

A Church Of Ministers

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The church is “*God’s household*” (Ephesians 2:19), it is “*of God*” (2 Corinthians 1:1), and it is “*subject to Christ*” since He is the head of the body (Ephesians 5:23-24). But as it exists on earth, this local church is our responsibility. It is our responsibility to maintain sound doctrine, preach the truth, practice church discipline, contribute financially, and every other job entailed in maintaining and operating a congregation. It is very important for us to realize this about the church of Christ that meets in this town – we are it! We are the church, we represent Christ, we are ambassadors for Him (2 Corinthians 5:20). We must feel a sense of responsibility – perhaps even a sense of ownership – when it comes to our participation in the local church.

A sense of ownership does not mean the belief that we “own” the church of Christ. It does, however, lead us to take an active part in it. Another way of putting the idea is “owning up to our responsibilities.” When we realize that our “membership” is more than just a name on a roster, we feel compelled to become more involved in the functions of the church. Is being a member here embodied only in attendance at one or two Sunday mornings a month? Does a spot in the auditorium mean the same thing as true, lasting, devoted participation? When you feel a sense of ownership, you start to see that your “church” obligations go beyond just being here:

- You may feel a sense of confidence in your standing with the Lord. Rather than shackling you to meaningless chores, partaking in the work of the church empowers the Christian. You are imbued with a sense of awe and wonder (Acts 2:43-47), and find yourself saying, “Yeah, this is *my* local congregation! These are the people I will be spending eternity with! My membership here is a great thing that needs to be cultivated, not ignored!”
- Are you afraid of becoming more actively involved? Do you fear change? Many of us shy away from our church responsibilities because we *do not want* a sense of ownership. After all, that means we are responsible for what happens (good or bad).
- Active involvement in the local church forces us to be held accountable to others. We are no longer allowed to skate by unnoticed.
- Discovering what your ministry is frees you from the confusion and complacency of “spectator” religion. Christianity, after all, is not about watching others let their lights shine for Christ, but working in such a way that our own light shines (Matthew 5:16).

The Christians in the first century were marked by their association with a local congregation. “*Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord...*” (Romans 15:5-6). How can we be in accord and in one voice if some members are hot and others are lukewarm? Either our direction is up or down, and every member of this church needs to seriously consider which direction their energy is going.

Fulfill Your Ministry

“Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it” (Colossians 4:17). *“Fulfill your ministry”* (2 Timothy 4:5). There is an expectation in the scriptures that we take an active part in fulfilling our individual ministry. Every one of us has been given unique gifts by God, and if we fail to use them for His will, should we expect any better treatment than the worthless servant of Matthew 25? What hinders me from fulfilling my ministry?

We must also be careful not to get too comfortable with our progress to date, for there is room for improvement in the life of every saint. *“Beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you... For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end...”* (Hebrews 6:9-12). Even though we may be doing many things very well, we must continue pushing ourselves. Can you honestly say that you have maximized your potential as a Christian? Have you truly realized *full* assurance of the hope of salvation? As long as we live in this world, let us pray that we never become so comfortable that we believe we have done enough for God or our fellow humans.