**When You Become a Member of Local Church (Some Things to Understand)**

1. The Importance of Togetherness in the Lord
   1. Acts 20:6-8.
   2. 1 Corinthians 14:23
   3. Now, there is a sense in which we are together even when we’re not together, i.e., in the same location.
      1. “joined **together** in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10); “joined and knit **together** by what every joint supplies” (Eph. 4:16); “with one mind striving **together** for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27); “knit **together** in love” (Col. 2:2)
      2. Even when not together in the same place, we’re still together in heart, purpose, and conviction.
      3. People who are this together should look forward to the times when they can actually be together, in the same location.
   4. Hebrews 10:24-25.
2. The Importance of Using Your Abilities and Your Opportunities
   1. Jesus’ Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25—don’t be like the one talent man who went and hid his in the ground. Jesus called him “a wicked and lazy servant” (v. 26).
      1. Remember, these talents were doled out “to each according to his own ability” (v. 15).
   2. 1 Peter 4:10-11.
      1. You bring glory to God, because you’re using what God gave you, but you also enrich yourself and others.
   3. 1 Corinthians 9:16: “Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel”
      1. “But I’m not sure I have the ability to preach.”
      2. Maybe not, but you do have the ability to do other things and woe is you if you don’t.
   4. Do you really need to be provided a list? People who want to serve the Lord usually find a way to maximize their abilities and opportunities.
3. The Importance of Those Many “One Another” Commandments
   1. The importance of those commandments is magnified when you become a member of a local church, because you’re now in close fellowship with a lot of “anothers.”
   2. I searched through the N.T. to see the different things we’re told to do to and for our brothers and sisters in Christ.
      1. Forgive them, prefer them, give to them, rejoice with them, weep or suffer with them, serve them, be tenderhearted toward them, be kind to them, submit to them, esteem them better than yourself, comfort them, uphold them, etc.
      2. No one can say, “I don’t see anything I can do.”
   3. 1 John 3:16-18.
   4. Don’t isolate yourself from your brethren. You need them and they need you.
4. Understand that others will be watching for your soul.
   1. This is true especially of the elders. Hebrews 13:17.
   2. But others will, too. 1 Thessalonians 5:14.
   3. The proper reaction to this? Thank God! I have people around me now who value my soul, who more than anything else want me to go to heaven.
   4. And so if the elders/others should approach you about something, make sure you have the right attitude.
   5. Back to this idea of the elders being held accountable…
      1. Implies some accountability toward them.
      2. Letting them/someone know when we’re sick, out of town, etc. This lets them know it’s not a lack of interest, that you’re not growing weaker. Jim Owens: When someone is missing from a family meal, we like to know why they’re not there.
      3. And why not before problems get too bad talk to them?