

WHAT I OWE MY HOME CONGREGATION (Ephesians 4:1-3)

I. I owe it a good influence in the community.

- A. Everything we do reflects on West Walker whether we like to think that or not.
 - 1. People with whom we are friends know where we worship.
 - 2. If we behave in an unChristian way, it reflects first on the Lord and second on West Walker.
- B. Peter mentioned that the unbelieving spouse can be one by the lifestyle of the believing spouse (1 Peter 3:1-2).
 - 1. The same holds true for our friends.
 - 2. We can have a hand in converting others by living right.
- C. We don't want to be those that turn people off to the congregation where we worship, and ultimately to the Lord, because of the way we act.
- D. Jesus came to this earth to teach us how to live and we must live accordingly (Titus 2:11-12).
- E. Our lives are to reflect God's glory (Matthew 5:16).

II. I owe friendliness to visitors to the worship services.

- A. We should want visitors to feel at home when they visit.
 - 1. We want them to feel loved so that they can learn to love us in return.
 - 2. If this happens those visitors will return.
- B. Studies have been done that show if a visitor finds three people with whom they have things in common, they are more likely to return later.
- C. We won't know if they have something in common with us if we don't speak to them.
- D. Notice Hebrews 13:2.
 - 1. I don't believe we will greet any angels.
 - 2. However, the command there is to be friendly.
 - 3. We don't know what can be accomplished with someone unless we open up ourselves to them.

III. I owe regular and consistent giving.

- A. We all go out of town from time to time.
- B. What do we do with our contribution?
 - 1. The truth is the work goes on whether we are here or not.
 - 2. The elders need to be able to plan and they can't do that with a contribution that goes up and down.
- C. One writer said, "If it is right for my congregation to pay its obligations each week, it is right for me to give each week.
- D. I also understand that there are times when we are absent that we have not planned to be absent.
 - 1. Sickness occurs and we aren't present.
 - 2. Some family emergency may arise or a quick trip becomes necessary.
 - 3. We need to remember to make up our contribution in cases like

these.

- E. We are to lay by in store on the first day of the week as we've been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2).

IV. I owe faithful attendance.

- A. We attend services for several reasons.
 - 1. We get to show God how much we love and appreciate Him by glorifying His name in worship.
 - 2. We edify and encourage one another (Hebrews 10:25).
 - 3. We gain strength from one another.
- B. Attendance, in and of itself, will not get us to heaven, but it is a sign of our faithfulness.
- C. I would say this includes Bible class attendance as well.

V. I owe support to the leaders of the congregation.

- A. In all honesty, the members of the congregation make or break leaders.
 - 1. They can plan and do all they want.
 - 2. If the members don't support their plans with their time, effort or finances, those plans do no good.
- B. Our support helps them be strong and encourages them.
- C. We should pray for them and their families.
- D. We should never embarrass them or hinder their efforts for good.

VI. I owe persistent effort in winning the lost.

- A. The Lord's work was to save the lost and His work is our work (Luke 19:10).
- B. The way we do this is by sharing the gospel message with others.
 - 1. We can do this with strangers or with friends.
 - 2. We do this by living right in a world that is against us.
- C. We know the fate of the lost.
 - 1. The Bible is plain in that those who are lost will be such for all eternity in a terrible place.
 - 2. We should want that for no one.
 - 3. Notice what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:11.
- D. Evangelism is the lifeblood of a congregation.
 - 1. If we don't win souls to Christ, the congregation will not grow.
 - 2. We may get people to move in, which is fine, but it is not true growth.

VII. I owe love to my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

- A. We can't allow our home congregation to be a place where hearts become cold toward one another.
- B. We must make it a place where hearts are open and warm towards one another.
 - 1. 1 Peter 4:8.
 - 2. 1 Peter 3:8-9.
 - 3. Ephesians 4:1-3.
 - 4. Philippians 2:2-3.
- C. We must be willing to forgive and forget any wrongs (Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:15).

1. When you take these two passages together it paints a great picture.
2. The one who wronged should meet the one who was wronged in the middle between their two homes.

From an outline by Mark Posey.