

MEMBERS OF THE BODY
(Saints in the Organization of the Local Church)
Lesson 24

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Local Church Organization Demands Total Membership Organization.

1. Local church organization is not just about having elders and deacons. Paul address "all the saints" in Philippians 1:1 in addition to the elders and deacons.
2. A local church that is properly organized has a membership where every member is functioning for the good of the body.
3. When a person is baptized into Christ, the Lord adds him to the one body of Christ – the "universal church" (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13). However, that person must then voluntarily "join" himself to a local assembly of Christians – the "local church" (Acts 9:26-29), so that he can fulfill his member responsibilities and his "one another" responsibilities.

B. Members of the Body of Christ.

1. The universal church is the "body" of Christ (1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12-13; Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4; 5:23,30; Col. 1:18,22,24; 2:19; 3:15).
2. The local church is also the "body" of Christ (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:14-31; Eph. 4:7-16).

C. Saints' Responsibilities in the Local Church.

1. In addition to assembling for worship (Heb. 10:25) and teaching others (Heb. 5:11ff), what other responsibilities do the saints have? Because saints are "members" of the "body" of Christ, they have many "member" responsibilities toward the "body."
2. In Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4, Paul outlines seven "member" principles. Much of what Paul writes here deals with the special spiritual (miraculous) gifts given by the Holy Spirit. But, the same seven "member" principles would apply today to our ordinary gifts and talents that we use to serve the local church. This lesson will focus on the last of these seven principles, reciprocal action.

II. SEVEN MEMBER PRINCIPLES IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.

- A. Diverse Function -- "All Members Have Not the Same Office" (Rom. 12:4).
- B. Collective Obligation — "Not One Member, But Many" (1 Cor.12:14, see v. 27-30).
- C. Unified Effort — "Many Members, But One Body" (1 Cor. 12:20).
- D. All Are Necessary — "Those Members of the Body ... Are Necessary" (1 Cor. 12:22).
- E. No Division — "That There Should Be No Schism in the Body" (1 Cor. 12:25).
- F. Effective Working — "That Which Every Joint Supplies" (Eph. 4:16; see also Col. 2:19).

G. Reciprocal Action — "Members One of Another" (Eph. 4:25; Rom. 12:5).

1. "One another" means reciprocal action. The action that is reciprocal is action that is done by *all* the members to *each other* — *each* member giving and receiving things. *Each* member, young and old, has equal responsibility to do these things. Study the passages below carefully to see what responsibilities *you* have toward *all* the members. These are mutual obligations for *each* member and they are not optional. You may be surprised how many there are in the NT! Of course, the negative "one another" passages below speak of actions that should be avoided.
2. Positive "one another" passages:
 - a) Peace one with another (Mk. 9:50).
 - b) Love one another (Jn. 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; Rom. 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 Jn. 5).
 - c) Members one of another (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:25).
 - d) Tenderly affectionate one toward another and preferring one another (Rom. 12:10).
 - e) Same mind one toward another (Rom. 12:16; 15:5).
 - f) Exhort, edify, and consider one another (Rom. 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25).
 - g) Comfort one another (1 Thess. 4:18).
 - h) Receive one another (Rom. 15:7).
 - i) Admonish one another (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16).
 - j) Salute or greet one another (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Pet. 5:14).
 - k) Wait or tarry one for another (1 Cor. 11:33).
 - l) Same care one for another (1 Cor. 12:25).
 - m) Serve one another (Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 5:5).
 - n) Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2).
 - o) Forbear one another (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13).
 - p) Be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving one to another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
 - q) Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
 - r) Submit or subject one to another (Eph. 5:21).
 - s) Confess your sins one to another (Jas. 5:16).
 - t) Pray one for another (Jas. 5:16).
 - u) Be hospitable one to another (1 Pet. 4:9).
 - v) Consider one another (Heb. 10:24).

