

The Church

March – May 2018

Objective: To study the concept of the “church” as presented in the scriptures, 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 revealed truth in scripture.

“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

The church of Christ exists in reference to the new man or woman in Christ. The duties in reference to self, humanity, family, and government are not based on a relationship to Christ but to our neighbor (Mat 19:17-19). 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.

As a requisite to this study of the Church, all must respect the enduring sound teaching of the Apostles and prophets which are inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

When we finish our study of the Church you will be able to recognize the value of the following quote: *"The local church is described in Galatians 1:1-2: "Paul an apostle, and the brothers with me, to the churches in Galatia." Here we see that in the province of Galatia there were many churches" what we call local churches. A Baptist church, Lutheran church, Catholic church, etc., is not the church, as in the universal church" but rather is a local church, a local body of believers."* GotQuestions.org

1. In each of the grouped scriptures below state in your own words the principle/s or concept truth/s : _____

Jn 12:48: Jesus words will judge on last day Jn 14:26: HS will remind apostles all Jesus said.

Gal 1:12: Apostle received word from Jesus 1 Co 14:37: Paul writes Lord's commandments

2. In each of the grouped scriptures below state in your own words the principle/s or concept truth/s : _____

1 Co 4:17: Teach everywhere in every church 1 Co 7:17: Paul directs in all the churches

1 Co 4:6: learn not to exceed what is written Rev 22:18,19: Don't add to or take away words

3. In each of the grouped scriptures below state in your own words the principle/s or concept truth/s : _____

2 Tim 1:13: Retain the standard of sound words 2Co1:24: Stand firm in your faith

Titus 2:7,8: Uncorrupted purity in doctrine, sound in speech

1 Co 11:2: Hold firmly to traditions, just as Paul delivered them

2 Tim 2:15: Be diligent to handle accurately the word of God

4. In each of the grouped scriptures below state in your own words the principle/s or concept truth/s : _____

Phi 4:9: What you have learned, received, heard, seen...practice these things...God w/you

2 Co 1:13: What we write, understand until the end

2 Tim 3:14: Continue in what you have learned, convinced of, knowing the source

Col 2:6,7: Walk in Jesus, firmly rooted, established as instructed

Table of Contents

LESSON 1: WHAT IS THE “CHURCH”?	4
(QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION)	8
LESSON 2: DISTINCTION IN UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL CHURCH	11
(QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION)	13
LESSON 3: WORK OF THE LOCAL CHURCH (PART 1)	16
(QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION)	18
LESSON 4: WORK OF THE LOCAL CHURCH (PART 2)	20
QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION	22
LESSON 5: PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH	25
QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION	27
LESSON 6: OVERSIGHT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH	29
(QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION)	31
LESSON 7: MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER OF A LOCAL CHURCH	33
(QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION)	37

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.

Lesson 1: What is the “Church”?

Common Ideas

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2018

“a building for public and especially Christian worship” - [*Churches* have pews, steeples, baptisteries - db]

“the clergy or officialdom of a religious body” - [The *church* ruled OK to eat only fish and no meat on Friday’s - db]

“a body or organization of religious believers as:

“the whole body of Christians” - [The *church* honors Christ - db]

“denomination” - [The Methodist, Baptist, *Roman Catholic church*, etc. - db]

“congregation” - [*church* of Christ in Humble- db]

“a public divine worship” - [Sing in *church* - db]

“the clerical profession” - [Considered the *church* as a career]

The Term Itself

COLLECTIVE NOUN

“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.

“*n. Grammar.* A noun that denotes a collection of persons or things regarded as a unit.” *American Heritage Dictionary*, 1994.”ⁱ

Examples:

One **link** is not a **chain**

One **cow** is not a **herd**

One **Christian** is not a **church**! 1Co 12:12,14...27 (Eph 1:22-23)

UNITS of the Collective

Israelites - **Acts 7:38** (KJV, “church”; NASB, “congregation”—see footnote ⁱⁱ)

Rioters - **Acts 19:32** (“assembly”—see NASB footnote)

Greek citizens - **Acts 19:39,41** (“assembly”—see NASB footnote)

Christians - **Acts 2:47** (KJV, NKJV); **1Co 1:2**. This is the “church” we are studying.

