

Welcome to my first bulletin in which I am writing to you, and I hope and pray that this will be the first of many, many bulletins to come, Lord willing. We are now well on our way into December and the year-end holidays, which signals time with families, time for reflections and time for planning for the future.

Melissa and I cannot thank you enough for the kindnesses that you have shown us thus far, and we enjoyed the opportunity to open our home to you. As I indicated recently, we hope to show you everything next year!

We are happy to announce that after visiting with us for several weeks, Scott and Tanner Cook have placed membership with us. Scott (8/3/71) and Sheri (7/21/69) celebrate their anniversary on September 6 (2002). Our youth are also blessed to add their son, Tanner (8/21/03). Their address is as follows:

17 Fox Run Lane
Carthage, TN 37030

Remember the events that we have later this month, including preparing holiday gift baskets (December 12), our annual budget meeting (December 13), our youth gift exchange (December 19), and New Year's Eve Get-together (December 31). Moreover, this month has five Sunday's, which also has our fifth Sunday offering and the young men conducting the evening worship.

Finally, I am planning my sermons for 2019 this month, so if you would like to suggest a topic, please write it down and place in the box in the foyer.

—Sam

Why Should I Place Membership with a Local Congregation?

When one obeys God's scheme of redemption, God personally adds that person to the church (Acts 2:47). There is nothing written in the word of God at all about joining any church. However, each of us needs to place our membership in a local congregation made up of members of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 12:4-5). To the contrary, some choose not to do so. Let us answer the above question to see what the Bible teaches about this subject.

I should place membership with a local congregation because I want to identify with the work of the Lord's church. When one places membership with a local congregation, he can immediately begin working to fulfill the mission of the church (Mark 16:15). By placing membership, the local congregation can offer us opportunities to accomplish the mutual goal of every member of the body of Christ. A solitary member or family cannot perform some responsibilities of the body of Christ alone. Therefore, it is imperative that one places membership to assist in helping the church to mature and grow. By failing to place membership, one refuses to attach themselves to the church spiritually, which shows a lack of commitment to the Lord and the church for which He died.

I should place membership with a local congregation because I want to place myself under the direct eldership of the local congregation as Christ intended. Jesus designed the church's organization to have elders who will oversee the flock (Acts 20:28). With their responsibility, the Bible teaches that we are to "*obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you*" (Hebrews 13:17). Yet, the eldership cannot accept responsibility for one who refuses to place membership under their oversight. Elders cannot assume the oversight of any Christian in the community, even if they worship regularly. Oversight by mere assumption is foreign to the teachings of the Bible.

I should place membership with a local congregation because I am to follow the approved examples of such in the Bible. In Acts 15:22, the elders of the church in Jerusalem decided “*to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch...*” How could they have been “*of their own company*” if they were not identified with the local congregation in Jerusalem? We can easily imply such. Moreover, after Saul of Tarsus was converted, he spent some time in Arabia, and three years after that in Damascus (Galatians 1:17-18). Then, when he came to Jerusalem, “*he assayed to join himself to the disciples*” (Acts 9:26). He was already a member of the Lord’s church when Ananias baptized him (Acts 9:17-18), so we can determine that this means that he wanted to identify with this local assembly of the saints in this area.

Why will one refuse to place membership with a local congregation? Is it because they do not want to become involved in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)? Is it because they do not want to submit themselves under the eldership in opposition to the teaching of the New Testament? Is it because they do not want to follow the approved examples of the Bible? Is it because of some other reason not listed? I pray it is simply because some may be unaware of the implications mentioned above. Please study about these things. Talk to the elders if you have any questions. Above all, do not delay in placing membership with a local congregation for your soul’s sake.

—Sam Willcut

December 9, 2018

The False Gospel of Delay

A minister of the gospel determined on one occasion to preach on the text, “*...now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*” (2 Corinthians 6:2). While in his study thinking, he fell asleep and dreamed that he was carried into hell and set down in the midst of a conclave of lost spirits. They were assembled to devise means whereby they might get at the souls of men.

One rose and said, “I will go to earth and tell men that the Bible is all a fable and that it is not divinely appointed of God.”

“No, that will not do.”

Another said, “Let me go; I will tell men that there is no God, no Savior, no heaven and no hell.”

“No, that will not do; we cannot make men believe that.”

Suddenly, one arose and with a wise regard suggested, “No, I will journey to the world of men and tell them that there is a God, that there is a Savior, that there is a heaven, and yes, there is also a hell, but I will tell them that there is NO HURRY; tomorrow will do.”

And they sent him.

—copied

Jimmie Faye Cole, Ramelle Cole, Sawyer Cole, Peggy Kemp, Mary Massey, Linda Phillips,
Bonnie Stafford, Rhonda Whitaker,
Joyce Williams (Athens, TN)

OUR RECORD OF LOVE FOR CHRIST

12/02/18

Wednesday (11/28).....	55
Worship Sunday AM.....	72
Bible Study Sunday AM.....	63
Daily Bible Readers.....	35
Worship Sunday PM (11/25).....	61

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 12—Prepare Holiday Gift Baskets
December 13—Annual Budget Meeting
December 19—Children’s Gift Exchange

Pantry Item: Canned Fruit

READING SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

01 Gal. 6; Eph. 1,2	11 Titus 1-3; Phil. 1	21 I John. 4-5; II John 1
02 Eph. 3-6	12 Heb. 1-3	22 III Jn. 1; Jude 1
03 Phil. 1-4	13 Heb. 4-6	23 Rev. 1-3
04 Col. 1-4	14 Heb. 7-9	24 Rev. 4-6
05 I Thess. 1-2	15 Heb. 10-13	25 Rev. 7-9
06 I Thess. 3-5	16 Jam. 1-5	26 Rev. 10-12
07 II Thess. 1-3	17 I Pet 1-2	27 Rev. 13-15
08 I Tim. 1-3	18 I Pet. 3-5	28 Rev. 16-18
09 I Tim. 4-6	19 II Pet. 1-3	29 Rev. 19-21
10 II Tim. 1-4	20 I John 1-3	30 Rev. 22
		31 Pray