- w) Speak, teach, and admonish one another in songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
 - x) Follow after good one toward another (1 Thess. 5:15).
 - y) Fellowship one with another (1 Jn. 1:7).
3. Negative "one another" passages:
- a) Receive glory one of another (Jn. 5:44).
 - b) Lust one toward another (Rom. 1:27).
 - c) Judge one another (Rom. 14:13).
 - d) Puffed up for one against another (1 Cor. 4:6).
 - e) Lawsuits one with another (1 Cor. 6:7).
 - f) Bite and devour another (Gal. 5:15).
 - g) Provoking and envying one another (Gal. 5:26).
 - h) Lie not one to another (Col. 3:9).
 - i) Preferring one before another (1 Tim. 5:21).
 - j) Hating one another (Tit. 3:3).
 - k) Speak not one against another (Jas. 4:11).
 - l) Murmur not one against another (Jas. 5:9).

III. LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

A. No True Local Church Membership.

1. What happens when each member of the local church (would "attendee" be better?) does not really function as a true member of the body? There will be problems.
2. There will be work problems. Carnality and materialism will take over and there will be no time left for the spiritual and physical needs of other members. All the work of evangelism, edification, and benevolence will be left in the hands of only a few spiritually-minded members.
3. There will be emotional problems. There will be no close attachment to the local congregation and "withdrawing fellowship" will not affect the conscience. Independence among members will take over and no mutual dependence on others will be felt. Cold personalities one toward another will exist in and out of the assembly.
4. There will be attendance problems. Members will attend the services, but do nothing outside the assembly. Some will attend very little or not at all. Membership will be viewed by some as just attendance. Some will simply fill a space on a pew, take the Lord's supper, drop some money in the plate, and do little more than that. However, they will certainly find the time to be critical of the leadership and others now and then.

B. What is the Solution? Take Local Church Membership Seriously.

1. Local church membership is not just about having your name in a church directory. The local church is a cooperative or collective "body", not a social club to visit a few times a week and pay dues.
2. The membership in the local church is to be no sham or cheap falseness. Membership should be taken seriously (Acts 5:10-11, 13-14; 9:26-30).

C. What Does Each Member Owe the Local Church? Loyalty, Dependability, Hard Work, and Presence at Each Service.

IV. CONCLUSION. Local Church Organization Means Every Member Possible, Using Every Talent Possible, Every Day Possible, to Serve Every Member Possible.

Lesson Twenty-Four Discussion

1. What people are a part of the local church in addition to the elders and deacons?

2. Christians are sometimes called the _____ of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-14).
3. What should each Christian in the local church do with his or her abilities, talents, or gifts, knowing that:
 - There is a diversity of function within the body?

 - The members of the body work together in a collective action?

 - The members of the body are to be unified, not divided?

 - All of the members of the body are necessary?

 - Every member of the body is to be working?

4. What happens in a physical body when one member (arm, leg, heart, etc.) does not function properly? What application can be made to the local body of Christ?

5. What are some problems that occur when Christians do not function as active "members" of the body of Christ?

6. What is the solution to these problems?

7. What does each member of this local church owe the local church?
8. Take each positive "one another" passage and write down one goal for each one that will help you carry out each responsibility. Be prepared to discuss in class what each passage means and what you plan to do specifically to fulfill each one.
- a) Peace one with another (Mk. 9:50).

 - b) Love one another (Jn. 13:34-35; Rom. 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11; 2 Jn.5).

 - c) Members one of another (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:25).

 - d) Tenderly affectionate one toward another (Rom. 12:10).

 - e) Same mind one toward another (Rom. 12:16; 15:5).

 - f) Exhort and edify one another (Rom. 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25).

 - g) Comfort one another (1 Thess. 4:18).

 - h) Receive one another (Rom. 15:7).

 - i) Admonish one another (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16).

 - j) Salute or greet one another (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 1 Pet. 5:14).

- k) Wait or tarry one for another (1 Cor. 11:33).
- l) Care one for another (1 Cor. 12:25).
- m) Serve one another (Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 5:5).
- n) Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2).
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w) Speak one to another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

x) Follow after good one toward another (1 Thess. 5:15).

y) Fellowship one with another (1 Jn. 1:7).