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Men

Unfortunately, many men think that unless they're elders or deacons, they fulfill all God expects, in terms of body life, by attending Sunday morning services. I've even encountered the stance of, "I'm a busy man, and don't have time for unnecessary extra church activities unless the church is about to be shut down!" Another person expressed this same problem with the comment of, "I'm going to have to be careful, I'm spreading myself thin as it is" in reference to getting together for Bible study, when there wasn't any more church attendance anyway.

Examine Our Priorities

The problem starts with priorities. Is the church of Christ important enough a priority to seek to build it up?

Consider some of the competition:

Children in sports and other extra-curricular activities

Employment(s)

Family, immediate and extended

Chores to be done

Charities to work with

Entertainment

Rest

Etc.

Such as found in this list are some of the things that become priorities over seeking to build the Kingdom of God. Without realizing it, we set these other areas over the charge of functioning in a local body of believers. The reason? We simply don't have a heart to seek the same priorities God wants us to have. If we made the work of the body a top priority, we would hear the opposite of the two examples I gave. The complaint wouldn't fall as excuses for not getting involved in seeking to build the body.

We, as men, need to diligently seek to become an active functioning part of the local body. We need to learn and share. We need to be an open vessel for God's Spirit to flow through to help others draw closer to Him so we can see His glory shine in our midst. Where we diligently seek the Lord, we'll find God's Spirit truly moving. If we're merely religious, we'll see dry activity with everybody seeking to get everyone else to see things as they do. Our gatherings must bear the quality described in Hebrews:

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24,25

Our gatherings should result in uplifting, building experiences. If the gatherings are a burden, leaving us rather exhausted after attending, something is wrong! Some possibilities being:

- The meeting isn't following the leading of the Spirit.
- The flesh is holding control.
- The love of the Lord and each other is lacking.
- We're not truly seeking the Lord with all our heart.

Where we're gathering according to God's plan, we'll see His presence. He will draw us closer to Him and each other. If this is lacking, the first place to start with is getting the meetings back on track!

I realize many don't see the importance of active involve-

ment in the local body. This being the case, we need to take a brief look at what the Bible calls for.

The Call For Active Involvement In The Body

Strangely enough, in this section on men, we need to look at two passages on women:

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

1 Timothy 2:8, 12-14

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

1 Corinthians 14:34,35

Looking at the first verse, Paul was covering instruction regarding men, then switched to the injunctions regarding women. It was not a general to all mankind, but specifically to men as verse 9 took up the other side of the coin with specifics to women. From verse 8 we see all Christian men, not just the leaders, are to have an active prayer life, walk in holiness, be strong in faith and with a controlled heart.

At this point, look at the verses in Corinthians and notice something very significant. In verse 35 we see the women were to ask their husbands at home about any questions. Back in Paul's time, we know the synagogues had chief leaders and the churches had elders. With today's mindset, he would naturally say that the questioning women could easily ask the "chief pastor" or an elder after service. That isn't God's way. Not that it would be wrong for a woman to ask an elder questions after service, but the issue of God's pattern for leadership is very sharp here. The women were to ask their husbands because each man

is to be a leader in his household. He is to be such a man of God that it would be as good as going to the elders. This shows the call each man has in his place in the church. He's to be one who can be as trusted, as any of the elders, to lead his family securely in the right manner.

Going back to the 1 Timothy 2:12-14, there's a picture drawn, we need to grasp. To see this, we need to understand the Greek word translated as "*to usurp authority*" means "to stand with one's own armor", as defined in Young's Analytical Concordance. Verses 13 and 14 lay out the picture of why this is important and show us men our responsibility.

Picture this: A ancient styled warrior, in full armor with shield and swinging sword. To the right is a serpent challenging the soldier. Behind the man, to the left, is his woman, the fair maiden he's protecting. She's clinging to him with a look of trust and confidence. A romantic King Arthur picture. This is like the word used in Timothy is referring to.

Going to the Garden of Eden, we see the messed up picture of the man with his armor looking to the right, the woman standing behind him to the left, and the serpent beside her even further to the left. The woman is taking on the battle and isn't prepared. The serpent knew what he was up to. The man and woman unit is a type of mobile fortress with a wall of defence only on the front. The back is unshielded, but since the fortress is mobile, there's nothing to worry about, as long as this fortress turns to face the enemy. If this fortress fails to turn the right side to the enemy, the enemy can easily take it from the unwallled side. The core of this fortress that helps sustain it, being the woman, is susceptible. When that inner wall support is knocked out, the strength of the walls will collapse. Hence, the whole will fall. This is what verses 12-14 were calling to remembrance. The woman is the wall's support structure, "the helpmeet".

When we grasp this image, we see what great responsibility the man has for his family, and the great charge God has laid upon him. The man can't afford to not stand ready with sword and shield. As verse 8 described, he's to be an active,

quality man of God! See the local church like this: A band of “mighty men”, as the Old Testament described warriors. NOT, and I repeat NOT a politician with a crowd of voters! We’re not to have the mindset of, “he’s our elected choice (the Pastor) and we can confidently leave all cares with him, he’ll take care of us” going about our mundane affairs of work and relaxation. See yourself as one of the might men, where each and every one was someone to be reckoned with. When you mean business with God, getting close to Him, you’ll begin to be equipped to be one the mighties. Putting it bluntly though, if you mean business, laziness has to go! You’ll never attain to a mighty level if a few spiritual pushups scare you away. Warriors don’t develop without working out. They have to be trained to use that sword, and they have to overcome fear with true faith. They also have to march when the General says to march - obedience.

The Word - Faith - Obedience. These three for becoming mighty men. Having other priorities, such as TV and fishing, that gobble our time of training, will leave us spiritually limp. Muscles won’t develop, and when the time comes we’ll find ourselves fat soldiers on the field of battle. We may not even be able to get out of the barracks. Take heed to this passage:

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2 Timothy 2:3,4

Fight the fight, love your wives and defend them, stand for the house of the Lord to see the body of Christ manifest in your local community!