

*In
Search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Philippians 4:8 (NASB-U)

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Our Work Here

By: Timothy R. Henderson

This week I would like for us to focus our attention on "Our Work Here". What is our work in this location? Are we as a congregation and as individuals accomplishing the work to be done? Or do we leave that work to others? We read in 1 Thessalonians 4:1 *"Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more."* As we look at Paul's instructions in how they *"ought to walk and please God"*, I would like us to think about our "walk", that is our work here as a local congregation and as members of this congregation. Once again, What is our work?

Our work involves edification of the saints—Ephesians 4:11-12. But what does "edification" mean? Edification is translated from the Greek word *"οικοδομή"* [*oikodomē*] which means simply "the act of building, building up". It is occasionally translated *"building up"* (i.e. NASB-U—Ephesians 4:12). The idea here is that as brothers and sisters in Christ we work towards the *"building up"* of one another. I believe this is our most important work, and yet it is one that is most often neglected, or carried out with little forethought or planning. The reason I believe this to be the most important work of the church is because, if we are fully edifying and growing together as we should, the other works of the church (Evangelism and Benevolence) will naturally take care of themselves. You see if we are truly building each other up then the local church will be one that *"from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."* (Ephesians 4:16) You see if we focus on edification, evangelism and benevolence will naturally follow.

But how do we focus on edification? Well it begins with our Bible

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TIMES OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

**Bible Classes* 10:00 AM
AM Worship 10:45 AM
PM Worship 6:30 PM**

WEDNESDAY

**Bible Classes* 7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)**

classes, our singing, our time together. *"Let all things be done for edification"* (1 Corinthians 14:26). We need to constantly be checking our work to see if we are truly edifying one another. Perhaps we can have more Bible Studies, at the building or in one another's homes. Perhaps we can have more singing and devotional periods, at the building or in one another's homes. We could even have these devotional periods in a more public place to accomplish the task of edifying one another and evangelism at the same time. We need to make sure that as a congregation we are providing the proper learning opportunities for all of our members, the weak, the young, the learned, etc. I don't believe a congregation can ever have too many Bible studies. But as we strive to increase, let us make sure that we are focused on the goal of "building up" one another.

Today's Sermon:

Finally Brethren

We can also accomplish this task as individuals by providing opportunities to study the Bible in a less formal format. We as individuals can and should have singings, devotionals and Bible study periods in our homes. Opportunities such as these give the members of the local congregation an opportunity to get together and get to know one another better, closer, to increase in their love for one another. We see these examples in the 1st Century church in that they met together as a congregation, and they also met together in one another's homes, continuing in the apostle's teaching (Acts 2:42-47). An interesting observation of this passage is that they were meeting together daily, studying together daily, eating together daily and *"the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved"* (v. 47). Perhaps the reason the Lord's church doesn't grow as fast today as it did in the 1st Century isn't because the world is busy with other things (they were then too), or caught up in other religious endeavors (they were then too), it's just that we aren't getting together as often as they did, we are not as visible in our service to God as they were in the 1st Century.

As we increase in our edification of the saints in the local congregation, a natural outgrowth from that is the other areas of work in the local church, Evangelism and Benevolence.

Our work involves spreading the Gospel. Evangelism is the work of spreading the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost of the world. Giving them the opportunity to hear and obey the Gospel, before it is eternally too late. Whether it be through the efforts of a local congregation (Acts 13:1-3) or through the efforts of an individual (Acts 8:4) we all have a responsibility to *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ..."* (Matthew 28:19,20). We each need to be doing all that we can in our individual lives to speak to others of Christ. Taking advantage of opportunities placed before us to tell others of the joy that resides within us because of our salvation. We should be living a life that is evident to all around us that we are different, that the affairs of this world do not effect us like it does everyone else. They need to see in us something that they desire. May our lives be "The World's Bible".

But also as a congregation, let us be about whatever efforts we can in providing opportunities for the people of the world to hear the Word of God. We must provide more than just Sunday worship services. As a congregation, we hold Gospel Meetings. We need to be making full use of these meetings. Inviting the surrounding area to attend. Making it known throughout the area that we are preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Perhaps we need to increase in our efforts. So many churches are reducing the length of their meetings, claiming a lack of effectiveness. I however believe that we need to work towards increasing our efforts, increasing our advertising and thereby increasing our opportunities to spread the Gospel. As a congregation we can also spread the Gospel through various evangelistic efforts such as, articles in the local paper, radio programs and television programs. These efforts, along with Gospel Meetings can be a costly endeavor. They take sacrifice of the members to help finance them. I am reminded of the business saying "You've got to spend money to make money." I believe we could use the idea behind this saying in the Lord's church. The Lord's church should only be concerned with the saving of souls, not money. The more money

we spend on evangelism, the more souls we reach, the more the Lord is pleased with our work. God is not concerned with how much money we have in the bank, He is only concerned with how much preaching and teaching of the Gospel we are doing. The early Christians were commended because they gave beyond what they were able. 2 Corinthians 8:1-3 *"Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, ² that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. ³ For I testify that **according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord,**"* I believe that we as brethren need to step out more in faith that God will help us if tragedy strikes. I have seen the giving of brethren towards buildings destroyed by hurricanes or other tragedies. We must always remember "The Lord will provide." Consider the following verses:

Ephesians 3:20 *"Now to Him who is able to do **far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,**"*

2 Corinthians 9:8 *"And **God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always **having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed,**"***

I often wonder if brethren have faith based on these verses or based on banks (a shaky institution right now). Let us be more about the work of evangelism as congregations and individuals.

That brings us to our final work of a local congregation—Benevolence. In a congregational setting, the only time we see benevolence is toward the saints (Acts 4:32-35; 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-26). It has been often said that the collection of monies was "by the saints, for the saints and to the saints." Looking throughout the book of Acts and the epistles in the New Testament, we see that monies were collected by congregations for two purposes, preaching the Gospel and helping needy saints. As a local congregation we have no other authority for the use of the Lord's money. Now as to individuals we are to show hospitality towards all men (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2).

Perhaps now you can understand why I believe that Edification of the church is the greatest work. If we are studying together and spending time with one another, then we will be concerned with one another, therefore showing benevolence. The more we study together, the more we grow in our understanding of the Word of God, the more able & willing we are to speak with our friends, neighbors and coworkers about the love of God, the death of His Son and Salvation through obedi-

News N Notes

Remember these in your prayers:

- Paula and Lydia Prager
- Joyce Coen as she recovers from her knee surgery.
- Mary Jane Myers has been in the hospital for the past week
- Terry Smith
- Earl Miller
- Trudell Tennant
- Lucille Harless, Dave Harless' mother
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband.
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Blake Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's grandson
- Bud and Merl Frey
- Tammy Garrison, Zeda Goddard's daughter
- Audrio Gaudio, Nancy Morris' great-granddaughter
- Marie Roberts, & Ed's father, Jim Roberts.
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother
- Cary & Grace Lancaster

Nursing Home:

- Pauline Sellers
- Ethel Mahan

Shut-ins:

- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Pauline Midcap