

Saints' Internal Responsibilities
("What am I supposed to do as a member?")

- I. This study focuses on the particular responsibilities of church members as a church.
 - A. We have corporate public responsibilities that all are obliged to perform.
 - B. We have mutual individual responsibilities in relating one to another.
 - C. Some have special responsibilities, such as pastors or deacons (where called for).
 - D. All are to have a service mentality. **MAT 20:25-27; GAL 5:13; 2TI 2:24 c/w 2CO 4:5.**
 - 1. Those who love preeminence do not fit nor benefit the church. **3JO 1:9-10.**
 - 2. They have not the mind of Christ. **PHIL 2:3-7.**
 - E. All are necessary members that have a role in the wealth of the church. **ROM 12:4-8; 1CO 12:14-27.**
- II. Corporate public responsibilities.
 - A. We are to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. **HEB 10:25 c/w 2TH 3:6.**
 - 1. forsake: To deny, renounce, or repudiate allegiance to (God, a lord, etc.).
 - 2. Necessary absence from public worship is not a forsaking of assembling but excess unnecessary absences could constitute *de facto* forsaking.
 - 3. "Church" translates *ekklesia* (SRN G1577), which means *a congregation, assembly, a gathering of citizens from their homes into some public place* (Thayer). The very concept of church is one of public convening for presentation to the Lord. **ROM 12:1.**
 - 4. The prophecy of **ZEC 14:8, 17-19** is interesting in this regard.
 - a. The "living waters" days are the era of the Holy Spirit in the church. **ACT 7:38.**
 - b. Jesus Christ is God tabernacled in human flesh. **JOH 1:14.**
 - (1) The word here translated "dwelt" is *skenoo* (SRN G4637) which in its singular or plural form is most commonly translated as tabernacle(s).
 - (2) The King is to be worshipped in the church. **EPH 3:21.**
 - c. God takes the worship of His Son in the church seriously. **HEB 12:28-29.**
 - B. We are to keep the memorial feast of our Savior's sufferings for our sins (Lord's table, communion). **1CO 5:8, 11; 11:2, 23-26.**
 - C. We are to wash one another's feet as Jesus ordained. **JOH 13:13-15.**
 - D. We are to sing congregationally to praise and teach. **HEB 2:11-12 c/w COL 3:16.**
 - 1. Congregational singing is no less optional than other services of worship.
 - 2. "But I can't sing very well." Then make a joyful noise (**PSA 95:1**); take lessons.
 - 3. "I just sing within, like Hannah prayed within (**1SAM 1:12-13**)."
 - a. How does this teach another?
 - b. What if all "sang" this way?
 - c. How about if I preach this way?
 - 4. "Let those refuse to sing, who never knew our God." (Hymn: *We're Marching to Zion*)
 - E. We are to pray together since God's house is one of prayer. **MAT 21:13; ACT 4:23-31.**
 - 1. It is appropriate for a prayer leader to say, "Let US pray..."
 - 2. When one is leading corporate prayer, let the rest be as Hannah (**1SAM 1:12-13**) that there be no confusion. **1CO 14:33, 40.**
 - F. We are to participate in church disciplinary action (and restoration) as needed. **1CO 5:13 c/w 2CO 2:6-8.**

1. Excommunication of a member is not a committee action nor a pastoral action.
 2. The pastor registers the charge and oversees the church court but it is the church that decides upon retaining or excluding a disobedient member. **1CO 5:3-5.**
 3. If the church majority insists on retaining a member whom God has declared unworthy of fellowship, the faithful who stand with God must withdraw from the church. **2TH 3:6.**
- G. Church members are to submit to pastoral authority as exercised from the Scripture. **HEB 13:7, 17.**
1. The pastor is to oversee and feed according to Jesus' will. **1PE 5:1-3.**
 2. The pastor answers to the same law as the brethren. **ACT 23:1-5; GAL 2:11-14.**
 3. Bible-oriented saints have great power from Scripture. **ACT 17:11.**
 4. The pastor makes determinations in discretionary areas where decisions must be made within the framework of God's law since the rule is committed to him.
 - a. This is similar to the principle of Executive Orders which are supposed to facilitate law's enactments, not make law.
 - b. God is the Legislator (**JAM 4:12**); the pastor is only His minister to see that His law is put into practice.
 5. The pastor determines who should become a church member.
 - a. He functions as the *porter* (One who has charge of a door or gate, esp. at the entrance of a fortified town or of a castle or other large building, a public institution, etc.; a gate-keeper, door-keeper, janitor). **MAR 13:34.**
 - b. He determines who meets God's qualifications according to His word and is obliged to baptize those whom God has declared clean. **ACT 10:15, 47-48.**
 - c. As the porter, the pastor determines whether an excluded member is suited for restoration to membership. **2CO 2:6-8.**
 - d. Door-keeping is lowly work of the truly servant-minded. **PSA 84:10.**

