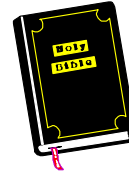


WEST COLUMBIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

“every disciple that is perfect, shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40b



Some Responsibilities of Church Membership

I have yet to find a passage of scripture that supports the “member at large” ideology. By that I mean, a member apart from a local congregation. The Scripture teaches the value of individual Christians being recognized as part of a local, autonomous congregation of God’s people. While it’s true that all those who have obeyed Christ through penitent faith and baptism are members of the church of Christ, in a general sense, it is equally true that those same individuals should identify themselves with a local body of New Testament Christians.

This past week, I went through some old files that I had received from a “retired” preacher. I ran across a piece of paper that has turned yellow and brittle due to the heavy weight of age. Based on some of the other documents that I found in the same folder, I’m guessing this piece is at least fifty years old.

On this tattered, yellow piece of paper is an article that someone wrote about church membership. I would like to share it with you.

Every relationship in life involves some responsibility. Membership in the church of the Lord bestows upon us the highest and holiest privileges and blessings conceivable to men.

It also involves great responsibilities and serious obligations [1 Cor. 12:12]. A man takes pride in fulfilling his obligations. A Christian should be eager to fulfill all obligations that go with church membership.

Let us study some of them, at the same time examining ourselves to see if we are fulfilling them so as to be approved of the Lord.

Local membership:

The local congregation is the only unit of organization we can read of in the New Testament for carrying on the Lord’s work that is assigned to the church. For a Christian to be in full fellowship with the church, he must be associated with, and be a part of, and be amenable to a local congregation. The New Testament does not describe the status of “A member at large.” We find Paul always associating himself with a congregation of Christians (Acts 9:26-30; 13:1-3).

- Continued on page 3

Choose the Strait Gate in 2008

www.WestColumbiaChurchOfChrist.org B647 South Carolina 9/21/2008

VOLUME 34, NUMBER 37 September 21, 2008

RECORDS 9/14/2008

SERMONS 9/21/2008

Sun 10 AM Bible Study: 70
Sun 11 AM Assembly: 106
Sun 6 PM Assembly: 116
Weds 7 PM Bible Study: 81
CONTRIBUTION: \$2608

AM: Jerry Manning
PM: Jerry Manning
A Call to Action
The Manifold Wisdom of God

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” - Hebrews 11:6
“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” - James 2:16

SERVICES

Sunday 10 AM Bible Study
Sunday 11 AM, 6 PM Assembly
Wednesday 7 PM Bible Study
Office Phone (803) 794-5320
Nursery provided

Bible Classes for all ages

LADIES CLASS

Tuesdays (except 1st) 10 AM

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A Warm Welcome awaits you at all our services. Come see!
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“PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” - James 5:16

- **REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** Beryl Parks, Nina Ruth Meadows (Marcella Klieves' mother), Jack and Elma Berrier, Nathaniel Manning (Jerry and Lynn's grandson), Lynn Drago (Jerry's sister) and Phyllis Johnson.
- Jan Kelleher is to have foot and knee surgery Tuesday.
- Eddie Sheppard had very successful cataract surgery.
- Marilyn Brooks has been ill and was not able to make it out to our meeting.
- Betty Mathis has been fighting some ills also, but is able to get out some.
- Megan Stoyk's Grandmother is to have serious heart surgery 9/29.
- We're thankful Margie and Ron Banks are back safely, though Ron isn't well.
- Jeanette Reeves continues to struggle with sin. Pray for her repentance.
- Remember all these, our new brothers and sisters in Christ, and brother Manning and those he studies the Bible with, in your prayers.

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." - 1 Peter 5:10

“AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY” - Acts 2:42

- **PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED!** Small cans or packages with pop-top lids are good.
- The Young Ladies Class, Thursdays, 7 pm at Jamie and Debbie Sheppard's home. Lynn Manning will be teaching. Just for the girls, teens to young adults.
- **New Convert Class** Saturdays 11 am at the building, for all who are interested. They're studying about the Bible using Keith Mosher's book, *The Book God Breathed*.

"Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked." - Psalms 97:10

“ELDERS ... FEED THE FLOCK OF GOD” - 1 Peter 5:1,2

Our Gospel Meeting is now history. Our thanks to: Billy Bland for encouraging us all with God's word; To the people that helped; To those who invited people to come hear God's word; To those who helped prepare meals; To those who encouraged us with their attendance; To our visitors; To those who PRAYED for success.

Did you get a chance to invite all those that you wanted? I hope you did and that you took time to tell others of our meeting. When you consider that ETERNITY is long and JUDGEMENT is sure, are there ANY good excuses not to have? May the Lord bless you according to your efforts.

But now the real work begins—Bible Studies with those who visited and others who want to learn more of the Gospel. Here's your chance to really excel! R U RDY

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds:" - Romans 2:6

--- Ed Kelleher, elder, West Columbia church of Christ, South Carolina

Some Responsibilities of Church Membership - (Cont. from page 1)

Subjection to the elders:

The elders are to exercise oversight over the local congregation (1 Peter 5:1-5). We (members) are to "obey them that have the rule over [us]" and "they are to watch for [our] souls" (Heb. 13:17; 1 Tm. 5:17-19).

Joint participation or fellowship in the work of the local church:

Each member is to be ready unto every good work (Tit. 3:1-2). "Every joint supplieth" the needs of the church (Eph. 4:16). "Every tree shall be known by its fruit" (Luke 6:44). "Prove your own work" (Gal. 6:4-5).

Preserve the unity, peace and harmony of the body of Christ:

"I beseech you that there be no divisions among you" (1 Cor. 1:10). "Mark them which cause division" (Rm. 16:17-18). "Endeavoring (make some definite effort) to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

The church has a mission—the salvation of souls:

We must be united with Christ that we might bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:4). Branches that do not bring forth fruit will be cut off and cast into the fire (John 15:2).

The "Christian at large" is defeating the very purpose of the local congregation—the preaching of the Gospel to the saving of souls. He is assuming no responsibility; and, sometimes he may be shirking it.

The apostle Paul said that the things written down in the past were done so that we might learn (Romans 15:4). While I understand these words to be referring to the Old Testament Scripture, I do believe they teach a valuable principle. Great Christian soldiers of the past are still teaching us by what they have written. I for one am grateful that we can still learn from these men today.

—Neil Richey, Gospel Preacher, Augusta Road Church of Christ in Greenville, SC.

Choose the Strait Gate in 2008—Read these books to see how!

NT BOOKS (27):	1 Corinthians	2 Thessalonians	1 Peter
Matthew	2 Corinthians	1 Timothy	2 Peter
Mark	Galatians	2 Timothy	1 John
Luke	Ephesians	Titus	2 John
John	Philippians	Philemon	3 John
Acts	Colossians	Hebrews	Jude
Romans	1 Thessalonians	James	Revelation