

The Church at Work

Perfecting the Saints

What is the church?

- ▶ The people of God in the New Covenant era
 - Indwelt by the Holy Spirit
 - United with the resurrected Jesus Christ
- ▶ The local assembly of believers
 - the functional unit

What is the purpose of the church?

- ▶ Edifying, perfecting, equipping the saints
- ▶ Conformity to Christ: Ephesians 4:13-16

How does the church do this work?

- ▶ Preaching and teaching the Word
- ▶ Baptism
- ▶ Lord's Supper
- ▶ Organization – elders and deacons
- ▶ Discipline

The Church's Product

Doing the Work of the Ministry

Christ-likeness – holiness in character and work

6 lessons on the characteristics of a “churched people”

- ▶ Worship – adoration of God
- ▶ Singing – musical praise to the LORD
- ▶ Giving – support the work and believers in need
- ▶ Discipleship – living the life of Christ
- ▶ Love – The sign of discipleship
- ▶ Am I my Brother's Keeper?

Am I my Brother's Keeper?

An application of the love of God in us

- ▶ Love – unconditional affection leading to acts of kindness which promote salvation.

How do we react to the scruples of one another?

- ▶ Scruples: An uneasy feeling arising from conscience or principle that tends to hinder action; a feeling of doubt as to whether an action is morally right.
- ▶ How do we deal with differences of conduct among Christians in matters of conscience that produce differences where there are no specific instructions from Scripture?

Instructions from Scripture:

- ▶ Romans 14:14-23
 - the weaker brother
 - days and dietary issues.
- ▶ 1 Corinthians 8
 - the exercise of Christian liberty
 - food offered to idols

Am I my Brother's Keeper?

Pursue peace and edification

Romans 14:13-23

Context:

- ▶ Romans 13:8 – owe no man anything except love!
- ▶ A particular case: one who is weak in faith – Romans 14:1
 - A true believer
 - Disputes over opinions
 - No explicit Scriptural teaching
 - Specific issues: foods and days
 - Do not quarrel or condemn
- ▶ Accountable to the Lord

My brother's keeper (Romans 14:13-23)

- ▶ The rule: do not condemn and do not hinder my brother.
- ▶ Clarification – these are things that are morally neutral.
 - The result of application of Christian principles
 - These are matters of conscience.
- ▶ Application of the rule
 - Do not grieve your brother.
 - Do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.
 - Do not let your good be spoken of as evil.
 - Serve God's Kingdom – righteousness, peace and joy
 - Accept the brother's scruples as your own.
 - Keep your faith between yourself and God.
 - Do all things with a clear conscience

**Am I my Brother's Keeper?
Never make my brother stumble
1 Corinthians 8**

Context: A series of questions. (7:1)

The issue – food offered to idols (8:1-6)

- ▶ We possess knowledge
 - One God the Father, Creator
 - One Lord, Jesus Christ
 - Idols are non-entities.
- ▶ Knowledge and love

The application (8:7-13)

- ▶ The weaker believer.
 - The weaker believer does not possess knowledge.
 - The weaker believer is wrong.
 - This issue is morally neutral.
- ▶ The application is not morally neutral.
 - Do not cause the brother to stumble.
 - This is sinning against a brother and against Christ.
- ▶ The resolution:
 - My brother's conscience is more important than food.
 - I will NEVER make my brother stumble.

Equipping the Saints *for* the Work of the Ministry

An eccentric life

- ▶ Definition:
 - Departing from a recognized, conventional or established norm or pattern.
 - Not situated at or in the geometric center.
 - Having the axis located elsewhere than at the geometric center
- ▶ The believer is “off center”!
 - Worship and praise God
 - Give our material goods
 - Living the life of Christ
 - Love and serve one another

The duty of the church.

- ▶ Contrary to the natural order
- ▶ An impossible task
- ▶ A holy task