III. Mutual individual responsibilities.

- A. We show that we are Christ's disciples by *loving one another*. **JOH 13:35; 1PE 1:22.**
1. There needs to be a personal demonstration of love *one to another*. **ROM 12:10.**
 2. Our love for one another must be expressed in deeds. **1JO 3:17-19.**
 3. If we truly love one another, we will seek each other's good which in turn will bind us together. **1CO 13:4-7 c/w COL 3:14.**
 4. Seeking one another's good should be for *edifying* (building up), not enabling. Be careful as to *how* you love someone. **ROM 15:1-2.**
 5. Fervent love among brethren makes their minister thankful. **2TH 1:3.**
- B. We are to *care one for another* as members of the same body. **1CO 12:12-27.**
1. Church members are one body in Christ.
 2. As members of the same body, church members NEED each other.
 3. As such, we should have care and *compassion* for one another. **PHIL 2:1-4; 1PE 3:8-9; ROM 12:15-16; HEB 13:3.**
 - a. compassion: The feeling or emotion, when a person is moved by the suffering or distress of another, and by the desire to relieve it; pity that inclines one to spare or to succour.
 - b. The good Samaritan is an example of such compassion. **LUK 10:33-35.**
- C. Christians are to *comfort one another*, i.e., to strengthen; to encourage, to hearten; to support, and assist one another. **1TH 5:11.**
1. This is a ministry of *edification*, of building one another up instead of tearing one

- another down. c/w **ROM 14:19; JUDE 1:20.**
2. Consider how Job comforted others and do likewise. **JOB 4:3-4; HEB 12:12-13.**
 3. Be a comfort to others. Nobody likes to be around a perpetual drag.
- D. We are to use *hospitality one to another without grudging*. **1PE 4:9; ROM 12:13.**
1. hospitality: The reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill.
 2. entertain: To find room for; to give reception to. To admit and contain; to accommodate.
 3. guest: One who is entertained at the house or table of another. **LUK 19:5-7.**
 4. Remember the account of Mary and Martha: do not burden yourself with overdoing the entertainment. **LUK 10:38-42.**
- E. We are to *bear one another's burdens*. **GAL 6:2.**
1. This does not mean that we fulfill each other's responsibility. **GAL 6:4-5.**
 2. It means that we support each other through prayer, compassion, forbearance (**ROM 15:1; EPH 4:2**), exhortation, comfort, and needed assistance. **ROM 12:13.**
- F. We are to *have peace with one another*. **MAR 9:50; 1TH 5:13.**
1. peace: Freedom from, or cessation of, war or hostilities.
 2. This requires the mortifying of lusts and pride. **JAM 4:1-3; PRO 13:10.**
 3. This requires a deliberate pursuit of that which produces peace. **ROM 14:19.**
 - a. Righteousness makes for peace (**PSA 85:10; ISA 32:17**). When we are personally at war with God, we are likely also to be at war with brethren. **LUK 22:24.**
 - b. Patience and temperance make for peace. **JAM 1:19-20; PRO 14:29.**
 - c. Forbearance and forgiveness make for peace. **PRO 19:11; COL 3:13.**
 - d. Overcoming evil with good makes for peace. **ROM 12:18-21.**
- G. We are to be *forbearing one another*. **EPH 4:2; COL 3:13.**
1. forbear: To bear with, have patience with, put up with, tolerate.
 2. Without this attribute, we are imperiled. We do well to remember our own faults. **ECC 7:21-22; MAT 7:1-5.**
 3. "But men are hopeless creatures, and the less they concentrate on their own sins, the more interested they become in the sins of others." (Augustine)
 4. Those most intolerant of others' imperfections tend to consider themselves to be the models of righteousness. **LUK 18:9-11.**
 5. The merciful will receive mercy. **MAT 5:7; JAM 2:13.**
 6. Love will bear and endure the weakness of others. **1CO 13:4, 7.**
- H. We are to *forgive one another*. **EPH 4:32.**
1. This speaks of private faults which need not be dealt with by church discipline.
 2. The humbled, penitent offender should be forgiven. **LUK 17:3-5; MAT 6:14-15.**
 3. We may even forgive an offender outrightly (**PRO 19:11**) but be cautious that this does not embolden someone's improper conduct.
- I. We are to *submit one to another* as appropriate. **EPH 5:21.**
1. Every member has the power and responsibility to press the claims of God upon one who is out of the way of righteousness. **LEV 19:17.**
 2. The enemy of this vital principle of church health is pride. **1PE 5:5.**
- J. We are to *greet one another with a holy kiss*. **ROM 16:16; 1CO 16:20.**
1. This was fully addressed in a sermon on 4-23-17.
 2. Would you struggle with accepting the words and grammar if God had said, "Greet one another with a holy fist-bump?"
- K. We are to *pray for one another*. **JAM 5:16.**