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

More than just plurality

Simply a plurality of **links** is not a **chain**

Simply a plurality of **cows** is not a **herd**

Simply a plurality of **Christians** is not a **church**. See **Mt 18:15-17**

Collective noun views something they have in common and groups them on that basis.

“Chain” collects links having in common a physical bond ⁱⁱⁱ

“Herd” groups cows having in common an owner, or, a pasture, or, breed

So with other collective nouns, e.g. “class,” “family,” “fleet” ^{iv}

Likewise, “church” groups Christians according to something they have in common. That brings us to the various uses of the term “church” in the N.T.

The Church - Universal Sense

UNITS - Christians

COMMON CHARACTERISTIC - being in Christ

The whole body of Christians, or, the collectivity comprising all those called out of the world by the gospel into the fellowship of Christ - Mt 16:18; Acts 2:47; Heb 12:23^v

By Various Figures Likened Unto:

Body - **1Co 12:12-14,27**

Temple - **Eph 2:20-22**

Priesthood - **1Pt 2:5**

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

The “fullness” of Christ - **1:3-23**

Life - **2:1-10**

Reconciliation - **2:11-22**

Heirs - **3:6**

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 3:20-21**

The Church – Area/District Sense

UNITS - Christians

COMMON CHARACTERISTIC - living in the same area or district

The body of Christians living in a defined area or district - Acts 9:31 in ASV, RSV, NRSV, NIV, ESV or NASB [“churches” in KJV, NKJV-see bible footnote]

The Church Local Sense

UNITS - Christians

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

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

Not simply assembly (children, unbelievers, meetings, special classes)

Not simply geography (not all members live in the locality of the designated church)

Characteristics of this fellowship

Regular assembly for worship and edification (though not by itself sufficient to identify the fellowship)

Common oversight under which they operate

Common fund through which they work

Illustrations:

Philippi (see above)

Corinth (see above)

Ephesus - **Acts 20:17,28; 1Tim 1:3...5:16**

Antioch - **Acts 11:26; 14:26,27; 15:3**

Note: A local “church” may exist without elders. **Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5**

The Church Assembled Sense

UNITS - Christians (and others who “enter” - **1Co 14:23**)

COMMON CHARACTERISTIC - Physical assembly of the local church

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**

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.

ⁱ“USAGE NOTE: In American usage, a collective noun takes a singular verb when it refers to the collection **considered as a whole**, as in *The family was united on this question. The enemy is suing for peace.* It takes a plural verb when it refers to the members of the group **considered as individuals**, as in *My family are always fighting among themselves. The enemy were showing up in groups of three or four to turn in their weapons.* (In British usage, however, collective nouns are more often treated as plurals: *The government have not announced a new policy. The team are playing in the test matches next week.*) A collective noun should not be treated as both singular and plural in the same construction; thus *The family is determined to press its (not their) claim.* Among the common collective nouns are *committee, clergy, company, enemy, group, family, flock, public, and team.*” *American Heritage Dictionary*, 1994. [bold mine]

“When a collective subject is **taken in mass**, the verb is singular (Mark 5:24 [“was following” NASB, srf]), but if the component parts are **viewed individually** the verb is plural (Mark 3:7 [“followed” srf]).” Dana and Mantey, *A*

Manual Grammar of the Greek NT, p165. Mk 3:7, “followed” - in Textus Receptus, the verb is plural; in Westcott/Hort the verb is singular. [bold mine]

ii The word *ekklesia* found in the NASB footnote is the word in the New Testament most often translated “church.”

