

SUBJECT: WORKING MEMBERS MAKE IT WORK

READING: Eph 4:11-16 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (14) That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Introduction:

Last Lord's day we examined God's Ingenious Plan to Reach the world that is separated from His love, mercy, and grace because of sin! That plan first of all involves man's redemption from sin, death and hell through Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

That redemption is the result to being exposed to the truth of the bible which is the very word of God; **that exposure to the truth comes as a result of ministry of the church either directly** (attending a service where the truth is proclaimed) or through a Christian who has as a result of his or her involvement with the Church; or as the result of a tract, a recording that is heard in some way or another. Regardless of how it one must be exposed to the word of God and all of us can help; **Rom 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

Once redeemed the new believer is in need of Bible teaching that will begin to transform them into the image of Christ!

This transformation is the result of God working in the believer's life. **Php 2:13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

God **works this work** through perfected “**Saints**” whom God has called and gifted as pastors and teachers; *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;* **Eph 4:11**

Some of these saints God calls and gifts to be pastors and teachers; but others he calls and gifts for other parts of the ministry which build up the Body of Christ; **Eph 4:12** For the perfecting of the saints, *for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

You are those working “Saints” it is your calling and your part in the ministry of Calvary Baptist Church that I want to address in today's sermon; First of all consider with me...

I. The Working Members;

- a. You may recall from our Sunday school lesson a week or so back that when Peter and the other Apostles preached on the day of Pentecost that *“they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”* (Act 2:41)
 - i. In the following days and weeks *“they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, (47) Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”* (Act 2:46-47)

- ii. Several thousands of Jews and others were saved; they all became members of the Church at Jerusalem and were taught the Apostles Doctrines.”
- b. As this teaching was progressing others were being saved and others were needing to be ministered to on God’s behalf!
 - i. As a result, the Apostles following the Holy Ghost’s leadership turned to the congregation for help with ministry needs **just as I am turning to each of you;**

Act 6:1-8 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. (2) Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

- ii. In a church there are many needs that need to be attended to, in this case “**their widows were neglected in the daily ministration**”
 - 1. Satan is looking for ways to divide and diminish the churches ability to meet the various needs of its members. **All of us can say no to Satan!**
 - 2. The church was experiencing "growing pains" which is good for a church!

3. Their growth here involved two problems making it difficult for the Apostles to minister to everybody.
 - a. First the "Grecians" were the Greek-speaking Jews while the "Hebrews" were Jewish residents of the land creating a cultural divide which would not soon be remedied!
 - b. The needs they had **were not spiritual but physical** involving things like housing, food, clothing as well as caring for their animals and repairing things that wore out or were broken.
 - c. As a result, the Apostles concluded other men could meet these needs leaving them free **to minister the word of God.**
 - d. The holy spirit's leadership was evident when they told the members of the church at large that they were to choose men who could minister to the temporal needs of the congregation!
- iii. Those seven men went from church members to church servants, who began doing the work of the ministry! **These first working members are what we call today Deacons!**

1. They get their name from the work they did; “... the daily **ministration**” to their widows!
 2. The word “**ministration**” in verse one is from the Greek word *diakonos* and in verse two **serve tables** is from the Greek the verb *diakoneo*!
 3. Deacons are the servants of the church.
- c. Even though we may be inclined to think that serving the church and its members is somehow a menial task nothing could be further from the truth the tasks were as important as a sermon being preached or a soul being won to Jesus!
- i. The Apostles gave the church members some guidelines for the selections of these working members;

Act 6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

1. **THEY WERE TO BE MEN; look ye out among you seven men;** although there are those who do the work of a deacon or servant who are women yet they do not have the qualifications given for those holding the office of a deacon.

Those who hold the office of a deacon are mentioned in the same

passage and with similar qualifications with those who hold office of Bishop or Pastor!