1. The emphasis on prayer in the N.T. is spiritual concerns.
EPH 3:14-19; PHIL 1:9; COL 1:9; 4:12; 2CO 13:7; MAT 6:13 c/w JOH 17:15.
 2. The concerns of the flesh and heart also merit prayer.
3JO 1:2; PHIL 2:25-27; JAM 5:14-15; ACT 12:5.
- L. We are to *confess our faults one to another* and *pray one for another* for healing.
JAM 5:16.
1. This is particularly appropriate where a brother has offended a brother.
MAT 5:23-24; 18:15 c/w MAT 5:44.
 2. One may be healed of *backsliding* by following this instruction. **JER 3:22.**
 3. Mind that this is confession of *one to another*, brother to brother. This is not public confession, nor auricular confession to a priest who deigns to grant absolution.
 4. We will come nearer dealing seriously with all our faults (personal and relational) if we handle them according to **JAM 5:16.**
- M. We are to be *likeminded one toward another*. **ROM 15:5.**
1. Partiality is not to be shown to any. **ROM 12:16; JAM 2:1-5.**
 2. All are brethren of the same order. **MAT 23:8; GAL 3:27-28.**
- N. It follows that we are to *receive one another*. **ROM 15:6-7; 14:1-3.**
1. receive: To admit (a person) into some relation with oneself, esp. to familiar or social intercourse; to treat in a familiar or friendly manner.
 2. If God has received one, who are we to not receive such? **ACT 11:17.**
- O. We are to *convert one another* as needed. **JAM 5:19-20.**
1. Being delivered from Satan's deceptions, one can strengthen brethren.
LUK 22:31-32.
 2. One who has gained victory himself is able to show others the way from personal experience and without hypocrisy. **ROM 2:21 c/w MAT 7:1-5.**
- P. We are to *exhort one another daily*. **HEB 3:13; 10:25.**
1. exhort: *trans.* To admonish earnestly; to urge by stimulating words to conduct regarded as laudable.
 2. Scripture determines what conduct is laudable. **PSA 119:128.**
 3. daily: *adv.* Every day, day by day. Often in a looser sense: Constantly, always, habitually.
 4. The sense here is one of faithful, habitual exhortation (especially as situations would demand it) rather than a rigorous "must exhort a brother every single day or else" command. We are not to be *busybodies* (An officious or meddlesome person; one who is improperly busy in other people's affairs). **1PE 4:15.**
- Q. We are to *admonish one another*. **ROM 15:14; COL 3:16.**
1. admonish: *gen.* To put (a person) in mind of duties; to counsel against wrong practices; to give authoritative or warning advice; to exhort, to warn.
 2. Solomon explains this plainly. **ECC 12:10-14.**
 3. It is better to be corrected by an enemy than solidified in error by a friend.
- R. We are to (positively) *provoke one another*. **HEB 10:24-25.**
1. provoke: To incite or urge (a person or animal) to some act or to do something; to stimulate to action; to excite, rouse, stir up, spur on.
 2. This may be done by positive example. **2CO 9:2; PHIL 1:14.**
 3. This may be done by positive abandonment. **ROM 11:13-14 c/w ACT 28:28-29.**
- S. We are to *esteem each other better than ourselves*. **PHIL 2:3; ROM 12:10.**
1. This may be one of the most difficult yet Christian things we can do mutually, since it requires the stifling of human pride.
 2. We remind ourselves of this duty when we wash one another's feet. **JOH 13:12-17.**

