

Mutual Responsibilities of Christians to One Another

Introduction:

1. Christians are people who have been baptized into one body, I Cor. 12:13.
2. The “*one body*” is the church Jesus built and purchased with His own blood, Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28.
3. “*Church*” in the Bible is primarily used in two senses:
 - a. In the universal sense, consisting of all the saved, both living and dead, Heb. 12:22-23.
 - (1) “*The church*” in the universal sense has one head, Col. 1:18; it does not have an earthly address, nor local organization.
 - b. The local sense, I Cor. 1:1,2.
 - (1) In the local sense, the church has an address (Rev. 1:10-11), and it has organization, Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1.
 - (2) The local church, properly understood, is a collective unit of fellowship, consisting of a collectivity of fellow Christians residing in a common area, and who have banded themselves together to work and worship as a “church,” or a group of people called by the gospel, 2 Thess. 2:14.
4. The church is “*the house of God*,” it is the “*pillar and ground of the truth*,” I Tim. 3:15.
 - a. Being “*the pillar and ground of the truth*,” the church has an obligation to the world. Both individually and collectively, we should be diligently involved in sounding out the gospel of Christ. Cf. I Thess. 1:7-8.
 - b. The members of the church have numerous responsibilities one to another.
5. In I Cor. 12, writing to the church of God at Corinth, the apostle Paul likened the members of the church to the members of one’s physical body, and he emphasized the need for each member of the body, I Cor. 12:14-21.
 - a. By way of application, in this lesson we are discussing the “Mutual Responsibilities of Christians to One Another.” Even as the well being of your physical body is dependent upon the physical health and mutual cooperation of every member of your body, the well being of this local church is dependent upon the spiritual health and mutual cooperation of every member.

Discussion:

I. There are many “*One Another*” Passages directed to Christians

- A. “*One Another*” is from *allelon* (Greek), which is used to describe our mutual obligations one to another.
 - a. Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon defines it as “one another,” “mutually,” “reciprocally.”
- B. “*One another*” includes each member of the body.
- C. “Reciprocally,” in practical terms, means you have obligations to the whole body and the whole body has obligations to you.
 1. By way of application, we can easily see the importance of members of a domestic family reciprocating, of their honoring their mutual obligations. How does a mother feel when she prepares a delicious meal, but the family members refuse to show up at meal time, or who simply refuse to eat? How does a father feel when he works long and hard to provide for the family, but the family shows absolutely no appreciation for his sacrifices and labors? What happens to the family structure when family duties are carefully and clearly laid out, but half the family members completely disregard their responsibilities?

II. Observation: There was probably never a time in history when it was more important for mutual responsibilities in every realm to be Stressed.

- A. Consider our society in the past.
 1. It was largely rural; farming, to a great extent, was done by hand.
 2. It took the cooperation of every family member for the family itself to survive.
 - a. Though that was difficult, it was also a blessing. It drew family members closer together, and made each one recognize his own importance to the family unity, and how essential it was for him/or her to honor his/her responsibilities. Cf. Lam. 3:27.
- B. Now, relatively speaking, we are living in an age of affluence.
 1. Parents often shower their children with “things” galore, but many times do not instruct them in the work ethic.
 2. The result: To a large degree, we are living in the “Me Generation;” we want things handed to us, but we are unwilling to assume our individual responsibilities.
 - a. And this attitude can easily filter over into the local church. We want to see it grow and prosper, but so often fail to recognize our individual obligations to help make it grow and prosper.

III. Responsibilities to One Another (to fellow Christians).

- A. Viewed Positively – what we should do.

1. Love one another. Perhaps the most comprehensive command in the Bible. John 13:34-35; 15:12,17; Rom. 12:10; 13:8; Gal. 5:13; I Thess. 3:11; 4:9; I Pet. 3:8; 4:8; I John 3:11,23; I John 4:7,11-12; 2 John 5.
2. Maintain scriptural unity. Rom. 12:5; 15:5,7; I Cor. 12:25.
3. Serve One another, Gal. 5:13; Gal. 6:2; John 13:14-15.
4. Encourage One Another, I Thess. 4:18; Heb. 3:12; Heb. 10:24-25
5. Teach and admonish one another, Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19.
6. Greet one another with a holy kiss, Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 16:20; I Peter 5:14.
 - a. "A holy kiss" was a form of greeting, perhaps similar to our handshake. The point is, our greetings should be warm, affectionate, and holy.
 - b. Incidentally, it can be difficult to "greet one another" if we arrive at the last minute, and depart upon hearing the last "amen!"
 - c. This very terminology indicates that Christians should delight to be in the presence of one another.
7. Edify one another, I Thess. 5:11.
8. Bear with one another, Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13.
9. Forgive one another, Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13.
10. Be kind to one another, Eph. 4:32.
11. Submit to one another, Eph. 5:21; I Peter 5:5.
12. Bear one another's burdens, Gal. 6:2
13. Speak truth to one another, Eph. 4:25.
14. Confess faults and pray one for another, James 5:16.
15. Have compassion one to another, I Peter 3:8.
16. Be Hospitable to one another, I Peter 4:9.
17. Tarry one for another, I Cor. 11:33.
18. Have fellowship with God and one another by walking in the light, I John 1:5-7.
- B. Viewed Negatively (Do Not)!
 1. Be a stumbling block, Rom. 14:13.
 2. Go to law with one another, I Cor. 6:7.
 3. Bite and devour one another, Gal. 5:15.
 4. Envy one another, Gal. 5:26.
 5. Grumble against one another, James 5:9.
 6. Be hateful to one another, Tit. 3:3.
 7. Speak evil of one another, James 4:11.

IV. Why Should We Obey the "One Another" obligations.

- A. We are commanded to!
 1. And we must obey the commands of the Lord to be saved, Matt. 7:21.
 2. If we love God we will obey His commands, John 14:15,23.
- B. Love for one another impels us to do what is in the best interest of each other.
 1. We have sinned, Rom. 3:23; God loved us, so He sent His Son to die for us, John 3:16.
 2. Love is always seen by the action it prompts – whether it be God's love for us, our love for God, or our love for one another.
- C. The success and growth of the local church depends upon it.
 1. In too many places members complain about what "they" are doing, or are not doing, but they don't pause to ponder the question, "what should we be doing!"
- D. Our eternal salvation depends on it!
 1. I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10

Conclusion:

1. It behooves each member of this congregation, including you and me, to ponder the question, "am I honoring all of my responsibilities to my brothers and sisters in Christ."

--Bobby Witherington, Sept. 6, 2015