

Responsibility in the Kingdom

When one becomes a member of the church he or she takes on the responsibility of living according to the standard of Christ. If one does not want to, or intend to be responsible to the cause, one should not become a member in the first place.

Becoming a member of the Lord's church has the added blessing of the care of the members. If one has a good attitude, one appreciates the care, exhortation and admonition of interested brothers and sisters. If one does not have a good attitude, one may interpret this care as interference into one's personal affairs, meddling, or butting in.

Members of the church have a definite responsibility to others. Consider the following:

1. "This is my commandment that you love one another," (John 15:12)
2. "Be of the same mind one toward another." (Rom. 12:16)
3. "Let no man seek his own, but another's good." (I Cor. 10:24)
4. "Bear ye one another's burdens." (Gal. 6:2)
5. We are to "exhort one another." (Heb. 3:13)
6. We are to "consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." (Heb. 10:24)
7. We are "not to lie to one another." (Col. 3:9)
8. We are "not to speak evil one of another." (James 4:11)

There are many passages like James 5:19, 20 that tell us what happens if we fulfill our responsibility toward an erring brother. Two specific things stand out: **one**, a soul will be saved from death (described as an eternal, spiritual death). It is described as a lake of fire, or fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:14,15; 21:8), and it is described as outer darkness (Mat. 25:46);

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two, a multitude of sins will be hidden. The word "hide" means to cover, or put out of sight. Therefore, if the erring brother comes back his sins are covered or forgiven. The Psalmist said, "blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sins are covered."

Some try to cover their sins in the wrong way (a cover-up). Adam tried to blame his on his wife (Gen.3:12). Achan tried to bury his (Josh. 7:1). Others lie (Rev. 21:8). The scriptures teach: "He that covereth (conceals) his sins shall not prosper." (Prov. 28:13)

No sin is really covered until it is forgiven. "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of the people, thou hast covered all their sin." (Psa. 85:2)

Church members have the obligation to preach the gospel, exhort, admonish, and encourage all people to do right, and especially the Lord's people.