

Cooperation in the Church (Acts 2:41-47)

Introduction:

1. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said that He would build His church.
2. In Acts 2 we read about the occasion when the Lord's church became a reality.
3. According to Acts 2:41-47, a number of wonderful characteristics were displayed in the original congregation that met in Jerusalem, including steadfastness, unity, benevolence, fellowship, joy, and a good reputation.
4. There was also a beautiful spirit of cooperation.
5. In our lesson we are concentrating on some key passages that relate to "cooperation in the church."
6. The word "cooperation" is not found in the Bible, but the concept of God's people working together is certainly emphasized.
7. Let us begin by showing that . . .

Discussion:

- I. THE CHURCH [THE LORD'S BODY] IS COMPOSED OF MEMBERS
 - A. This principle is addressed in Romans 12:4-5.
 - B. This principle is also addressed in 1 Corinthians 12:13-14.
 1. Vs.13 shows that we are baptized into the Lord's body -- this applies to everyone, including Jews, Gentiles, bond, and free.
 - a. The Bible teaches that we are saved when we are baptized (Mark 16:16).
 - b. When we are saved, the Lord adds us to His church (Acts 2:47).
 2. We understand how the church is composed of many members.
 - C. Since the church is composed of many members from a variety of backgrounds and possessing different talents, there is potential for:
 1. great good, if a spirit of cooperation prevails
 2. evil, if cooperation is hampered by things such as pride, jealousy, or ego.
- II. IN THE CHURCH THINGS THAT INTERFERE WITH COOPERATION MUST BE ELIMINATED
 - A. This is illustrated in 1 Corinthians 12:15-17, 21, 25.
 - B. Some Old Testament characters showed how things such as jealousy affect cooperation among God's people.
 1. Miriam and Aaron became jealous of Moses (Numbers 12:1-2).
 2. Korah became jealous of Moses and Aaron and tried to lead a rebellion (Numbers 16:1-3).
 - C. Things that interfere with cooperation are detrimental to the church and must be eliminated.
- III. EACH MEMBER MUST CONTRIBUTE WHAT HE/SHE IS ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE
 - A. This principle is emphasized in:
 1. Romans 12:6-8
 2. 1 Peter 4:10-11.
 - B. When each member does what he/she is able to do, the church will be edified, and it will increase (Ephesians 4:16).

Conclusion:

1. We know how to become members of the Lord's church.
2. We know that each member is important.
3. When a spirit of cooperation prevails among God's people, the church will be blessed, and the Lord will be glorified.