one eldership can oversee the evangelistic work of all churches, could they oversee their benevolent work? _____ Their worship? _____
18. Are you making plans to be qualified to be an elder? (or, an elder's wife?)

Lesson 7: My Responsibilities as a Member of a Local Church

I. Membership In A Local Church Implies

- A. Saint (Units of the collective. See lesson, “What is the Church?”) **1Co 1:2**
1. To live “as is proper among saints,” **Eph 5:3ff**
 2. Those who do NOT - **1Co 5**
- B. Volunteer to *work together*, have *fellowship* with other saints (Lesson, “What is the church?”; Lesson, “Purpose of the local church.”) **Php 1:27**

1. Consider responsibilities to “ONE ANOTHER”

Note: while these would not be limited to fellow members of a local church, they would be especially applicable due to that relationship (“team”) and the opportunity it affords.

- Have fervent love for one another - **Rom 12:10; 1 Pet. 4:8; 1Th 4:9,10; 1 Jn 3:14-18; Col:3:14**

(While “love” sums up the responsibilities, following are some specifics)

- Honor one another - **Rom 12:10**
- Help supply the needs of one another - **Rom 12:13**
- Be hospitable to one another - **Rom 12:13; 1Pt 4:9; Heb 13:2**
- Consider one another - **Heb 10:24**
- Encourage, build up, admonish one another - **Heb 3:12; 1Th 5:11; Rom 15:14**
- Comfort one another with God’s word - **1Th 4:18**
- Restore one another - **Gal 6:1; Jam 5:19,20** (note contrast in **Gal 5:26**)
- Bear one another’s burdens - **Gal 6:2**
- Serve one another - **Gal 5:13** (see context thru **6:10**; note contrast in **5:15,19-21**); **1Pt 4:10-11**
- Accept one another - **Rom 15:7** (note vv. **5-6**)
- Live in peace with one another - **1Th 5:13**
- Be compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, forbearing, and forgiving with one another - **Col 3:12, 13 ; Eph, 4:2,3,31,32, 5:1-2**
- Humbly cooperate with one another - **Php 1:27; 2:1-4; Rom 15:5-6; 1Pt 5:5**
- Always seek what is good for one another - **1Th 5:15**
- Speak truth to and about one another - **Eph 4:25; Col 3:9**
- Do not cause one another to stumble - **Rom 14:13; 1Co 8:8-12**
- Greet one another - **Rom 16:16; 2Co 13:12; 1Pt 5:14**

- Sing to one another - **Eph 5:19; Col 3:16**
- Rejoice/weep with one another - **Rom 12:15**
- Withdraw from one who is impenitent - **1Co 5; 2Th 3:6-15**
- Pray for one another - **Jam 5:16; Eph 6:18,19**
- Etc. e.g., **Eph 5:21; Jam 4:11; 5:9; Heb 13:3**

C. Demands:

1. Time

Question (Ask yourself): “If every member invested the same amount of time as I do, what would the local church here be?”

2. Talent

Question (Ask yourself) “If every member worked as hard as I do, what would the local church here be doing?”

3. Money

Question (Ask yourself): “If every member contributed as liberally as I do, proportionately, would the church be able to carry on its present work?”

Note: In secular relationships, those who refuse to contribute their share are thought of as “deadbeats,” “bums,” etc. What about in the spiritual realm?? Read **Mt 25**. Apply to *time, talent, and money*.

II. Responsibilities To Elders

A. Respect, Honor, Cooperate

1. **1Th 5:12-13**

- a. “know” - understand...and thus “esteem them very highly...”

Appreciation, respect. A trying (“labor”) job, and many times members don’t know their trials, troubles, worries, etc. Take them for granted, critical of, complain, no encouragement, cooperation.

- b. “admonish” you

“1a: to indicate duties or obligations to b: to express warning or disapproval to esp. gently, earnestly, solicitously 2: to give friendly earnest advice or encouragement to” - *Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1970

2. **1Tim 5:19** - Gossip, rumors...??

3. **Heb 13:17**

In such a way that “joy” not “grief”

- a. “Watchmen” - solemn resp. - will necc. encouragements, admonitions

- b. Involves willing cooperation, not like stubborn child
- c. Support instead of unjustly criticize, judge

Those not in the eldership may not know *what* they are doing nor *why* they are doing certain things that pertain to the congregation. By virtue of the nature of dealing with people, their work requires some degree of privacy and a great amount of judgment.

