

## ***The Work of the Church***

Christians have God-given work to do, both individually and collectively. While there is much overlap, passages such as 1 Timothy 5:16 clearly indicate a difference between the two. What does the Bible teach about our collective work?

### **Spiritual**

The Bible teaches that God ordained specific tasks for churches to perform. First-century congregations:

(1) Preached the gospel at home and abroad (1 Th. 1:8). This was done through instruction given in worship assemblies (1 Cor. 14:24-25), by people talking to those with whom they had contact (Acts 8:4), and by sending men out to preach (Ph. 4:15 -16).

(2) Built up the members of the congregation. Everything done in worship was to be unto edification (1 Cor. 14:26). Elders, spiritual shepherds, were charged with feeding the flock (Acts 20:28). Even severing association was an act of seeking to restore the erring (1 Cor. 5).

(3) Provided for needy brethren, either at home (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35) or abroad (1 Cor. 16:1-2; Rom. 15:26). This third area, unlike the others, was not necessarily ongoing, but as needed. Since the church is a spiritual relationship, it is no surprise that its work is in the spiritual realm.

So much of what modern churches do is conspicuously absent from the pages of the New Testament. The Bible makes no reference to churches operating schools or day care centers, providing recreational facilities and opportunities, being in the health care business, being a source for counseling and all sorts of social services, or even being a general charity.

The fact that something seems like a good thing to us is no justification for altering God's plan. Neither do we have any right to employ carnal means to attract more people. See John 6 for the result.

### **Equipped**

The Bible teaches that Christ equipped the church to accomplish everything He wants it to do. "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 3:11-12).

God's provisions are simple, yet sufficient. It is only when we try to involve the church in an unauthorized activity that we find our resources or organization inadequate. Make no mistake: any argument that says we must go beyond the New Testament model for churches in order to be effective is a denial of the sufficiency of God's design!

### **Independent**

The Bible teaches that each church governs itself, planning and executing its own work in keeping with Christ's directions. Elders' oversight is limited to the flock among them (1Pet. 5:2). No New Testament church ever directed the work of another, wholly or in part. None ever planned a work beyond its ability to carry out. Each did what it could.

No New Testament church ever paid a human institution to do its work for it. There were no add-on organizations, no subsidiary "ministries," no missionary boards or societies.

Let us be busy doing God's work in God's way.

*- by Frank Himmel*

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## ***Things to Remember When in Worship***

1. Remember the purpose of worship is not to entertain or amuse one another, but it is to pay homage, love and honor to God.

2. Remember the people in worship; they are not perfect, neither are you. Those with imperfections are worshipping Him who is perfect. He who realizes his own imperfections most is better qualified to worship Him who is perfect.

3. Come to the worship period thinking how great God is and how insignificant you are.

4. Give due attention to the thoughts contained in the spiritual songs as well as in the harmony and melody of the singing of them.

5. Remember that a sermon depends as much on the hearing of it as the presenting of it.

6. Keep in mind that a critical, intolerant attitude is foreign to the spirit of Him whom you purpose to praise and to them that are gathered with you. One is to be encouraging to those who are worshipping with him. Never be critical of those who are leading the worship services.

*- by Jim Sasser*

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## ***On Listening to Sermons***

How about a suggestion on how better to deal with sermons? As a veteran fidgety pew wiggler myself I have some experience in these matters. Immense help and immense focus come when we always follow along in the Scriptures and take notes on the sermon. The importance of these two cannot be overstated. You will be surprised how much more involved you will become. You will listen better. You will follow along better. You will pay attention better. Put down a title, main points, passages used, and any observations (even things like, "Is he right about that?"). When I do this I am putting something into the lesson in order to get more out of it. It does not matter if I have heard the topic before, or if it is the simplest of lessons, or what the topic is. It helps me to pay attention, and admittedly, yes, maybe helps the time move along better when paying attention is difficult.

*- by Robert Hines*

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## ***Some Suggestions for Your Daily Routine***

We all have some things that we do with great regularity. Certain activities are a part of every day - things like bathing, dressing, brushing teeth, etc. Each person will have other unique practices that are incorporated into their normal routine. And, while it is possible to "get in a rut," some of this regularity is important and helpful in making us more efficient individuals. With that idea in mind, we'd like to suggest some things that ought to become a regular part of every Christian's daily routine. Every day we should...

- Pray. Pray daily for your fellow Christians, especially remembering the sick, the bereaved, those who are spiritually weak, those laboring under heavy burdens, and others who have special needs. Don't let these prayers be totally "general" in nature. Think of specific individuals and mention them by name in your prayers.

- Give Thanks. In the course of your prayers, do not neglect to thank the Heavenly Father for all the wonderful blessings that He gives us. Again, be specific. Taking the time to "count your blessings" every day will help you to gain a greater appreciation for what God has done for you. Especially spend time contemplating the great spiritual blessings we have in Christ.

- Study. Find some time each day to spend in the study of God's Word. Get up a few minutes earlier each day, break away in the middle of the day, make time in the evening - but by all means study the Word. This will help you to resist temptation (Matthew 4:1-11) and prepare you to explain your faith to others (1 Peter 3:15).

- Serve. The Christian's life is to be a life of service (Mark 10:43,44). Instead of waiting for others to do things for you, look for some opportunity every day to do some deed of kindness for another individual. Your life will be happier if you concentrate less on self and more on others.