iii “Chain” - “1. a flexible series of *joined* [italics mine, srf] links...” W.NWD. A question was raised as to whether “chain” was a good analogy because if you remove one link from the middle of the chain, it severs the group. This is not so of the local church. But, any analogy can be pressed beyond the point of comparison. For example, the church is likened unto a “temple,” **Eph 2:21-22**. In a physical temple, the materials that comprise it are used at no will of their own. This is not so being a part of the church. Yet, the Holy Spirit used this analogy. A “chain” is being used by analogy to illustrate that the “links” must be “joined” to form the collective. In this regard the analogy illustrates well.

iv “Senior “class”; Fontenot’s “class.” Fontenot’s “family”; Ford “family” of fine cars. “Fleet . . . 1. A number of warships operating together under one command. 2. A group of vessels or vehicles, such as taxicabs or fishing boats, owned or operated as a unit.” *American Heritage Dictionary*, 1994.

v “Firstborn” plural, “firstborn ones.” Note verb, “who ARE enrolled...”

Lesson 1: What is the “Church”?

(Questions & Discussion)

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.

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

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

Choices:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Church – Universal _____ | 1. non-Christians |
| Church - District _____ | 2. Christians |
| Church - Local _____ | 3. Congregations |
| Church - Assembled _____ | 4. Denominations |
| | 5. Citizens |

Matthew 18:15-17

Verse 15, “if he does not listen to _____”

Verse 17, “if he refuses to listen to _____”

Verse 17, “if he refuses to listen even to _____”

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

What makes one a part of, or unit in, each of the following collectives?

To be a part of the universal church one must _____

To be a part of the church in a district one must _____

To be a part of a local church one must _____

To be a part of a church in the assembled sense one must _____

What church was the Ethiopian eunuch a member of? (**Acts 8:26-29,37,38**) _____

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

Be specific in answering the following questions.

WHAT did Saul persecute when he ravaged the “church” (**Acts 8:3**) People who.....

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

WHAT were they added to when the Lord added them to the “church”? (Acts 2:47) People who....

Complete the chart of figures-What was done?

What was done? _____	Individual _____	Church _____
_____	1Co 6:11	Eph 5:26
_____	Acts 22:16	Eph 5:26; 1Jn. 1:7,9
_____	Acts 2:47	Eph 5:23
_____	1Co 6:20	Acts 20:28

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

Rom. 16:16 _____
1Co 1:2 _____
1Co 14:28 _____
Eph 5:23 _____
Rev 1:4 _____

What is the “Humble church of Christ?” _____

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

Singular	Plural	Collective
Christian	Christians	_____
Church	Churches	_____

(Note: “denomination” – “4: a religious organization whose congregations are united in their adherence to its beliefs and practices.” Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2018. “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.)

Do the following convey clear, scriptural, concepts of “the church”? Be sure you are able to give specific reasons for either agreeing or disagreeing.

Question: “What are you religiously?” Answer: “I’m a Church of Christ.”
 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.”
 “He is a true Church of Christ preacher.”
 “We all need to be more faithful to the church.”
 “In the Restoration Movement, the church was restored.”
 “All of brother and sister Smith’s children were raised in the church.”
 “John married in the church.”
 “The church needs to be painted.”

“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.

“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.

“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>

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.

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 true ‘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.

Entrance

Univ.: God adds. **Acts 2:47**

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

Removal

Univ.: God removes apostate. **Rev 3:16; Jn. 15:1,6**

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

Fellowship

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

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

Membership & Salvation

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

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**

Scope/Reach

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

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

Beginning

Univ.: **Mt 16:18...Acts 2:36,41; Heb 9:15; 11:1-40**

Local: Any time. **Acts 11:19,26**

Duration

Univ.: Never be destroyed. **Matt 25:46; 1 Jn 2:17; 2 Pet 3:13; Eph 5:27; Php 1:23**

Local: Can be destroyed. **Acts 8:1; Gal 1:13**

Number

Univ.: One. **Eph 1:23; 4:4**

Local: Many. **Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor 14:33; 1 Thes 2:14**

Oversight

Univ.: No earthly. **Eph 1:22; John 10:16**

Local: Earthly. **1Pt 5:1,2; Acts 20:28**

Treas ury

Univ. None.

