

October 18, 2020 - - Ephesians 4:1-12 - What is Expected of Members?

Introduction

I learned about a man who lives up in Saskatchewan, (sə-'ska-chə-wən) Canada, in a small prairie town who has made it his life objective to collect rare and great violins. He now has twenty-five of the world's most rare and valuable violins that he stores in his house up in this prairie town. It is believed that one of them is a 1714 Stradivarius Violin missing or stolen in 2002 value at 1.6 million dollars. However, the sad thing about that is it's highly unlikely that anybody's ever going to play those violins. And wouldn't it be marvelous if 25 great violinists got a hold of those 25 violins sitting somewhere in that guy's house? Folks, I'm afraid that many churches are like that scenario. There is a collection of gifted Christians in many local churches but none of them are making any music. It's a heartbreaking thing to think about. When we are saved we are saved to serve, to worship to participate in the body of Christ as a team member. This is a very important aspect for every member. We are as it were to make music unto God first in our worship that is expected of all members.

So today being New Member Sunday I want to share what a scripture teaches is expected of 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. In this sermon we will address at least four; the first has to do with a...

I. Worship in the Church vv.1,

1. Worship begins with a proper attitude and understanding of the church... The church is a mysterious entity; it is the body of Christ. Jesus Himself was the one who ordained and commissioned the church. The church was empowered by the Holy Spirit just as Jesus promise John 14:16, 17 and in Acts 1:8. The quality of our worship is not based on our activities but on our character. Genuine worship, originates from within our hearts. Preparation for worship should begin prior to coming to church. If our relationship with God is not healthy, all these things are nothing more than religious pageantry. Your involvement makes for a wonderful worship experience together.

2. The true church is the combine body of all born again believers. It is made up of all who genuinely confess Jesus to be "the Messiah and the Son of the Living God." These are the members of the Church. Are you a member? ---gospel

3. Today, we tend to look to external things to enhance our worship. The true quality of our worship, however, rests within us. If we have not allowed 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 the other members who come to worship. Texting, talking, playing video games listening to music is not being involved in the worship and it can be distracting to others. Second,

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 Thes. 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 must 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 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 are 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 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.