

October 25, 2020 - Ephesians 4:2-12 / Romans 12:5-10 - What is Expected of Members?

Introduction

I heard the story of a guy who went to a Knick's game. The tickets he got were terrible, upper level way in the back, so he could hardly see a thing. He noticed that there was an empty seat court side right in the center so he made his way down to the empty seat. When he arrived there, he asked the man sitting next to it "Is this seat taken?" The man replied, "This was my wife's seat. She passed away. She was a big Knicks fan." The man replied, "I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Still hoping to use the seat he said, "May I ask why you didn't give the ticket to a friend or a relative?" The man replied, "Well I would have, but they are all at her funeral right now." Well, that is a guy with some really messed up priorities... How about our priorities? As Christians do we give our Lord priority in our lives? He deserves the preeminence from his Saints. Today we are continuing in our sermon "What is Expected of Members / Believers?"

I. Worship in the Church vv.1,

1. Worship begins with a proper attitude toward God and an understanding of the church... "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever," Solomon spoke of this in his book of Ecc.12:13 He said, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. The word "fear" is from the Hebrew "*yare*" which conveys the concept to stand in awe of, to reverence, honour and respect. Much of Scripture calls for our respect, joyful gratitude and adoration of the living God. When we honor God, we celebrate Him as the Source from which all goodness and provisions flows.

2. When we praise God from our heart we find ourselves wonderfully blessed. Just as a beautiful sunset or a peaceful countryside scene points to the majesty of the Creator, so worship draws us into a close spiritual bond with Him. The psalmist says, "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. The Lord is near to all who call on him" (Ps. 145:3,18). God does not need our praise, but we need to praise God. That was a review the objective of my first point in this message. So, what else is expected of us as children of God?

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

Ephesians 4:3- Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

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).
7. We are to “greet one another” (16:16).
8. 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. Be “subject to one another” (5:21). 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. Warnings are found in Proverbs 16:28; 18:8 & 27 passages.

It doesn't matter if the information is true or not; if our sharing of someone's personal information is not to help or protect, it is the sin of gossip. When you protect the unity of our church by refusing to gossip, you obey the scriptures for a member as read this morning. 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 are to 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 FRAN, 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).

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 “*kat-ar-tis-mos*” used only one time in the NT that means “complete furnishing or equipping”... You don’t want a beautiful home but no furnishing. God gave spiritual leaders to teach and mature His saints to do the work of the ministry. Leadership is to equip the saints to do the work of ministry. The apostle Paul amplifies this truth in his letter to the Church at Corinth in the passage we read today.

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. **The church is like a wheel it needs all its members to be plugged in...**

1. 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

2. To prepare you for His purpose God has given each believer these special endowments of the Holy Spirit. 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” again comes from a Greek root word the means “fully grown or furnish”. 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:

Here is 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. It is Christ, not us, who should be the focus of all we do.