Local: Thru which to work. **1Co 16:1,2; Php 4:14,15,16**

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

When a person is scripturally baptized, he thereby becomes a member of
the universal church
the local church where he was baptized
both
neither

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

A sign reads:

Church of Christ
3300 That St
Certain City, Kansas
Established 30 AD – Welcome

How is the word “church” used: Local or universal sense? Was it established 30 AD?

What work has God given the universal church to do?

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

Elders have oversight over the _____ church.

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

Is the church referred to in the local or universal sense in the following passages?

Acts 20:28 _____
1Co 12:28 _____
Eph 1:22 _____
Eph 3:10 _____
Eph 3:21 _____
1Tim 5:16 _____

Match:

Vertical fellowship (man with God)

Local church

Horizontal fellowship (man with man)

Universal church

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

There is only one church. _____

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

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

Sometimes we find a person who years after they were first baptized discovers that their baptism was not according to the revealed gospel.

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

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

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?

Are “universal church” and “local church” terms you find in the Bible? _____

Do they describe Bible concepts? _____

Can you think of better terms to describe these? _____

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

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)

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.*

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

Mt 18:15-18

3Jn 10

Fishing, Boy Scout, etc.

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

Mt 18:15-18

Acts 13:1-3...14:23

Fishing, business, etc.

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

1Tim 5:16; 1Co 11:34

1Th 1:1...4:11

Sleep, social get-together, etc.

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

Acts 19:39 - whole town converted...sit in city council

Business, charitable organizations, etc.

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

1Tim 5:16 - "it" (note each part of the proposition)

Php 4:15 - "communicated" (KJV); "had fellowship" (ASV); "shared" (NASV), sing, verb

Note characteristics of what is "common" **Acts 4:32-5:4**. It is not one's "own," v. 32, 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)

Mt 18:15-18

How many disciples acting in v. 15? _____

How many disciples acting in v. 16? _____

Up to vs. 17, has any church action taken place? _____

This rebellious man was to “hear the church.” How could this be accomplished?

Text _____

Php 2:25; 4:18 _____

1Co 7:1 _____

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 would likely start a war whether anyone was killed or not. Why? *What is the difference?*

1Tim 5:16

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

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? _____

If every member of a church acting does not necessarily involve church action, then what WOULD constitute church action in the relief of widows (“that it may relieve”)?

Acts 4:32-35

“...not one of *them* claimed that anything belonging to him was his _____ ; but all things were _____ property to them.”

Define “common”: _____

What two things would NOT be true of Ananias’ money once it was put into the “common” fund? (5:4)

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?*

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

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

What does the word “fellowship” mean? _____

The church at Philippi had supplied service toward Paul, **2:25-30**. How had this work of that local church been accomplished?

Note in ASV & NASV “your messenger and minister” and footnote on “messenger.” 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.

Think: If anything Christians are authorized to do the church can do, then,

May the church “engage in business and make a profit?” **Jam 4:13; 1Th 4:11-12**

Take a wife? (husband?) **1Co 9:5; 1Tim 4:1-5**

Build health spas? **1Tim 4:8**

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 “cat” - it does not make it so. It is still a dog.

Duties are based on relationships

Luke 10:27-37

Duty: Benevolence to all men

Relationship based on: “neighbor” - fellow human being

Duties of a collective of neighbors based on this relationship... e.g., Cancer Society

Romans 13:6,7

Duty: Pay taxes

Relationship based on: “citizen”

Duties of a collective of citizens based on this relationship... e.g. Democratic Party

Ephesians 6:4; Prov 31:27-28

Duty: Train children

Relationship based on: “parent”

Heb 13:15

Duty: Offer praise through Christ (note also **Rom. 16:3,9,12; Php 2:25,30**)

Relationship based on: being “in Christ”

Duties of collective of Christians based on this relationship??

