

Prayer List



- Of Our Number**
- ♦ Janice Carnley—Shoal Creek
 - ♦ Jennifer Derrick—health problems
 - ♦ Rick Hemphill—dental procedures
 - ♦ Jeff Mashburn—health problems
 - ♦ Jim Nivison—health problems

- Others in Need**
- ♦ Kristen Adam—stage 4 cancer
 - ♦ Terri Adams—cancer
 - ♦ Glen Brooks—clot in carotid artery
 - ♦ Fran Carlos—back surgery
 - ♦ Sheila Cole—health problems
 - ♦ Ruth Cook—cancer surg. recovery
 - ♦ Louise Douglas—health problems
 - ♦ Kim Dunn—cancer
 - ♦ Joyce Faulk—health problems
 - ♦ Jennifer Foxworth—health problems
 - ♦ Annette Garrett - Non-H. lymphoma
 - ♦ John Kelly—health problems
 - ♦ Lucinda Lingor—heart problems
 - ♦ Jerry Madden—cancer
 - ♦ Paul Mays—Lyme disease

Continued in next column...

- ♦ Kenny Parsons—shoulder surgery
- ♦ Dan Sikes—back pain, surgery
- ♦ Michael Totoro—cancer
- ♦ Pray for Christians overseas, such as those facing persecution in Pakistan and certain parts of India.
- ♦ Pray for peace, pray for the bereaved, the persecuted, sick/ suffering, civil leaders, military, 1st responders, the lost, enemies.

Events

If the Lord wills...

- September 20**
Men's Meeting
- September 23**
Fourth Wednesday Singing
- October 4-8**
Bellview Gospel Meeting

Faithful Worship — **1) Praying** to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ (Luke 11:1-2; John 16:23; Eph. 5:20; Php. 4:6); **2) Singing** without mechanical instruments (Matt. 26:30; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17; Heb. 2:12); **3) Preaching** God's Word (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:42; 20:7); **4) Giving** weekly as prospered, cheerfully (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7); **5) The Lord's Supper** on the first day of every week (Matt. 26:26-28; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-34; 16:2; Heb. 10:23-31).

To Our Visitors



We are happy and honored that you are here! Please fill out a visitor's card and give us a chance to get to know you. If you have any questions about anything said or done in Bible class or worship, please ask. We seek to give a Bible answer for everything we do (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 3:15; 4:11).

Privileged to Serve



Announcements: Leo Derrick
Song Leading: Sunday—David Howze; Wednesday—Jacob Mashburn
Serving the Lord's Supper
Head: Ethan Howze; Helpers: Mark Howze, Trey Miles, Johnny Moss
Lord's Supper PM
Head: Mark Howze
Helper: Ezra Howze
Bible Reading: Rick Hemphill



THE BAKER BULLETIN

The weekly bulletin of

The church of Christ in Baker, FL

September 20, 2026

Meeting Times

- Sundays:**
- 10AM Bible Class
 - 11AM Worship
 - 6PM Worship
- Wednesdays:**
- 7PM Bible Class

Other Information

Building: 5761 Hwy. 4
Mail: P.O. Box 285
Baker, FL 32531 USA
850-669-9117

Website:
churchofChristatBaker.com

Radio Program:
104.7FM Sundays 8:30AM
WAAZ1047.com livestream

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Being an Active and Accountable Member of a Local Church

Part 1, By Jason Patrick Hilburn

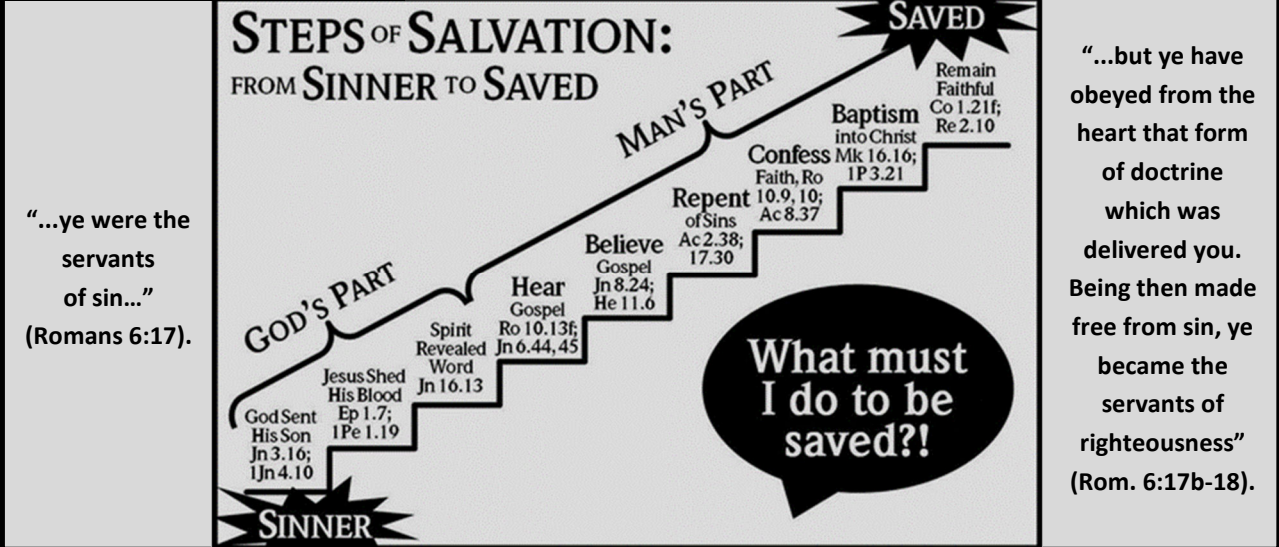
When someone becomes a Christian, he is not just saved individually. The Lord adds him to His church (Acts 2:41, 47), and he becomes part of the household and body of Christ (Ephesians 2:19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

This new relationship comes with both blessings and responsibilities. Christians are not meant to live isolated spiritual lives. God designed the church so that Christians work together, encourage one another, serve one another, and help one another remain faithful.

