

WHAT I OWE THE LOCAL CONGREGATION (Acts 2:41-47)

I. I owe the local congregation my affection.

- A. You see this in the first century church by the way they were always together and looked after each other.
- B. These people were motivated by love for one another.
- C. Our Lord had such affection for the church He died for it (Ephesians 5:2).
- D. We are to love like Jesus (John 13:34-35).
 - 1. How did He love?
 - 2. He loved sacrificially.
 - 3. That is the way we are to love (1 John 3:16).
- E. Notice what Paul told the Colossians (3:1-2).
- F. As members of the body of Christ, that body purchased by the blood of Jesus, we owe it our love.
- G. If you can remember when you were dating, how much time did you spend with the one you were dating?
 - 1. Did you ever call him or her and say, "I don't feel like spending any time with you today?"
 - 2. Or better yet, did you ever just not call at all?
- H. We wouldn't treat a person we love that way, but sometimes we treat the Lord that way.
- I. We owe the Lord our affection and one way we express it is by the way we treat the local congregation of which we are members.

II. I owe the local congregation the right actions.

- A. Notice how the first century Christians acted.
 - 1. They did the things they had been taught by apostles.
 - 2. This caused them to gain favor from God and men.
- B. Our Lord died to make the church pure (Ephesians 5:25-27).
- C. It's the role of each Christian to make sure the church stays pure.
- D. That role begins with each individual - we must maintain our own purity before we can help others maintain theirs.
- E. Each of us reflects on the Lord's church by the way we act.
 - 1. Does your speech reflect purity (Ephesians 4:29)?
 - 2. Do your actions reflect purity (Ephesians 4:24-32)?
- F. Our actions in the world reflect on not just us but the church also.
- G. We owe each other the right actions towards one another.
- H. Each member is to do his or her part (Ephesians 4:16).
- I. Each member has a role to fill in the congregation.
- J. If we want West Walker to grow and have a bright future, we have got to reflect well on the church now.

III. I owe the local congregation the right attitude.

- A. This is essential for any congregation to grow (Psalm 100:2-4).
- B. Love must be the motivating factor of our attitudes.
 - 1. 1 Peter 1:22-23.
 - 2. Love leads us to help, encourage and rebuke brethren.

3. Romans 12:15 can't be fulfilled without love.
- C. Love will lead us to cooperate with each other.
 1. This is desire to work together (1 Corinthians 12:18-20).
 2. When it comes to working together for Christ, which of the following best describes you:
 - a. A cog in the wheel;
 - b. Friction in the gears;
 - c. Extra weight;
 - d. Gasoline;
 - e. Or grease?
- D. Love will lead us to appreciate others.
 1. This leads us to get rid of hurtful speech and division.
 2. Someone once said, "Expressing appreciation is like grease on the machine, it makes others do their work much better."
 3. There would be less problems if we said something positive for every negative statement that we make.
- E. As we maintain purity of the church in our actions, we also do the same with our attitudes.
 1. We are each to do our part (Ephesians 4:16).
 2. We are to show the fruits of the Spirit.
 3. These are vital to the well being of the congregation.
- F. Love leads us to be enthusiastic about the work of the church.
 1. We are to serve heartily (Colossians 3:23).
 2. Our enthusiasm is shown when we are on time, prepared for our roles, awake, living right and active in the work.

IV. We owe the local congregation our attendance.

- A. There are Christians who would never miss a day of work or school but think nothing of missing services.
- B. We encourage our children to have perfect attendance at school but allow them to miss Wednesday nights to do homework.
- C. We show others how important the church is by our attendance.
 1. If we are always here for worship, bible class, meetings or whatever, we show it is important to us.
 2. If we are haphazard in attendance and plan activities the week of events at church we show it is not so important to us.
 3. One of our elders commented to me how well attended the Tuesday night of our meeting was and then said it was because of our visitors not our members.
- D. Have you noticed how important it was to the early church to be together?
- E. You can't have fellowship while forsaking the assembly.
 1. Hebrews 10:24-25 - forsake means to abandon, desert.
 2. We can't abandon service and walk in the light (1 John 1:7) because that is where fellowship is.
- F. Hebrews 10 points to any assembly of the saints.
 1. By the end of Bible class we have a pretty good crowd usually in the foyer.

2. Some can't physically make it through class and worship and I understand that, but is that the case with all?
- G. Willful neglect reveals a lack of love for the local congregation, the Lord and spiritual sickness.

V. We owe the local congregation our assets.

- A. We all have abilities that are usable by the congregation.
- B. Some of us have physical assets such as finances or equipment that can be used by the local congregation.
- C. Each of us are to do our part (Ephesians 4:16).
- D. We all have time to give to the Lord.
 1. We can find ways to use our time that are good, but there is no better way to spend it than in service to God.
 2. This means more than the three or four hours here.
- E. Any ability we have should be used to help this congregation.
 1. If I can teach, then I should.
 2. If I have leadership ability then I need to develop it.
 3. If I can lead singing I need to work at it.
- F. We owe the local congregation our giving.
 1. We are to abound in this grace (2 Corinthians 8:7).
 2. God doesn't want our leftovers.