Basic relationship underlying the existence of the local church

Members are those “sanctified in Christ Jesus” - **1Co 1:2**

Collectivity is “in Christ” - **1Th 1:1**

This is why called churches “of Christ” - **Rom. 16:16**

Note other “churches”: **Acts 7:38; 19:32,39,41**

Authority for church work

Saints (units of the collective) - **1Co 1:2**

Acting together (purpose of the collective) - **1Co 11:17; Php 1:27**

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

Applied: its work

Edification “in Christ”: **Col 3:16; 1Co 14:26**

Evangelism “in Christ”: **Php 4:15,16**

Benevolence to those “in Christ”: **Acts 6:1-6; 11:27-30; 1Tim 5:16; 2 Cor 8:1f;9:1ff**

****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.

What difference does it make?

Question of authority - **Luke 6:46; 2Tim 1:13**

Confuses the mission of Christ, i.e., “church of Christ” - **Luke 19:10**

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
Personal	Social	Domestic	Civil	Spiritual

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 a relationship to Christ but to our neighbor. 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

The Thessalonians are charged to work to earn a living in **1Th 4:11,12**. (See **2Th 3:6-15**).

To whom is this letter written? (**1Th 1:1**) _____

Does this passage then authorize the church to do this kind of work? If not, why not? _____

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? _____

Would this be the local church in the grocery store business? _____

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? _____

Would this be the local church in the grocery store business? _____

Could ALL the members of a local church combine their resources under a common oversight in a grocery store business? _____

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.)

Describe the following as to (1) who comprised it and (2) the nature of it.

Acts 7:38, “congregation” (“church,” KJV)

Acts 19:32, “assembly”

Acts 19:39, “assembly”

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*

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

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. _____

Read **1Co 16:1-3**; **2Co 8,9**; **Rom. 15:25-31**. All these verses involve the *same* contribution.

It was made up by the Gentile churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia (Corinth) for whom? _____

(See **1Co 16:1**; **2Co 8:4,5**; **9:1,12**; **Rom 15:25,26,27,31**.)

What was the underlying motive in this contribution? (See **2Co 8:4,8,24; 9:12,13**).

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?

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 [Local]	MARCH OF DIMS	FAMILY	HEART FUND
Raise children				
Cripple children research				
Heart research				
Preach gospel				

Gal 6:10

To whom was this letter written? _____

Does it necessarily follow that everything in the letter authorizes collective church action? _____

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 5:13,14ff.) _____

Why would a Christian have a special (“especially”) duty toward other Christians? _____

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?”
Therefore is the idea of benevolence the primary idea in this passage ?

James 1:27

Can you address a church without addressing individuals? (Compare **Rev 2:7**.)

What relationship in life is the responsibility here given based on? _____

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 marriage relationship). Now the word “religion” does not merely have to do with the “five items of worship” as sometimes thought of (singing, praying, giving, L.S., preaching.), 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.

In **1Pt 3:16**, “good behavior *in Christ*” seems to include all discussed from **2:11**, i.e., being a good citizen, servant, wife, husband, and neighbor. If these activities are “in Christ,” can the church make provision for them?

Answer: No. “Sanctify Christ as Lord,” **v. 15**, demands we keep all these duties, but they are not *peculiar* to that relationship. We had these duties *before* we were in Christ. Serving Christ as Lord underscores our responsibility to fulfill them.

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 psalms, hymns, spiritual songs because of word 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 be condemned? Is it needed to worship God?...to be saved?...to stay saved?...or for what?

As A Member Of The Universal Church

Blessings: **Eph 1:3ff**

Privileges:

Sing - **Jam 5:13**

Pray - **Acts 10:9**

Give - **3Jn 5-8**

Study - **Philemon, Timothy, Titus**

Responsibilities: **Eph 4:1-3,11-15,17ff**

Then why the local church??