Unfortunately, some today treat the local church almost like a social club, attending when convenient, resisting accountability, and refusing real commitment. Being accountable, being an active member, and supporting the work of a local congregation are important parts of faithfully serving Christ.

1. The Church Is a Body and a Family

The Bible describes the church as a body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Paul wrote: *"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26)*. A physical body illustrates the importance of connection. A hand or foot does not function independently of the rest of the body, and each member depends upon the others. The same is true spiritually. Paul wrote that there should be *"no schism in the body; but that*



the members should have the same care one for another" (1 Corinthians 12:25).

Christians are also described as *"the household of faith"* (Galatians 6:10) and *"the household of God"* (Ephesians 2:19). If a family member who is normally at the dinner table suddenly stops showing up, the family notices. They do not ignore his absence simply because he is an adult capable of making his own decisions. They care because he is family.

2. Commitment to a Local Congregation Is the New Testament Pattern

Christians are added to the Lord's church when they obey the Gospel (Acts 2:41, 47), but the New Testament also shows Christians identifying and working with local congregations.

Those baptized on Pentecost were added to the Lord's church. Many had come from distant regions (Acts 2:5, 9-11) and many would eventually return home. Wherever Christians lived, they assembled and worked with other faithful Christians. Where congregations did not yet exist, the spread of the Gospel led to the establishment of congregations.

The New Testament repeatedly speaks of churches in local terms: *"the church of God which is at Corinth"* (1 Corinthians 1:2), *"the church of the Thessalonians"* (1 Thessalonians 1:1), and *"the church of Ephesus"* (Revelation 2:1). Elders were appointed *"in every church"* (Acts 14:23).

When the apostle Paul came to Jerusalem after his conversion, *"he assayed to join himself to the disciples"* (Acts 9:26). Although Paul traveled often, he sought to identify and associate himself with the disciples while he was there.

Today, a city may have several faithful congregations. This does not remove the need to identify with one of them. It simply means that many Christians now have more than one good option in their area. A Christian who moves indefinitely between several congregations, without committing to any of them, still fails to identify with a local church the way the New Testament pattern requires.

The New Testament recognizes no organizational structure of the church beyond the local congregation. Paul addressed *"all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons"* (Philippians 1:1) — offices that exist only at the local level, not a universal one. The church carries out its collective work and worship through the local congregation. The Lord's Supper is observed when the congregation *"come[s] together into one place"* (1 Corinthians 11:18, 20), and the local church gives on *"the first day of the week"* (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). A Christian can evangelize, study the Bible with others, and do good works without identifying with a congregation, but some things God requires can only be done within a local congregation. Christ designed the local congregation as the means by which His people worship and work together, rather than through some separate type of organization.

Someone may say, "I am a member of Christ's church universally, but I do

not need to be part of any particular congregation." Unusual circumstances may cause a faithful Christian to be temporarily isolated, such as a new convert living where no faithful congregation exists. In such situations, the New Testament pattern calls for establishing a congregation, not remaining permanently apart from one. When persecution scattered the Jerusalem church, the disciples *"went every where preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4), and congregations were the result (Acts 11:19-26). Such circumstances do not change the pattern revealed in the New Testament. Where faithful congregations exist, Christians are expected to assemble, worship, work, and serve with faithful Christians locally.

The commands given to Christians assume sustained relationships within a congregation, not occasional visits. Christians are to assemble together (Hebrews 10:24-25) and submit to those who watch for their souls (Hebrews 13:17). Christians are also commanded to *"warn them that are unruly"* and *"support the weak"* (1 Thessalonians 5:14). These are responsibilities that require knowing who the unruly, the weak, and the struggling actually are. A Christian who only occasionally appears at different congregations, without identifying with any of them cannot consistently fulfill these responsibilities.

The Biblical pattern is not one of Christians deliberately living independently of local congregations. It is one of Christians assembling and working together as identifiable local bodies.

3. Commitment Enables Responsibility and Service

When a Christian is actively part of a local congregation, he can participate consistently in its work. Christ warned the church at Laodicea about lukewarmness: *"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth"* (Revelation 3:15-16).

Serving Christ in the local church should not be treated as an occasional activity done only when convenient. Christians should be dependable and active in the Lord's work, treating that work as their own rather than something done by others.

Paul told Timothy, *"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"* (2 Timothy 2:3). A soldier's service affects the other soldiers around him, not just himself. His fellow soldiers depend upon him to do his part. The same is true of a Christian's place in the local church.

4. Christians Are Commanded to Assemble and Encourage Each Other

Hebrews 10:24-25 says: *"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*
...To be continued next week, Lord willing