- T. We are to settle personal conflicts between brethren “in house.”
MAT 18:15-17; 1CO 6:1-8.
- U. Let our strivings be *together* for common understanding and edification.
PHIL 1:27; EPH 4:13 ct/w 1CO 1:10-11.
- V. As the members minister to one another, their spiritual potential is maximized.
EPH 4:16; COL 2:19.
 - 1. The members are *edified*.
 - 2. The members are *nourished*.
 - 3. The members *together* increase.
- W. None are exempt from this mutual ministry.
 - 1. The church is compacted (firmly and closely joined together) by that which *every joint/member* supplies.
 - 2. All the members are needed. **1CO 12:18-22.**
- X. The church is a body in which each member works *together* with the other members to edify itself for the glory of God. **EPH 2:21; 3:21.**

IV. Consider some hindrances to our mutual ministry of edification (per **EPH 4:16**).

- A. If we do not rightly perceive the value of what God has done for us in building us together as His habitation (**EPH 2:22**), we will limit our individual and corporate edification.
 - 1. The kingdom is a found pearl of great price. **MAT 13:45-46.**
 - 2. It is a society of undeserving redeemed sinners of *like precious faith* (**2PE 1:1**), knit together in love (**COL 2:2**) because of God’s love (**1JO 4:11**), a rare, pleasant, unified thing. **PSA 133:1 c/w HEB 13:1.**
 - 3. God has opened our eyes to His truth and given us understanding. **1JO 5:20.**
 - 4. God is ever among us even when only a few are together. **MAT 18:20.**
 - 5. We share something together that cannot be experienced in any other relationship: a common interest in *the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony*.
REV 12:11, 17.
 - 6. We should therefore desire the companionship of our brethren above others.
PSA 119:63, 79; MAL 3:16.
 - 7. Who other than our brethren of like precious faith who hunger and thirst after righteousness (**MAT 5:6**) as defined by God’s precepts (**PSA 119:128**) are better able to encourage us in the paths of righteousness?
 - 8. We ought to be a benefit to our brethren over all others (**GAL 6:10**), and if we are not a benefit to our brethren’s edification, just what are we doing?
 - 9. Sloth and indifference can ruin a house (**ECC 10:18**) to where God becomes its enemy and abandons it and those with lingering faith have nothing left but songs of lament for what has been lost. **REV 3:15-17; PSA 137:1-4 c/w ISA 64:11.**
 - 10. It is the spirit of Esau that forsakes a valuable inheritance without good cause.
HEB 12:15-16.
- B. Sacrifices are needed to profitably relate to one another and since the best interaction is face-to-face (**ROM 1:11-12; 2JO 1:12**), our mutual edification is hindered if we are not willing to sacrifice time and personal interests to be in one another’s presence.
 - 1. By personal interfacing we can gauge another’s countenance and make necessary inquiry so as to offer instruction and comfort. **NEH 2:2-3; PRO 27:17.**
 - 2. By personal interfacing we can fulfil texts like **1CO 16:20.**
 - 3. The most obvious place for such face-to-face interaction is when we assemble for worship and present our bodies a living sacrifice. **ROM 12:1.**
- C. Pride and the hatred of reproof will deprive us of the benefits of mutual ministry.

NEH 9:16; PRO 12:1; 13:1; 15:12; 25:12.

