

First is **mutual agreement**. Since you agreed to become a member of a local church when you joined (Acts 9:26-28), you agreed to fulfill whatever obligations come as the result of membership.

This duty is also based on **mutual responsibilities** of the members to each other. Every member is obligated to use his abilities for the benefit of the entire body (Romans 12:4-8).

Our responsibility also rests on **mutual love** for one another (Romans 12:9-10). We should so love our brothers and sisters that we desire to be with them, work with them, and serve them.

The obligation is based on **mutual need** for each other. Every part of the body is needed to do its share in the growth of the body (Ephesians 4:16).

Importance of Each Member

Christians sometimes have the denominational attitude in which they expect the work of the local church to be carried out by paid professionals, the clergy, such as a pastor or a priest. **The church Jesus built has no professional clergy but relies upon the loving, dedicated service of each member** (cf. Matthew 23:8-11).

Every member is important because each has his own function to perform (1 Corinthians 12:14-19). You may not be able to do the things that win the praise of others, but God sees and knows the little deeds of kindness and service you perform (Matthew 6:1-4). Those with great ability and spiritual strength must not look down upon the less gifted or weaker as unimportant (1 Corinthians 12:20-24). Rather, the local body should be bound together by the mutual love and concern of every member for each other (1 Corinthians 12:25-27).

Responsibilities of Each Member

What then are the responsibilities we as Christians have to the congregation of which we are members? Each member of the church is obligated to **faithfully assemble** with the saints to worship God (Hebrews 10:24-25). Also, every Christian in the congregation is to **give liberally** of his means in the first day of the week collection to help the church discharge its work (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). All members should **zealously participate** in every scriptural function of the church that pertains to them (James 4:17). Each Christian is to **diligently work** at those services he is able to render (Romans

Responsibilities to the Local Church



- ☛ Faithfully Assemble
- ☛ Liberally Give
- ☛ Zealously Participate
- ☛ Diligently Work
- ☛ Actively Love
- ☛ Regularly Pray



12:4-8). Whether you can preach, mow the grass, teach a class, prepare communion, or assist the sick, do the best you can in God's service with whatever gifts He has graciously bestowed upon you. Instead of selfishly taking but never giving, be constantly giving in the service of the Lord (Acts 20:35). Every member is obligated to **actively demonstrate love** and concern for every other member through deeds of kindness (Romans 12:9-10,13; Matthew 10:42). Finally, we should each **pray for one another** regularly (James 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Conclusion

To be successful, the local church needs every member doing his part, fulfilling his obligations. Each member should faithfully attend, liberally give, fully support the work, diligently work, sincerely love, and unceasingly pray. When that describes each member of the congregation, the church will be successful. Does it describe you? Are you "not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord"? (Romans 12:11)

Questions for Review

True/False

1. _____ The local congregation is one of many organizations authorized to be part of or connected to the New Testament church.

Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson Twenty-five

Responsibilities to the Local Church

2. _____ The Lord requires Christians to become members of a local church.
3. _____ There was no such thing as a local church in the first century.
4. _____ All members of the congregation have a responsibility to share in its work.
5. _____ Since you agreed to become a member of a local church when you joined, you agreed to fulfill whatever obligations come as the result of membership.
6. _____ Only the elders, deacons, and preacher are obligated to use their abilities for the benefit of the entire body.
7. _____ We should so love our brothers and sisters that we desire to be with them, work with them, and serve them.
8. _____ All the church needs to grow is as good preacher.
9. _____ The church Jesus built has a professional clergy to do its work.
10. _____ Every member is important because each has his own function to perform.
11. _____ The local body should be bound together by the mutual love and concern of every member for each other.
12. _____ We can worship God at home, so it is not important to assemble with the church.
13. _____ Every Christian in the congregation is to give liberally of his means in the first day of the week collection.
14. _____ It is only necessary for the preacher to zealously do the work of the church.
15. _____ Each Christian is to diligently work at those services he is able to render.
16. _____ We may selfishly take and never give in the service of the Lord.
17. _____ Every member is obligated to actively demonstrate love for every other member through deeds of kindness.
18. _____ We should each pray for one another regularly.
19. _____ To be successful, the local church needs a great, dynamic preacher.
20. _____ I am “not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

Churches of Christ probably face no problem more persistent and frustrating than that of members who allow the things of the world to hinder their work with the local congregation. Long hours on the job, visits by company, fishing trips - all these and myriads of other hindrances keep Christians from fulfilling their duties to the church.

An important source of this failure is ignorance on the part of many disciples of the seriousness of their relationship to the local congregation. **What are the responsibilities of a Christian to the church of which he is a member?**

Importance of Membership

How important is membership in a congregation? The local congregation is the only organization authorized to be part of or connected to the New Testament church (1 Corinthians 1:2). If congregations fail to perform their scriptural tasks, there is no scriptural, organized activity within the Lord's body.

The Lord requires Christians to become members of a local church. As soon as the Lord's church began, the first citizens of the kingdom formed an organized congregation. They worshiped together on a permanent basis and had a treasury through which they did a common work (Acts 2:44-48). They were a local church. Immediately upon arrival in Jerusalem the apostle Paul joined that congregation (Acts 9:26-28).

Bases of Responsibilities

All members of the congregation have a responsibility to share in its work. This obligation cannot be fulfilled through family devotionals, group meetings in one's home (unless the family or the group meeting in the home is the local church), or membership in civic clubs or charitable organizations. None of these activities is wrong, but neither can any of them replace or take precedence over responsibilities to the congregation. As the local church is a God-ordained relationship, responsibilities to it can only be fulfilled within the congregation itself. There are four bases to this obligation.