

LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER

INTRODUCTION:

1. Christians have INDIVIDUAL WORK to do, and they have COLLECTIVE WORK to perform.

2. When the Local church functions as a UNIT there is group action.

(1) The church at Philippi supported Paul. Phil. 4: 15 – 16

(2) Effective CHURCH DISCIPLINE requires action by the group as a WHOLE, not just a few. I Cor. 5: 4 – 5

(3) Congregational worship involves ALL the members.

A. The church at Troas. Acts 20:7

B. The Jerusalem Church. Acts 2:42

C. The church at Corinth. I Cor. 11: 20; 14:23; I Cor. 16:1-2

D. I Tim. 5:16

3. Concerted effort is not designed to discourage or to take the place of personal effort.

(1) When a church sends out a preacher, or supports a man in the field, this should not cause the members of the church to let up in their personal zeal and work.

4. In any kind of team endeavor, the participants must learn to work together. Acts 2:42; 2: 44 – 45; 4:32; Eph. 4:16

5. Christians are often ensnared by church splits, discord, bitter strife, and severed relations because of not learning to work together in the Lord's good cause.

6. What are some of the BASIC lessons which we must learn in order to work together harmoniously and effectively?

I. WE MUST FOLLOW RULES:

1. **Team effort necessitates rules or a standard.**
2. **Athletic teams must play according to the rules. II Tim. 2: 5; I Cor. 9: 24- 27**
3. **In the days of Joshua, Achan violated the rules – he stole the accursed thing (Josh. 7: 21) and Ai smote Israel.**
4. **The advance on Ai was hindered by the action of one man. Josh. 7: 12**
5. **To learn to work together we must learn to follow the precepts and principles of the New Testament.**
 - (1) Eph. 3: 1 – 3
 - (2) I Cor. 1:10
 - (3) I Cor. 4: 6
6. **One or two members, clamoring for something that is contrary to New Testament teaching, can disrupt unity.**

II. CONCEDE PERSONAL PREFERENCE:

1. **To learn to work together, we must realize that in matters of judgment no one can have his way about EVERYTHING.**
2. **Some are very outspoken in pressing to have their judgment to prevail.**
3. **We are to emphasize the plainly revealed truth of Jesus Christ and MINIMIZE to EXTREME our opinions, that we may follow after and make peace among ourselves, and edify one another. Rom. 14:19**
4. **Our opinions and matters of PERSONAL CONVICTION will not edify and cultivate love.**

III. WE MUST LEARN TO ACCEPT CRITICISM.

1. **Many are strongly averse to criticism, but we must learn to take criticism IF WE ARE TO WORK TOGETHER.**

**2. Constructive suggestions and friendly rebukes can be helpful.
I Thess. 5:14**

3. Jesus criticized Martha for her anxiety over housework. Lk. 10: 38 – 42

(1) This friendly criticism was presented in the spirit of love.

4. In many cases, we may receive unjust and worthless criticism.

(1) The Pharisees and Scribes often heaped that kind of criticism on our Lord.

5. Anyone who does anything worthwhile is going to be criticized.

(1) The songleader.

(2) The Elders.

(3) The Preacher.

6. Criticism, like advice, must be weighed.

(1) If it has any merit, profit by it.

(2) If it is worthless, discard it.

IV. WE MUST LEARN TO ESTEEM OTHERS.

1. We must follow Paul's teaching in Phil. 2:3

2. We must NOT ATTEMPT to put ourselves ahead of others for the purpose of being pre-eminent.

3. We must elevate others and see their good qualities, esteem them, and not ourselves.

4. Rom. 12:10 *"In honor preferring one another..."* I Cor. 12: 25 – 26

V. WE MUST LEARN TO VALUE LEADERSHIP.

1. Team effort requires leadership.

2. Imagine a ball team trying to play without a captain or coach.

- 3. Good leaders inspire confidence and motivate the team effort.**
- 4. The New Testament reveals that ELDERS LEAD IN THE LOCAL CHURCH. Acts 14: 23; 20:28; I Pet. 5: 1 -4**
- 5. Effective collective work calls for good elders.**
- 6. To learn to work together, we must learn to value godly elders.**
- 7. Many Christians have never learned to WORK WITH the overseers as they should.**
- 8. Many preachers have problems because they do not know how to work with elders.**
- 9. Elders must LEAD, and members must FOLLOW.**
- 10. Too many shepherds have in their flock stubborn, hardheaded sheep that go off in all directions.**

VI. WE MUST LEARN TO BE TOLERANT TOWARD OTHERS:

- 1. Working together in the Lord's cause demands PATIENCE and FORBEARANCE.**

(1) Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13

- 2. It is easy for one to overlook his own faults and shortcomings, and bear down hard on the other fellow. Matt. 7:1 – 5; Lk. 18: 9 – 13**

VII. BE DEPENDABLE.

- 1. Many people in the church are not dependable.**
- 2. They can be given work to do, and never get around to doing it.**
- 3. Sometimes people volunteer to do a job, then never get around to it.**
- 4. Effective working together demands that each one LEARN TO BE DEPENDABLE.**
- 5. Paul felt that John Mark was not dependable on the first journey, so he refused to take him on the second journey. Acts 15: 37 – 38**

6. When we agree to do something, remember that the whole team (congregation) is counting on us.

VIII. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY.

1. Have you every talked on the telephone when there was a bad connection?

2. If so, you can appreciate what it means to have a communication problem.

3. In the work of the church it is highly important that there be regular and clear communication.

4. Sometimes there is a breakdown in communication between the congregation and elders, or between the preacher and the elders.

5. No member should be left in the dark about what the church is doing.

6. The preacher must communicate the word of God so that it will be understood by the hearers.

7. Bible class teachers must clearly communicate what they mean to the class.

CONCLUSION:

1. It is so vital that Christians learn to WORK TOGETHER.

2. A soloist may be an excellent singer, but put him in a chorus and he stands out like a sore thumb because he has not learned to blend in with others.

3. In addition to the work that we do as individuals let us learn to work with others.

(Hebron Lane 1990)