

## Meeting My Responsibilities in the Local Church

*by John Isaac Edwards*

When we hear the word of the Lord, believe and are baptized, the Lord adds us to the church (Acts 2:47). We then join ourselves with faithful brethren in the local church to worship and carry out the work of the Lord. A good example is in Acts 9:26, “And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples...” After Barnabas attested to Saul’s faithfulness, “...he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem” (Acts 9:28). When Apollos traveled into Achaia, the brethren at Ephesus “... wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace” (Acts 18:27). Our responsibilities are carried out through the local church. What is expected of me as a church member?

### **Faithful Attending.**

Christians in the New Testament gathered on

many occasions for a variety of purposes. They gathered “...daily with one accord in the temple...” (Acts 2:46). They had a prayer meeting after James was killed and Peter was imprisoned (Acts 12:12). The church at Antioch gathered to hear Paul and Barnabas report on their first preaching trip (Acts 14:27). In Acts 15, the whole church assembled, with the apostles and elders, for a discussion concerning fleshly circumcision and Old Testament law-keeping. Paul instructed the Corinthians to deliver the immoral brother in their midst to Satan “...when ye are gathered together...” (1 Corinthians 5:4). 1 Corinthians 14:23 mentions when “...the whole church be come together into one place...” Paul spoke of singing, praying and teaching in these times of togetherness (vv. 15, 26). The discharge of the duties of elders (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17;

Titus 1:9; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2) involves bringing the church together. Hebrews 10:25 says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...” Every member is expected at every service!

**Able Serving.** Peter said, “...if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ...” (1 Peter 4:11). When each individual part of the body works properly, the church is made to grow (Ephesians 4:16). So, let’s attend to anything that may serve another’s interests. Paul said, “...by love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). Mark 14:8 says of the woman who wrought a good work on the Lord, “She hath done what she could...” Let us do what we can in taking part in the public service (reading the Scriptures, leading singing, making announcements, serving the Lord’s supper, leading prayer, preaching),

teaching Bible classes, encouraging others, practicing hospitality, visiting, taking care of the building and such like. Let's be like Tabitha, "...full of good works and almsdeeds which she did" (Acts 9:36).

### **Cheerful Giving.**

Disciples in the first century contributed into a common treasury (Acts 4:34-35). 1 Corinthians 16:2 records this order to the churches, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him store, as God hath prospered him..." 2 Corinthians 9:7 further teaches, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

### **Worthy Walking.**

New Testament Christians were besought to walk worthy of the Lord. "I therefore, the prisoner of

the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). As a Christian, one is expected to "...behave thyself in the house of God..." (1 Timothy 3:15), setting a good example of living "...soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12). Should I be guilty of walking disorderly, I can expect the brethren to withdraw themselves from me, in accordance with 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.

### **Peaceable Living.**

The Christian is expected, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). This includes being at peace with brethren. Jesus told the disciples, "...have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50). Paul wrote the Ephesians, "Endeavouring to keep the

unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). God hates "...he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). We are taught, "...mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

These are the Lord's expectations for all Christians everywhere. Saul's responsibilities were no less in Jerusalem than in Damascus, and the passing of Apollos from Ephesus into Achaia in no way changed his relationship with the Lord. It is a blessing to be associated with "...them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1). Are we meeting our responsibilities in the local church?

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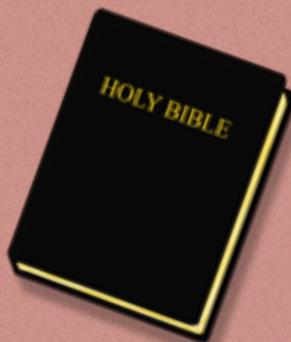
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