- D. Backbiting, whispering and talebearing will destroy mutual ministry.
1. backbite: To detract from the character of, to slander, traduce, speak ill of: a person absent.
 2. slander: The utterance or dissemination of false statements or reports concerning a person, or malicious misrepresentation of his actions, in order to defame or injure him; calumny, defamation.
 3. talebearer: One who officiously carries reports of private matters to gratify malice or idle curiosity.
 4. officiously: In an unduly forward or obtrusive manner; with importunate forwardness; without being asked or required; gratuitously.
 5. whispering: The action of saying or reporting something quietly or secretly; suggestion or insinuation (by whispered speech); faint mention or rumour; *esp.* malicious insinuation, secret slander or detraction, backbiting.
 6. We are *not* loving our brother when we complain of his faults behind his back rather than facing him with them. **LEV 19:16-17; PSA 41:7.**
 7. Whispering and talebearing destroy togetherness. **PRO 16:28; 17:9.**
 8. Talebearers do not respect private matters. **PRO 11:13; 20:19.**
 9. Who wants to confide anything to a whisperer, talebearer or backbiter?
 10. Do not listen to backbiting.
 - a. The backbiter cannot fulfill his sin without a listener.
 - b. Drive backbiters away with an angry countenance. **PRO 25:23.**
 11. God hates those who sow discord. **PRO 6:19.**
- E. Mutual edifying ministry may be hindered by fear.
1. We may fear being betrayed.
 - a. One Judas Iscariot does not mean that all are Judas Iscariots.
 - b. Let not abuses cause you to not love others as you ought. **JOH 13:30-35.**
 2. We may fear negative reactions from those we confront.
 - a. If you fear losing a friend because you reprove him, you are loving yourself more than him. **LEV 19:17.**
 - b. Faith looks past the potential friction. **PRO 28:23.**
 3. We may fear scrutiny or exposure.
 - a. The godly desire loving scrutiny even though it stings. **PSA 141:5; PRO 9:8.**
 - b. Repentance and holiness preclude any fear of light. **JOH 3:21.**
 - c. The best counsel is truth (**EPH 4:25**), the truth of the gospel and the truth about ourselves. We don't grow by pacifiers and enablers.
- F. A lack of trust will obstruct mutual ministry.
1. Trust is a vital element in good relationships. **PSA 41:9.**
 2. Scripture warns against *evil surmisings*. **1TI 6:4-5.**
 3. Remember King Saul's paranoia. The innocent were not safe with him. **1SAM 22:6-16.**
- G. Mutual ministry does not stand a chance in the face of *envy*. **PRO 27:4.**
1. envy: (v.) To feel displeasure and ill-will at the superiority of (another person) in happiness, success, reputation, or the possession of anything desirable; to regard with discontent another's possession of (some superior advantage which one would like to have for oneself).
 2. Envy breeds strife. **JAM 3:14-16.**
 3. Those who seek *vainglory* (inordinate or unwarranted pride in one's

- accomplishments of qualities; disposition or tendency to exalt oneself unduly; idle boasting or vaunting) fall into envy. **GAL 5:26.**
4. Love does not envy. **1CO 13:4.**
- H. Selfishness will obstruct our mutual ministry.
1. True friends don't only appreciate us for what we can give them or do for them. **PRO 19:4-7; JUDE 1:16.**
 2. Do not always assume the receiving end. **ACT 20:35.**
- I. Beware of intolerance. No relationship can survive constant criticism.
1. Remember that we are commanded to forgive and forbear. **COL 3:13.**
 2. While not encouraging it or foolishly excusing it, we must be tolerant of imperfection in others.
 3. We are *growing* together (**EPH 2:21**) at varying stages approaching perfection. **EPH 4:13.**
- J. Beware of unwarranted schism (division).
1. Party strife stems from carnality, not spirituality. **1CO 1:12-13; 3:1-4.**
 2. Heresy causes division. **1CO 11:18-19.**
 3. The counter to these is earnest contention for the faith derived from the rightly divided word of truth. **JUDE 1:3; 2TI 2:15; PHIL 1:27.**
 4. Ignorance of Scripture breeds destruction, not edification. **HOS 4:6; 2PE 3:16.**
- V. Each member should take initiative in ministering to their fellow-members without being pushed by the pastor. **PHIL 1:27; 2:12.**
- VI. Successful mutual ministry requires willingness, work and patience. **HEB 6:10-12.**