Dealing with Church Problems

The apostle Paul writes, "For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest" (1 Corinthians 11:19). Paul reveals God's desire for the body of Christ to act as one at 1 Corinthians chapter 12 yet there always seems to be someone working against that. Problems in the church are unpleasant yet inevitable. Will church elders shepherd the flock they oversee or will they permit wolves to destroy it? Will preachers stand firm in truth or will they water it down with tolerance in fear of spiritual bullies guided not by truth but by opinions? Will deacons and church members see the body of Christ as precious or will they fabricate man made unity to keep so called peace in the church? This article shall examine how church problems were dealt with in the Bible.

Paul could have easily looked upon the Corinthian's problems and said, "Forget it, these people are ultra liberal and I'm not going to waste my time on them." The problems of the church in Corinth revolved around division, tolerance of sin, defrauding, fornication, eating meats sacrificed to idols, propriety, Lord's Supper, faction, schisms, selfishness, chaotic assemblies, and false teachers on the resurrection. Rather than giving up on these brethren Paul systematically deals with each one of these issues. The Lord's church today must do the same thing; i.e., deal with it.

The apostle Paul set the standard that we are all to follow to day as he was divinely guided by the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:1; 14:37). When false brethren troubled the churches of Galatia he did not stand by idly while the church was destroyed. Paul writes the letter of Galatians exposing these men's church destroying work (Galatians 1:6ff; 4:17; 5:7-10). Paul admonishes the disorderly brethren of Thessalonica to repent or be marked and avoided (see 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15). Paul named the troublesome brethren by name and demanded that all be united in truth alone (1 Timothy 1:19-20). Paul knew that if these erring brethren were permitted to continue in their erring ways that they would "overthrow the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:17-18). Paul instructed the churches to altogether avoid the faction man that the
church may be spared of their wicked doctrines and practices (Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10). Over and over again Paul dealt with church problems rather than sweeping them under the rug. It was church problems that brought a life of high anxiety to him (2 Corinthians 11:28).

Paul was not the only one we read of in our New Testament Bibles that dealt with church problems. The apostle John dealt with Diotrephes saying, "I will bring to remembrance his works which he does, prating against us with wicked words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbids and cast them out of the church" (3 John 10). To the seven churches of Asia John writes that they are to deal with their church problems. The church of Ephesus had "left thy first love" (Revelation 2:4). The church of Pergamum had some who held to the teachings of Balaam and Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:14-15). The church of Thyatira tolerated Jezebel (Revelation 2:20). The church of Laodicea was comprised of lukewarm Christians whom the Lord said he would, "spew out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16). The point being that all of these churches were called upon to deal with their problems or forever loose their souls.

Sometimes brethren today conduct themselves as though the Lord never will come again. When problems arise in the church most seem to want to pretend the problems do not exist. The out of sight out of mind approach may work with men but not with God who sees and knows all things (see Jeremiah 23:23-24).

The church of Jesus Christ is not to be held hostage by modern day Diotrephes. Those brethren who put their opinions and personal convictions on par with God's word and then demand that everyone else fall in line with them are nothing more than spiritual bullies doing the work of Satan. Said workers of Satan create faction and schisms in local churches. Shall the faithful stand by and be bullied? Let us all, like the apostles of old, systematically deal with every problem that comes up in the church. True unity and peace does not need to be finagled day by day with lies and neither does it turn a blind eye to sin. Equipping one's self with truth while displaying a spirit of gentleness and meekness will go a long way in solving church problems and creating unity and peace among brethren.

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Nicholas Long’s grandmother died this past week. Remember the Long family in your daily prayers.

Sarah McBroom's uncle Tony died this past week too. Please remember her family in your daily prayers.

Nell Hulsey continues at home after her rehab at Health South and is doing reasonably well.

Nina Gray continues at home recovering from her surgery as well.

Shut-ins:

Stella Davidson 696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York 692-0489 (Home)

Ila Belle Windham (at home but request no calls at this time)
The Worship of the Church
Philippians 1:1

Introduction:
The church of Christ is comprised of baptized believers known as citizens in the kingdom of God
(Acts 2:37-42; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 2:12). The people in God's kingdom are
bought with the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28; Revelation 5:9-10). The kingdom of God /
church was foretold of coming into existence hundreds of years before it actually was established
(2 Samuel 7:12ff). The Lord's church has the God ordained work of evangelizing, edifying, and
providing benevolent care for needy saints. Today's lesson will examine the organization of the
church that its work may be accomplished.

I. The Organization of the Church (Philippians 1:1):
   A. Local church is a "body" of believers working together as one (1 Corinthians 12).
   B. Local body organized locally (Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:1-2):
      1. Elders / Bishops / Pastors - 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5ff
         a. Elder - a person advanced in age
         b. Bishop - inspector, overseer, guardian
         c. Pastor - shepherd the sheep or flock
      2. Deacons - Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 10
         a. Greek *diakonous* = Servants
         b. Serve to accomplish work of church

II. Two other Parts of the Church that help Accomplish its Work:
   A. The preacher / evangelist - 2 Timothy 4:1-5
   B. Members of the body of Christ

III. Church is Organized to accomplish Work:
   A. Work of church is to evangelize lost (Elders, deacons, preachers, and members have a
      part in this work)
   B. Work of the church is to edify its members (Elders, deacons, preachers, and
      members have a part in this work).
   C. Work of the church is to provide benevolent care for the needy saints (All members
      have a part in this work whether that be through one's contributions, visiting, and or
      helping as one may have the opportunity).

Conclusion:
To examine the organization of the church is to gain a greater understanding of the church's God
ordained work. God has ordained the organization of Bishops, deacons, evangelist, and
members to accomplish the work of evangelizing lost, edifying members, and providing
benevolent care for the needy saints. Each church is organized locally and thereby each work of
a local church is independent to other churches who have their own organization. The elders of
one church are to shepherd that church alone.