B. Reprove - **1Tim 5:20-21**

1. “Those who continue in sin” NASB. Not to be continually fault-picking...they are men and will make mistakes
2. “Reprove” - not idle charges

This is to *expose error*. No justification for those who are continually critical without justification. Note “before all” - if not worthy of this, then this not dealing with it.

3. “Without partiality” - don’t overlook favorite elders.
4. Even then, to be done in respect for age, **1Tim 5:1** (See NASB)

C. Support **1Tim 5:17-18**

1. “Honor” = support
 - a. **Mt 15:6, 1Tim 5:3,4**
 - b. **v. 18**
2. “Double” honor - liberal, sufficient, complete maintenance Hebrew idiom: **2 Kings 2:9; Isa. 40:2; 61:7; Jer 16:18; 17:18; Zech 9:12**

III. A SUGGESTION TO THOSE WHO TAKE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES LIGHTLY

For one month show the same diligence, determination, and enthusiasm on your job and toward your job responsibilities that you do toward your responsibilities as a member of the local church.

If you have a slight headache, stay home. Sleep late a few mornings and do not go in. And don’t bother to call in either, as that would be embarrassing to explain, you know. If someone says something to you that makes you mad, slander the boss and the company and refuse to go to work for a week. When you return, pout real evidently so all will know your displeasure. If you really do get sick, just let the company guess why you didn’t show up. After all, you’re such a reliable employee. And it isn’t any of their business anyway. Don’t attend any safety meeting or other meeting the company plans. Tell them you have other things to do - let the bosses take care of that. If company comes in, just stay home that day. you wouldn’t want your company to think that you think more to that business than of them. Do as little as you can to get by. Be sure not to volunteer for any “extra” work - after all, the pay wouldn’t be worth it. Complain always, gripe constantly, and oppose every change and every effort at progress the company makes. Be sure, of course, to let your

fellow employees know how you feel - you know misery loves company. And, of yes, don't forget to tell folks how sorry that boss is, always bugging about your word.

THEN, AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN FIRED FOR YOUR ATTITUDE AND CONDUCT
IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMON SENSE - THINK ABOUT HOW GOD REGARDS
SIMILAR CONDUCT IN A LOCAL CHURCH!

Lesson 7: My Responsibilities as a Member of a Local Church (Questions and Discussion)

1. Members of local churches are _____. **1Co 1:2**
 - a. What does this demand as to his manner of life? _____
 - b. What if he refuses to so live? _____

2. Should Christians seek to be members of a local church? Why? _____

3. *How* and *when* can the Christian fulfill the following responsibilities? Give practical, specific suggestions.
 - a. Greet one another, **1Co 16:20,21**. _____

 - b. Encourage, admonish one another, **Heb 3:12,13 1Th 5:11; Rom 15:14; Heb 10:24,25**.

 - c. Bear one another's burdens, **Gal 6:1,2**. _____

 - d. Be hospitable to one another, **Rom 12:10; 1Pt 4:9**. _____

 - e. Sing to one another, **Col 3:16; Eph 5:19**. _____

 - f. Rejoice/weep with one another, **Rom 12:15**. _____

 - g. "Judge" the impenitent, **1Co 5:12,13**. _____

4. The Christian has the obligation to mature spiritually, **Eph 4:13,14,15; 1Pt 2:2; Heb 5:12-14; 1Co 3:1-2; 2Pt 3:18**; etc. Do you agree or disagree with the following?
 - a. Mature people do not shirk responsibility. _____
 - b. Mature people fulfill responsibilities placed upon and expected of them. _____
 - c. Mature people do not have to be continually reminded of duties. _____
 - d. Discuss with your family or in class, applying to one's responsibilities in a local church.

5. **Acts 9:26** - What did Paul attempt to do upon reaching Jerusalem? _____

6. **Heb 13:17** - *How* can members bring joy, or grief, to their leaders in their work? Be specific in your illustrations. _____

7. **1Tim 5:19-22** - When does a preacher or other member have the right to oppose and expose their leaders? _____
8. What are some of the qualifications such opposition must meet? (Note also **5:1-2**) _____

9. Can elders be scripturally supported? _____
 - a. Give the scripture. _____
 - b. How well should they be supported? _____