Benefit Of Together Work As Recognized In Society

AA; Weight Watchers; Gamblers Anonymous etc.

People of like problems, goals, mind...share:

Knowledge

Strength

Resources

Abilities

What society has recognized, God knew all along...

Purpose Of The Local Church

As seen in its activities:

Assembling - **Heb 10:24,25...26ff; 6:11**

Singing - **Col 3:16**

Praying - **Acts 4:21,23,24...31**

Giving - **2Co 8:1; 9:1,2**

Studying - **1Co 14:26**

The Lord's Supper - **1Co 11:17...26...30**

Thus:

Its work is to be in harmony with its purpose...last lesson.

Qualified oversight and competent teaching necessary to being the “pillar and ground of the truth,” **1Tim 3:15** (see context)next lesson.

“Fellowship” = the assembly itself, not the before and after. Affects our attitude toward it - preparation, appreciation, consideration

Make assemblies conducive to its goals - **1Co 11:17; 14:5-6, 17-19,40**

Primary goal *not* “evangelism”-Timothy

Rather than “we need you”...You need it and us!!

Encourage one another - **Heb 3:12**

People who “have it made” - NO - just opposite!

Remove from its membership those who tear down - **1Co 5:6,7; 2Th 3**

Lesson 5: Purpose of the Local Church

Questions & Discussion

Is being “in Christ” equivalent to being a member of the church (universal)? _____

When a man is “in Christ”, how many of the blessings of Ephesians, chapter one, are his? See v. _____

3. List at least five:

v. 4 _____

v. 5 _____

v. 7 _____

v. 11 _____

v. 13 _____

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.

If (and this is not certain) John was exiled to Patmos, separated from other Christians, did he enjoy these blessings (of **Eph 1**)? _____

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? _____

What local church was he a member of? _____

Why is a Christian obligated to the duties of **Eph 4:2ff, 17ff**? See v. 1. _____

Are these duties contingent on being a member of a local church? _____

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?

With and among others with like goals one can>> _____

Read **Heb 10:23-26**. These verses urge to steadfastness and warn against apostasy. What action did the writer say could help them? _____

Why sing with others? **Col 3:16** _____

Read **Acts 4:23-24...31**. Note the context, **vv. 13-22**.

- a. What does “their own companions,” v. 23, refer to? _____

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? _____

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).

Did Paul believe one's giving might stimulate another's giving? _____

What was the purpose of the assembly of **1Co 14**? See **v. 26**. _____

When we observe the Lord's Supper, we "_____ " the Lord's death, **1Co 11:26**.

- a. What is the intended result of this assembly? **v. 17**. _____

What was the result to those not partaking with the proper attitude? **v. 30**. _____

State in your own words the purpose of the local church. _____

Can you think of other applications than those on the outline? _____

Lesson 6: Oversight of the Local Church

God Appointed Oversight

Apostles

Acts 2:42; 4:35; 6:2-3

No more apostles on earth, but must still respect their authority – **Lk 16:29-31; 1Co 4:1,17; 14:37,38**

Elders

Acts 20:17,28; 1Pt 5:1,2

Terms designating:

Elders - Presbytery

By definition refers to older men - suggestive of experience and maturity

Would rule out the young, inexperienced

Bishop - Overseer

By definition refers to one who watches over or superintends - see in this partially the nature of their work

Would rule out women – **1 Ti. 2:12**

Pastor - Shepherd

By definition one who tends or rules (including feeding) a flock - see again partially the nature of their work)

Would rule out the ignorant and indifferent

Proof that all terms refer to the same men – **Acts 20:17,28; 1Pt 5:1-2**

Plurality in each congregation - **Acts 14:21,23; 15:4; 20:17; 1Th 5:12,13; Tit. 1:5; Jam 5:14**

Oversight limited to local congregation – **Acts 20:17,28; 1Pt 5:1-2**

Character qualifications: **1 Ti. 3; Tit. 1**

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**

Congregational meetings

Churches existed without elders – **Acts 14:23**

The common fund (and that purchased with it) belongs to all – **Acts 4:32;5:4**

Note: The church is a “team” - **Php 1:27**.

