

May 15, 2022 -

Ephesians 4:1-21

- Expectations of Church Members.

Introduction: Characteristics of a mature church

A few Sundays ago a nice group our church members went bowling. We had a great time. Everyone followed the rules and did what was expected...Today I want to share what the scripture teaches is expected of each of us as members. Every organization has expectations for its members. The Bible teaches that all Christians, which obviously include church members, are expected to do certain things. We could all be kinder to one another and we could think a little bit more about our brothers and sisters. I have in no way arrived and this applies to me as well. In this sermon we will address at least four; the first has to do with a...

### I. Worship in the Church vv.1,

1. We don't walk worthy so that God will love us, but because He does love us. Walk here is the Greek word "*pair/ee/pot/tat/o*" meaning how one conducts oneself. It has to do with worship! It is motivated out of gratitude, not out of desire to earn merit. When we really understand how much God has done for us, we will naturally want to worship and serve Him out of gratitude. Worship begins with a proper attitude and understanding of the church... If our relationship with God is not healthy, all these things are nothing more than religious pageantry. Your involvement makes for a wholesome worship experience together with God's people.

2. Today, we tend to look to external things to enhance our worship. The true quality of our worship, however, rests within us... If we do not allow God the essence of self, our worship will be void of His presence. If you do not have a pure heart, you may be here in body and may give an offering, but your worship will be unacceptable to God. The Bible teaches that all members are asked to give a proper attitude of worship. We also need to respect other members who come to worship. The principality of powers that is spiritual wickedness begins its evil manipulation and wicked warfare to disrupt worship to our heavenly Father. These things work in discord and prevent a smooth transition to a great worship. We need to beware of these.

I want to do everything in my power to heighten a spiritual time of worship and to give all of you the message that God wants you to have and what you need. However the evil one hates you, he hates us to worship our Father. If he could he would kill all of us to keep us from this place... just think about some of the things that happen on a Sunday morning in your homes that upset you before you even make it to the parking lot. He hates us to praise God and Jesus.

3. Often these hindrances happen. Some of you will see your pastor fluster and wonder why he is so concerned. Why does he care if the music isn't just right or the microphone or the heat or what the noise level is? It is because God loves and you need what he has for you. However, Satan and his evil demonic forces want to disrupt, hinder and stop worship to God. "Martin Luther counsels men to answer all temptations of Satan with this only, I am a Christian."

I want to do all I can to create an atmosphere where God can work and the Holy Spirit has the power to move and encourage and convict and see souls saved. I feel sometimes alone in the struggle and battle. I do not want anything to hinder our worship experience.

Texting, talking, playing video games listening to music is not being involved in the worship and it can be distracting to others. We must do better to the glory of God. Second,

## II. Members, Must Protect the Unity of the Church vv. 2, 3

1. We protect the unity of the church by caring for one another... In Paul's letter to the Romans he includes the most extensive "one another" profile.

1. We are "members of one another" (Rom. 12:5).
2. We are to "be devoted to one another in brotherly love" (12:10a)
3. We are to "give preference to one another in honor" (12:10c).
4. We are to "be of the same mind with one another" (12:16a)
5. We are to "accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us" (15:7).
6. We are to "admonish one another" (15:14). -We are to "greet one another" (16:16).
7. To speak the truth in love...Ephesians 4:15 - Be "subject to one another" (5:21).
8. We are to serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). &"Bear one another's burdens" (6:2).
9. Show "forbearance to one another" (Eph. 4:2 & 32) - "forgiving one another".
10. Encourage one another (1 Thess. 5:11).

2. Another important way we protect the unity of the church is refusing to gossip about other members or staff. More problems and disunity are created in churches because of gossip than anything else. *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.* Ephesians 4:29

The Bible teaches that all members are asked to give a proper attitude of worship, to protect the unity of the church, third to...

## III. Members should participate in the Ministry of the Church vv. 7, 11&12

1. Attending the services of your church. Every time you attend a church service your presence encourages other members. We should never be guilty of forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:25 gives us this command of regular fellowship. Some believers start drifting spiritually when they begin missing Bible study and worship services...They never intended to become spiritual drifters. However, after missing a Sunday here and there, their spiritual anchors soon lift, and they begin to drift off course spiritually.

2. Invite unchurched people graciously. A good place to start is with **F.R.A.N.**, an acrostic for friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors. Inviting others graciously means with respect and gentleness, as opposed to being obnoxious or acting "holier-than-thou."

3. Help make your church friendlier. The number one reason a visitor returns to a church is feeling welcome. Research reveals that for visitors to feel welcome they must have had their hands shaken at least five times by different people. One of the most important ministries of our church is making people feel welcome--"Greet one another" (16:16). Covid hinder this! The Bible teaches that all members are asked to give a proper attitude of worship, to protect the unity of the church, to participate in the ministry of your church and then last...

#### IV. Pursue your God's given Gift for the Church vv.7, 10

1. The apostle Paul stresses here the perfecting of the saints in verse 12. The word “perfecting” comes from a Greek root word that means “complete furnishing or equipping”. God gave spiritual leaders to teach and mature His saints to do the work of the ministry. Leadership is to equip and the saints who are to do the work of ministry. The apostle Paul amplifies this truth in his letter to the Church at Corinth.

2. Every saint and if you are “born again” you are a saint and you need to seek out your gift and use it. Indifference toward your duties as a member can harm your church and weaken its’ influence. Every believer has at least one spiritual gift, which is not a ready-made ability but a supernatural enablement that must be developed. You developed it by working it out not by staying out.

3. God has a plan for each of our lives, and finding that purpose is the only way our lives will ever have real meaning and significance. Nothing can make the Christian life more exciting and fulfilling than discovering God's very important purpose for our lives. God has always had a purpose for you. To prepare you for His purpose God has allowed you to have certain experiences. These include vocational, educational, cultural, family, and sometimes even painful experiences. God desires us to be good stewards of our pain. Sometimes our greatest opportunities for ministry come as a result of our pain, failure, or mistakes. --- Romans 8:28

4. To prepare you for His purpose God has given each believer special endowments of the Holy Spirit. We call these spiritual gifts. In the spiritual body of Christ believers have gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us (Romans 12:6a). Every believer has at least one spiritual gift, which is not a ready-made ability but a supernatural enablement that must be developed. The apostle Paul amplifies this truth in his letter to the Church at Corinth... He stresses here the perfecting of the saints in verse 12. The word “perfecting” comes from a Greek root word the means “fully grown”. You need to seek out this gift and use it. Spiritual indifference to the duties of members will kill your church. **James 1:22 describes it for us...**

#### Conclusion:

A true story illustrates this point: It took place at the University of California at Berkeley. The University had a termite problem so they order information to be given to the maintenance department. They were shoved into a closet and never distribute. A maintenance man went into a storage room and found this stack of pamphlets called “Control of Termites”. He discovered that termites had eaten through the stacks of pamphlets. The university knew how to solve the problem of termites, but they didn't act on the knowledge they had. That's the way it is with us believers all too often. We know what the Word of God says but we always don't act on that knowledge.

---You will never be happier than doing this because this is what He created you to do for Him.