WHAT I OWE THE LOCAL CHURCH

INTRODUCTION:

1. The word "Church" is used in two senses in the New Testament.
2. It is used in the Universal sense—including all the saved -- Matt. 16:18; Heb. 12:23; Eph. 5:23
3. When we are Baptized we are ADDED to the church -- Acts 2:47; I Cor. 12: 13; Eph. 2:6; Acts 5:14
4. The Ethiopian Eunuch belonged to the church -- Acts 8: 36 - 39
   (1) When he was first baptized he belonged to NO local church.
5. The church universal is only a SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP to God and Christ -- I Cor. 1:9 -- it has no:
   (1) Organization
   (2) No Work
   (3) It is not a functional body
   (4) It is unlimited by place
   (5) It has no common treasury
6. Only the Lord KNOWS the number of members of the church universal and only He adds to it.
7. There are INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES which WE OUGHT TO DO because of our relationship to Christ in this universal body
   (1) I am a Christian and part of the universal church 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
   (2) Every action of my life should reflect my spiritual relationship to Christ -- I Cor. 10:31
8. The scriptures teach as a Christian, a member of the church universal, I am to be a member of a local church -- Acts 9:26; Acts 11: 26; 13:1
9. The local church is an ENTITY:
   (1) It has local identity
      1. The church at Corinth was distinct from the church in Jerusalem
      2. The seven churches of Asia
   (2) The local church takes collective action
      1. In Discipline -- Matt. 18: 15 - 17; I Cor. 5: 4 - 5
      2. In Worship -- Col. 3:16; I Cor. 16: 1, 2; Acts 20:7; Acts 2:42
      3. In Preaching the Gospel -- Phil. 1:5; 4:15; II Cor. 11:8
      4. It can select and appoint qualified elders -- Acts 6:3; 14:23
10. God expects EVERY Christian to belong to a local body of believers and work within this group in service to Him -- Acts 13:1; Rom. 16:1; Acts 9: 26
11. What do I OWE THE LOCAL CHURCH?
I. I OWE THE LOCAL CHURCH THE SAME KIND OF ALLEGIANCE WHICH I GIVE TO THE LORD, FOR IT IS THE BODY OF CHRIST -- I Cor. 12:27 "Now ye are the body of Christ"

1. There are many problems in the local church due to the imperfections of us all.
2. I must be able to see the difference between the human side and the Divine side of the church.
3. When the local church has problems I must help solve the problems.
4. Many members have mixed allegiance to the church:
   (1) They love the church, but not in hunting season, ball season, etc.
   (2) They want to be used, but not when the "fish are biting".
   (3) They want to be active for the Lord, but not on Wednesday nights and Sunday night.
5. I OWE BETTER ALLEGIANCE TO THE LOCAL CHURCH THAN SUCH DIVIDED LOYALTIES.

II. I OWE TO THE LOCAL CHURCH THE EXHORTATION THAT WE MUTUALLY NEED TO REMAIN STEADFAST.

1. We are to PROVOKE one another to love and good works -- Heb. 10:24
2. We are to TEACH and ADMONISH one another in song -- Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19
3. Each of us can become discouraged -- Gal. 6:9; I Thess. 5:14
4. The Lord in His wisdom has made provision in the local church for us to HELP ONE ANOTHER -- Gal. 6:2; Heb. 3:13; Tit. 2:6; Rom. 12:8; Acts 2:40; Acts 14:22
5. We neglect to receive a blessing when we fail to be with other Christians to exhort and be exhorted!

III. I OWE THE LOCAL CHURCH FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE TO ITS WORK -- Heb. 10: 24 - 25

1. I must PARTICIPATE in all its efforts and in opportunities of worship and study.
2. The Christian that only attends once a week is a very weak Christian.
3. From the ranks of those who attend but one hour a week comes no elders, teachers or preachers.
   (1) They cannot be depended on for any kind of work on a regular basis.
4. They are not STEADFAST -- I Cor. 15:58
5. The disciples in Jerusalem were STEADFAST -- Acts 2:42

IV. I OWE THE LOCAL CHURCH MY FINANCIAL SUPPORT

1. Faithful Christians will support the work of the Lord with their money.
2. We are commanded to support the local treasury -- I Cor. 16:1,2
3. When we give to the Local treasury we are giving to the Lord -- Acts 5: 1 - 11; Mal. 3:8
4. The local church will always have a need since the Lord assigned it the work of:
   (1) Evangelism -- Matt. 28: 19
   (2) Edification -- Matt. 28: 20
   (3) Benevolence
5. As a member of the congregation, I have responsibility to SHARE IN THE SUPPORT OF THIS WORK -- Acts 2:42
V. I OWE THE LOCAL CHURCH A PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD EACH AND EVERY MEMBER

1. We are to LOVE ONE ANOTHER with a pure heart fervently -- I Pet. 1:22; John 13: 34 - 35
2. We are to BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS -- Gal. 6:2
3. We are to RESTORE one another -- Gal. 6:1; James 5: 19 - 20
4. We are to follow after the things which make for PEACE -- Rom. 14:19
5. We are NOT to be filled with STRIFE and ENVYING -- Rom 13:13
6. We are to lay aside ALL EVIL SPEAKING -- I Pet. 2:1
7. We are to endeavor to KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT -- Eph. 4: 2 - 3; I Cor. 1:10
8. We are to do NOTHING THROUGH STRIFE OR VAINGLORY -- Phil. 2:3
9. We are to HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST -- Phil. 2:5

CONCLUSION:

1. God, in infinite wisdom, provided the congregational arrangement so His people might grow together and encourage one another, and worship in peace.
2. We all have an obligation to the Local church to promote these things.
3. Eph. 4:16
4. Are you paying what you owe to the local church?

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