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.

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.

Examples of congregational meetings - **Acts 6:1-6^{vi}; 15:12...22**

What other alternatives are there without letting certain ones be the designated overseers... elders??

Need for elders – **Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5; 1 Ti. 3:15**

Why some local churches do not have elders

None qualified

Young church; older disqualified

No preparation, experience

Unreasonable expectations

No one cares - satisfied with present arrangement. Fail to realize the need and seriousness of such need.

Some do not have the time.

Burned by bad elders - afraid.

Substitutions

Preacher rule (“Pastor system”)

Dominant, influential individuals (men or women)

Voting (Democratic rule, majority rule)

Objector rule (minority rule)

Sponsoring “elders” (“elders” functioning as overseers over something other than the congregation to which they are related as bishops)

Board of directors, committee

Missionary society

Orphan homes under boards

Colleges

Rejection Of God Appointed Oversight And Apostasy

Israel - **1Sam 8:4-8**

Second century - Result...Roman Catholic Church

Nineteenth century - Result...Christian Church

Twentieth century - Result...Sponsoring church ???

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

The early church followed the _____ doctrine.

Match by drawing line:

Elders

Presbyters_1Ti 4:14

Overseers

Bishops

Ac20:17,28;Ph1:1;1Ti3:1,2;Titus1:7

Shepherds

Pastors_Ac20:28;1Pet5:2;Eph4:11

Act 20:17,28. Paul calls for the _____
Addressing the men whom the Holy Spirit had made _____, he told
them that they were to feed the flock.
Feeding the flock is the work of _____.

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 _____.

How many elders in the following churches? Give book, chapter, and verse for each
answer;Acts14;15;20;21

Lystra

Jerusalem

Iconium

Ephesus

**Antioch of
Pisidia**

Thessalonica

Bishops have scriptural authority to oversee whom? (Give a scriptural reason for your choice or
choices.)

Christians in general

The local church among which they are members

The local church among which they are members and other local churches in that area
that have no bishops

As much as they have the natural ability to oversee

Any work they choose to sponsor or assume.

Is something lacking, wanting, unfulfilled where there are no elders?_____ **Tit. 1:5.**

Congregational meetings

To whom do the collected funds of a congregation belong? **Acts 4:32.** _____

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.

If a husband consults his wife before buying a new house, has he forfeited his
authority? _____

A congregational meeting, **Acts 6:1-6**

Who was present during this meeting? _____

Who was in charge during this meeting? _____

A congregational meeting, **Acts 15:7-29**

Who was present during this meeting? **vv. 4,12,22.** _____

Who was in charge during this meeting? _____
A decision was made in this meeting that involved the knowledge, understanding and approval of the whole church ...what decision? _____

Write the scripture that discusses a men's business meeting to decide the affairs of the church. _____

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.**

Where are the character qualifications for elders found? _____

Write the verse that authorizes a preacher to oversee a church under certain conditions: _____

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

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 authorized work of local churches can sound elders voluntarily give up? _____

When men who are "elders" function over something other than the local church to which they are related, are they doing so as "elders?" Assumed or Assigned function? _____ Explain. _____

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)

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.

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? _____

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

Membership In A Local Church Implies

Saint (Units of the collective. See lesson, “What is the Church?”)

