

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*

DO WHAT GOD WANTS ... NO IN BETWEEN IN 2014!

THE BULLETIN—VOLUME 40, NUMBER 38 September 21, 2014

SERMONS THIS SUNDAY:

AM: **TJ Bolen**—Be Stirred, Not Content. 2 Peter 3:1-2

PM: **TJ Bolen**—"Terms" of Forgiveness
"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

NO IN BETWEEN IN 2014!

A Warm Welcome awaits you at all our services. Come see!

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SERVICES
Sunday 10 AM Bible Study
Wednesday 7 PM Bible Study
Office Phone (803) 794-5320
Nursery provided
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Informal Bible Study
Everyone Welcome!
Bring your Bible questions
Saturdays 3 pm

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"PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER" - James 5:16

REMEMBER IN PRAYER: *Stephanie Rigney, Dorothy Gray and family, Pat Joyner, Gwen Pittman, Anna Porter, also Richard Ramkinson, Wilson Burton.*

- **Courtney Dunbaker** was to have kidney stone surgery.
- **Margie DeYoung** is in critical condition in hospice care.
- **Anna Porter** is doing better, as is **Tommy White**.
- It is reported that **Richard Ramkinson** isn't well.
- **Margaret Herring** continues to suffer with many ailments.
- **Jason Parks** has been having difficulty sleeping for several months now.
- Remember also, **Gwen Pittman** (send a card), **Dorothy Gray, Margaret Gamble (Jones' sister), Stephanie Rigney, Floyd Richbourg and Carolyn Stidham**.
- Remember to pray for and send cards to those we've not seen for awhile.
- Pray also that we all grow in **faith, hope, love, humility, zeal, mercy, knowledge**.

"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

- **Bible study, Saturdays, 3pm, informal, bring friends and your Bible questions.**
- We need **volunteers** to take the DVD and the Lord's supper to our shut-ins.

"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

NO IN BETWEEN IN 2014!

Sun AM Sermon— *Be stirred, not content. 2 Peter 3:1-2*

Actions start in the mind with our thinking. Peter wrote to remind Christians of the words and the command which they already knew. The mind has to be "stirred up" for this to happen. If the Christian mind is not stirred it will become content, contentment will lead to complacency, and will also leave the door open for one to fall prey to error.

1. I am writing - an overview of 2 Peter.
2. When being content is not what the Lord would have us to be.
3. "Stir Up" the mind to prevent acceptable contentment.

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:" - 2 Peter 3:1-2

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.

DO WHAT GOD WANTS YOU TO DO! ... NO IN BETWEEN IN 2014!

**GOD HAS TOLD US WHAT HE WANTS IN HIS WORD,
IT'S UP TO US TO KNOW IT—AND TO DO IT!**

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." - Romans 15:4

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." - 2 Timothy 2:15