1Ti 3:1& 8 This is a true saying, **If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. . (8) Likewise must the deacons** *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; (9) Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. (10) And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. (11) Even so *must their wives be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. (12) Let the deacons **be the husbands of one wife**, ruling their children and their own houses well. (13) For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

It is compelling that that both the Bishop and the Deacon **be the husbands of one wife, thereby implied that they are to be men.**

2. MEN OF HONEST REPORT,

Their honesty was to be unquestionable. They must be men of integrity,

- Integrity is not reputation — others' opinion of us.
- Integrity is not success — our accomplishments.

Integrity is not something we have, but something we are.

- **Authenticity**

The old adage is true: Our walk must match our talk. We need to live in such a way that our family, church, and friends will know that who we say we are, we are.

- **Honesty has always been hard to find.**

The Institute of Behavior Motivation has found that 97 out of 100 people tell lies, doing so about a thousand times a year.

- **Conviction**

Integrity is not only about authenticity and truth-telling; **it is also about convictions.**

A person of integrity stands for what is right. **One cannot be a person of integrity without deep convictions.** They know what they believe and why. Convictions are not forced on an individual; **they are beliefs and actions of choice that one should be willing to die for!**

3. **full of the Holy Ghost; is a phrase that implies what the man does not what the Holy Ghost does.**

Every person of God has all the spirit of God he will ever possess; but the man who is

empty of self is the man who is full of the Holy Ghost!

4. The final qualification here in Acts is that the deacon is **full of wisdom!**

Wisdom is given by God to those who realize they do not have it but understands how desperately need it!

Jas 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

1. When this was written the church at Jerusalem needed 7 deacons to care for it widows which would indicate it was a fairly large church.
2. After persecution caused the church at Jerusalem disperse many if not most of churches that were started **would be churches like ours in attendance!**
3. Yet the need for deacons remained as for our church we could easily keep one or two deacons involved in serving the congregation!

In addition to Deacons appointed to their office by the church and directed by the pastor; churches need...

II. All members Working to make it Work!

Remember this verse: Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

a. Every member of the Church at Jerusalem were saints but it is obvious that not called to the office a Deacon but all were called to do **the work of the ministry** which is the work a deacon! ***The work of the ministry provides every member with the opportunity to serve God in at least 9 ways!*** Eph 4:12-16

- i. **for the edifying of the body of Christ:** To build it up physically (inviting people to the services) and spiritually (by sharing the Gospel of Christ with others)
- ii. **Till we all come in the unity of the faith,** Working together for the same God, The Same Book, The Same Goal, and the Same reward.
- iii. **Growing in the knowledge of the Son of God,** learning about Jesus, about what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do through reading the bible and attending the services!
- iv. Growing **Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:** Conforming to the likeness of Christ!
- v. **That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness,** Stability concerning what we believe, who we serve, and protecting others who are being deceived.

- vi. By **speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:** Learning to confront lies, errors, and deception with the loving truth of God's word,
- vii. **May grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:** Daily thinking and acting more like Christ
- viii. **From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,** Every person has something to give to the cause of Christ; **according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, recognizing that our strength and power comes from being knit together by the Holy Ghost;** from what everyone of us contributes;
- ix. Together each one doing his part in his place exercising their gift or gifts **maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.**

Conclusion:

From the office of deacon which are men who are appointed by all of us to extend the ability of the pastor to be more focused on the spiritual aspects of the ministry, deacons who like Philip and Steven are able to preach and teach when the pastor is sick or when must be away to attend to his own family!

To all those men and women like each of you who do the work of the ministry through door knocking, bus visitation, teach Sunday school, cook and serve at the social functions,

change light bulbs, do other things that make our ministry for Christ work!

Invitation:

Here is what I need you to do;

- I. Consider nominating those you believe can serve in the office of deacon give me their names so I can see if they are qualified and willing to serve.

- II. Do what you can do to help our church serve our members and our community! Every one of you can do something! Visit, pray, call on the phone, look for a repair that needs to be done and do it or find some who can help you do it!

None of us can do everything but every one of us can do something!

- III. Together we can make Calvary Baptist Church the ministering loving church God intends it to be!