To live “as is proper among saints,” **Eph 5:3ff**

Those who do NOT - **1Co 5**

Volunteer to *work together*, have *fellowship* with other saints (Lesson, “What is the church?”; Lesson, “Purpose of the local church.”) **Php 1:27**

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.

a) Have fervent love for one another - **Rom. 12:9,10,21; 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)

b) Honor one another - **Rom. 12:10**

c) Help supply the “needs” of one another - **Rom. 12:13; Lk10:42; Eph4:29**

d) Be hospitable to one another - **Rom. 12:13; 1Pt 4:9; Heb 13:2**

e) Consider one another - **Heb 10:24**

f) Encourage, build up, admonish one another - **Heb 3:12; 1Th 5:11; Rom. 15:14**

g) Comfort one another with God’s word - **1Th 4:18**

h) Restore one another - **Gal 6:1; Jam 5:19,20** (note contrast in **Gal 5:26**)

i) Bear one another’s burdens - **Gal 6:2**

j) Serve one another - **Gal 5:13** (see context thru **6:10**; note contrast in **5:15,19-21**); **1Pt 4:10-11**

k) Accept one another - **Rom. 15:7** (note vv. 5-6)

l) Live in peace with one another - **1Th 5:13**

m) 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**

n) Humbly cooperate with one another - **Php 1:27; 2:1-4; Rom. 15:5-6; 1Pt 5:5; Lk13:8**

o) Always seek what is good for one another - **1Th 5:15**

p) Speak truth to and about one another - **Eph 4:25; 1Cor12:15ff; Zech8:16,17,25; Col 3:9**

q) Do not cause one another to stumble - **Rom 14:13; 1Co 8:8-12**

r) Greet one another - **Rom. 16:16; 2Co 13:12; 1Pt 5:14**

s) Sing to one another - **Col 3:16; Eph 5:19**

- t) Rejoice/weep with one another - **Rom. 12:15**
- u) Withdraw from one who is impenitent - **2Th 3:6-15; 1Co 5**
- v) Pray for one another - **Jam 5:16; Eph 6:18,19**
- w) Etc. e.g., **Eph 4:25; 5:21; Jam 4:11; 5:9; Heb 13:3**

Demands of the “team”:

Time

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

Talent

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

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 “sluggards,” “bums,” etc. What about in the spiritual realm?? Read **Mt 25**. Apply to *time, talent, and money*.

Responsibilities To Elders

Respect, Honor, Cooperate

1Th 5:12-13

“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.

“admonish” you

“1a: to indicate duties or obligations to b: to express warning or disapproval to esp. gentle, earnest, or solicitous manner 2: to give friendly earnest advice or encouragement to” – *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, 2018

1Tim 5:19,20 - Gossip, rumors...??

Heb 13:17

In such a way that “joy” not “grief”

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

Involves willing cooperation, not like stubborn child

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.

Reprove - 1Tim 5:20-21

“Those who continue in sin” NASB. Not to be continually fault-picking...they are men and will make mistakes

“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.

“Without partiality” - don’t overlook favorite elders.

Even then, to be done in respect for age, **1Tim 5:1** (See NASB)

Support 1Tim 5:17-18

“Honor” = support

Mt 15:6, 1Tim 5:3,4

v. 18

“Double” honor - liberal, more than sufficient, complete maintenance Hebrew idiom: **2 Kings 2:9; Isa. 40:2; 61:7; Jer 16:18; 17:18; Zech 9:12**

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)

Members of local churches are what by calling? 1Co1:2,9 _____

What does this demand as to ones manner of life? _____

What if they refuse to so live as a saint? 1Co5:9,11,13 _____

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

How and when can the Christian fulfill the following responsibilities? Give practical, specific suggestions.

Greet one another, **1Co 16:20,21.** _____

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

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

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

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

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

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

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?

Maturing people do not shirk responsibility. _____

Maturing people fulfill responsibilities placed upon and expected of them. _____

Maturing people do not have to be continually reminded of duties. _____

Discuss with your family or in class, applying to one's responsibilities in a local church.

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

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

1Tim 5:19-22 - When does a preacher or other member have the right to oppose and expose their leaders? _____

What are some of the qualifications such opposition must meet? (Note also **5:1-2**) _____

Can elders be scripturally supported? _____

Give the scripture. _____

How well should they be supported? _____