
BIBLE INSIGHT

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

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The work of a church of Christ

By Pat Farish

A local church of Christ is composed of saints. In a mature church, some of these saints are bishops, and some are deacons, Philippians 1:1. The organization implied in these words indicates that a local church of Christ is to work, collectively. Each member of this church will have "good works" he/she is personally to perform; but there is work to be done by the church, the "collective", and this is the purpose of the organization.

Our consideration of the work that a church of Christ properly does will be drawn from precepts announced, and the description of the things churches did, in the New Testament. Some sneer at this, deriding the idea that the behavior of people two thousand years ago in a cultural situation far removed from ours should be any kind of guide for us. The problem with these folk is that they do not understand that it is not the behavior of those brethren in the first century that fascinates us, but the direction from God that promoted such behavior. If someone finds such a response to Scripture to be too restrictive, so be it. It is the response God prescribed. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that they should "learn by us not to go beyond what is written ..." (I Corinthians 4:6); and so must we all.

A church of Christ works to spread the gospel.

Such a mission, the burden of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), was embraced by local churches. Barnabas and Saul were sent on their first preaching tour by the church at Antioch, at the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-3). As he later worked in preaching the gospel Paul was assisted by the church at Philippi, with whom he had

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church of Christ at Beverly Shores

Sun. 9:30 a.m.—Bible Classes
Sun. 10:30 a.m.—Worship
Sun. 6:00 p.m.—Worship
Wed. 7:00 p.m.—Bible Classes

1318 Griffin Road
Leesburg, FL 34748
352-365-9946

Welcome Visitors!

We are glad to have you visiting with us today, because you are part of our goals. This may sound odd, but please let us explain. Our goal is to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) and to glorify Him in all that we do. (1 Cor. 10:31)

God will always be our number one priority, but the Bible speaks of secondary goals that this church also recognizes. Today, we consider you our honored guest, and hope to prove ourselves welcoming and hospitable. In fact, we hope that you can tell we are loving.

1 Timothy 1:5 says: "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

Because this is our goal as well, we hope that you can see love in our teaching. We hope you can see people with pure hearts, a good conscience, and faith that is totally genuine. Only then will we really be doing our job.

So please, stay a while after services so we can greet you. Feel free to take a welcome packet with you as you leave, and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask. Helping you is part of our goals.

“partnership in the gospel from the first day unto now” (Philippians 1:5). He further says to them, “And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again” (4:15, 16). With this kind of concern for the spread of the gospel, we are not surprised that before the pen of inspiration is laid down for the last time we read of the gospel being preached “everywhere” (Mark 16:20). Paul writes of “the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven ...” (Colossians 1:23). The gospel, the power of God to save, is the most precious message the world can know: and a church of Christ has no higher aim than to be preaching that gospel in every way possible.

A church of Christ seeks to edify.

One who becomes a Christian is likened to a newborn (John 3:3-7; I Peter 1:23; I Corinthians 3:1). As delightful as a baby is, we nonetheless expect to see it grow and develop, and anxiously watch for physical advance. By the same token, the babe in Christ is expected to put aside spiritual dependence in the process of maturing. Because some had not, the writer of Hebrews said, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil” (5:12-14).

The Lord expects that, after a reasonable time, “we may no longer be children”. So He made provision for the local church to edify, to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ ...” (Ephesians 4:12-15).

So, the local church provides opportunities of Bible study, and more formal gatherings for worship, as well as spiritual oversight in those situations where qualified men serve as elders. As far as its members are concerned, edification is the most important activity a church can pursue.

A church of Christ works in benevolence.

A Christian is moved by the plight of the needy, and as he has opportunity and ability he tries to alleviate that need. However, Scripture indicates that churches’ benevolent assistance should be given to “the saints” (Romans 15:26; I Corinthians 16:2, et al). The apostles said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables” (Acts 6:2). Things pertaining to the eternal are more important than things that pertain to the temporal. Jesus said, “For you always have the poor with you” (Mark 14:7); a practice of universal benevolence would quickly exhaust all the resources of those who would attempt such.

The work of the church of Christ is not left to the evolving assumptions of men; it is *assigned*, not *assumed*. The arrangement God has given is sufficient to do all the things He wants done, in the spread of the gospel, in the building up of Christians, and in providing for the poor. As someone else has said, the problem is not that the plan does not work; the problem is, that we do not work the plan.
