



10/23/2022

Lakeland Hills Leader

Lakeland Hills Blvd Church of Christ - 2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd, Lakeland Florida 33805

Our Duties to the Local Congregation

By Greg Gwin

It is certainly true that we are converted to Christ, not to the church. However, it is also true that the church is a vital part of God's plan for His people (Ephesians 3:9,10), and we know that membership in a local congregation is crucial for every disciple (Acts 9:26). Therefore, all Christians should be committed to the local congregation where they are members.

With these facts in mind, what are our duties to the local church? Consider these:

1. The congregation's reputation in the local community is very important. We cannot expect people to visit, investigate, study, and ultimately be converted if they know that individual members of the church are not living up to the standard they proclaim. If others see hypocrisy among the members of the local church, it will not prosper. Each and every individual Christian must be 'salt' and 'light' among the lost (Matthew 5:13-16).
2. No organized group can progress without good leadership. This is definitely true of a local church. But good leaders need supportive and cooperative followers. Thus, as the elders lead and guide according to the God's truth, each member has a duty to submit and obey (Hebrews 13:17).
3. There are certain financial obligations that must be met with regularity. Consequently, the members need to sense their obligation to give generously, regularly, and consistently (1 Cor. 16:1,2). Though circumstances may force one's absence occasionally, extra effort should be made to make sure one's financial support to the congregation is always honored.
4. Ultimately, the very existence of any congregation depends upon the attendance of its members. The very life of the church is dictated by attendance. For this reason, every saint should feel a duty to be present at every possible service, Bible study, special meeting, etc. (Hebrews 10:25). Each one should realize that an unexplained, unjustifiable absence strikes a blow to the energy, enthusiasm, and efficiency of the congregation.
5. The growth of the congregation depends upon new people being converted. If this is to happen, the members must grasp the importance of sharing their faith with others who are in their sphere of influence. Neighbors, co-workers, family members – to name a few – should be among those that we seek to win for Christ (Matthew 28:19,20).
6. It is critically important that the members feel a sense of love and loyalty to every other member and to the group as a whole. Just as one would not 'turn their back' on their physical family, neither should they callously turn away from their spiritual family. This means that there will be a concerted effort to maintain peace with others (Ephesians 4:1-3). Genuine concern should be shown for those with special needs, both physical and spiritual. The brotherly love between individual saints should be open and obvious – it is, after all, a sign of our discipleship (John 13:35). When a Christian leaves a local church without good reason, it is an indication that he did not have a sense of loyalty that is so necessary if the church is to succeed.

A Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken

By Whit Sasser

The Holy Bible says...*Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.* (Hebrews 12:28). And, am I grateful in times like these. Whether democrat, republican or other, our political kingdom is getting really shaky, it would seem, and so I rejoice in spirit, knowing I have been called into a kingdom that will never pass away.

Hebrews 12:28-29 - Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.