

The Church Of The Bible

Lesson 7

The Church At Work

Introduction

- **What is the nature of the work of the church?**
- **Much past discussion – some division**
- **Depends on how the nature of the church is viewed**
- **A body of related individuals**
 - **The Lord's work is done by individual Christians**
- **How Christians are empowered to do the work**
- **Church building centered work and evangelism???**

A Body of Individuals

- The Lord’s body with Christ at the head
 - *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body,-- (Eph.1:22-23)*
- God’s family with God as the father
 - *And do not call anyone on earth `father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. (Matt. 23:9)*
- No “institutional” designation
 - “Kuriakon” – The Lord’s house

The Overriding Concept

- *Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." (John 6:28-29)*
- *However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. (Rom. 4:5)*

The Lord's Work

- **Church work is only a part of the Lord's work**
 - **Committees, projects, programs, worship assignments**
- **Life's responsibilities may also be the Lord's work**
 - **Parenting, family, good marriages, providing for family, responsible citizens, productive employees**

Church work may interfere with the Lord's work.

Church Work vs The Lord's Work

- **“Church work” is done under the auspices of a local congregation**
- **The Lord's work**
 - **All church work should be the Lord's work**
 - **But not all the Lord's work is necessarily church work**
- **What may individuals do that “churches” may not do?**

There is no scriptural basis for any distinction between work done by individual Christians and that to be accomplished by the church as a body or a group of Christians working together. (J. Ridley Stroop)

The First Christians

- Their primary “devotion”
 - *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (Acts 2:42)*
- Helping each other
 - *All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. (Acts 2:44-45)*

The Christian's Basic Work

- **Doing good**

- *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph. 2:10)*
- *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Gal. 6:10)*
- *Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. (1Tim. 6:18)*

God's Workmanship

- Well equipped to do good
- Able to abound in good works
- *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Cor. 9:8)*

“Doing good in the neighborhood”

Individual Responsibility

- **Self examination**
 - *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. (Rom. 12:3)*
- **Work out your own salvation**
 - *- - -continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. (Php. 2:12-13)*

Individuals

- **Different kinds of service & workings**
 - *There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. (1 Cor. 12:5-6)*
- **Different talents and interests**
 - *We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.. (Rom. 12:6-8)*
 - *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (1 Cor. 12:7)*

Fruit Bearers

- *And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, (Col. 1:10)*
- *Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (John 15:4)*

The kind of fruit doesn't matter.

The Aroma of Christ

- *For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. (2 Cor.2:15)*
- *Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God. (2 Cor.2:17)*

Smellers, not sellers!

Biblical Unity

- Like God the Son and God the Father (**John 17:18-23**)
- Agree with one another (**1 Cor. 1:10**)
- One heart and mind (**Acts 4:32**)
- Without:
 - Disharmony
 - Dissention
 - Division

Biblical Diversity

- A range of spiritual maturity and individual scruples. (**Romans 14**)
 - Weak & strong
 - Sacred days
 - Some approve – others condemn
- **Scruples**
 - Idol worship practices
 - Moses' Law (Paul kept the Jewish traditions)

Church Diversity

- **Predominantly black churches vs white**
- **Churches in other cultures vs United States**
- **“Progressive” vs traditional worship**

Individual Diversity

- **Diverse age groups**
 - **Education**
 - **Professional background**
 - **Race**
 - **Religious heritage**
 - **Social demographics**
 - **Degrees of maturity**
- Not everyone will see everything
alike all the time!**

Enlightened Individuals

- Power for those who believe
- *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (Eph.1:18-19)*

Paul's Prayer

- *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*
- *And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*
- *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Eph. 3:16-21)*

Church Activities

- **Activities of the church must be for the benefit of individuals,**
 - Both those to whom it is directed and those participating.
- **The church exists for the individual, not the individual for the church.**
 - Christ died for individuals

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, Col. 1:9-10

