

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
 - ♦ Deb Aplin—health problems
 - ♦ 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
 - ♦ 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 27**
Men's Meeting
- October 4-8**
Bellview Gospel Meeting With Gilbert Gough

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

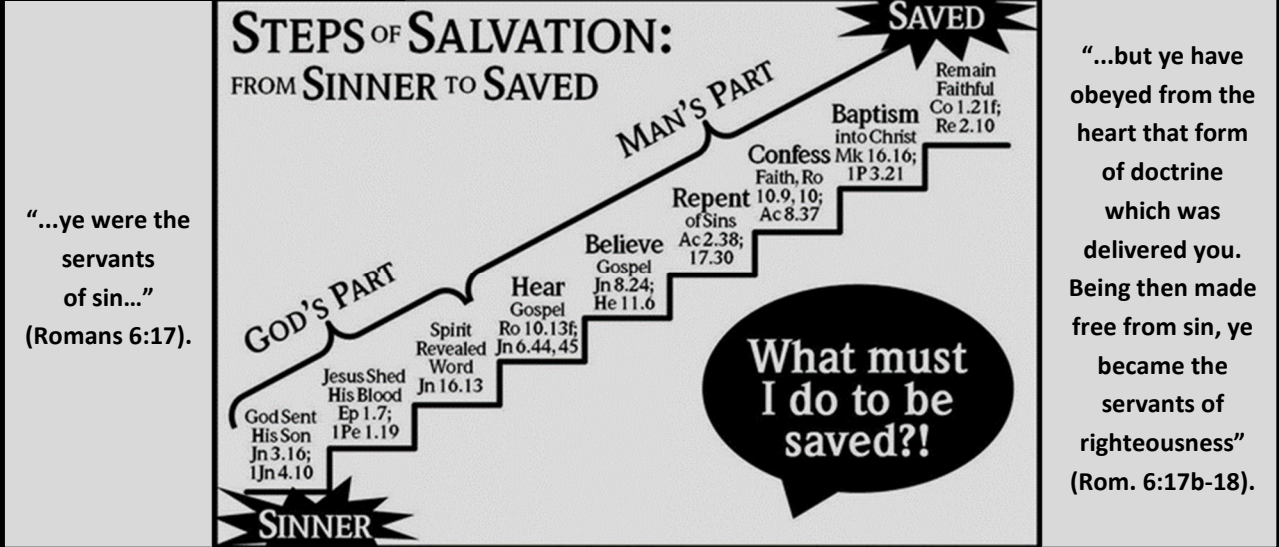


We are happy and honored that you are here! Please fill out a visitor's card and give us a chance to get to know you. If you have any questions about anything said or done in Bible class or worship, please ask. We seek to give a Bible answer for everything we do (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 3:15; 4:11).

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 27, 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 2 of 2, By Jason Patrick Hilburn

Christians assemble not only to worship God but also to "consider one another" and exhort one another. This does not mean that every individual absence, regardless of the reason, constitutes forsaking the assembling. Sickness, caregiving responsibilities, travel, emergencies, and other circumstances may prevent someone from being present, sometimes for an extended period. That distinction demonstrates why we should care when someone is absent. Checking on an absent member is not necessarily an accusation of sin. It may simply mean, "We noticed you were not here. Are you all right?" If someone is repeatedly absent, loving brothers and sisters should be concerned about his spiritual welfare (Galatians 6:1).

5. Accountability Is About Love, Not Control
James 5:19-20 says: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

God expects His people to care when a brother or sister begins to stray. Missing assemblies may sometimes indicate that someone is struggling spiritually. It may also be caused by sickness or another legitimate circumstance. We often cannot know the situation without showing enough concern to ask.

Accountability is about love, not domination. If a loved one were drowning, we would not refuse to throw him a rope merely because he had not asked for help. It also would not make sense to

“mind our own business” when someone we love is drowning. When a brother or sister may be drifting spiritually, love moves us to act rather than ignore the danger. This kind of care is almost impossible without Christians who know one another well enough to notice, which requires identifying with the same congregation rather than moving from place to place.

6. We Must Be Willing to Be Corrected

Hebrews 3:12-13 says: *"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."*

Notice that the warning is addressed to *"brethren."* Christians have responsibilities not only for themselves but also toward one another. Sin is deceitful and can harden the heart. Christians therefore need encouragement and, at times, correction. *"Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful"* (Proverbs 27:5-6; cf. 9:8-9; 28:23). A spiritually mature person should appreciate loving correction rather than resent those who care enough to speak (Psalm 141:5).

7. Isolation Is Dangerous

Peter warned: *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8). Spiritual isolation can make children of God vulnerable to Satan. Assembling regularly with Christians we know provides encouragement and help through those relationships. Deliberately separating oneself from faithful Christians means giving up much encouragement, correction, strength, and assistance.

8. If Nobody Identified with a Local Congregation...

Finally, imagine if no Christian ever committed to a local congregation, if everyone simply drifted from place to place without identifying with a particular body of believers. What would happen?

- **There would be no meaningful accountability.** No one would know who belonged where, making it extremely difficult to know who had strayed or who needed encouragement, correction, or restoration (Galatians 6:1).
- **Elders and members could not fulfill their responsibilities toward one another.** Elders are to oversee the flock among them (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2), while members are commanded, *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls"* (Hebrews 13:17). If Christians never identified themselves with a particular congregation, elders would have no identifiable flock to oversee, and members would have no identifiable elders to whom they were to submit. There would not even be a settled local congregation from which qualified men could be appointed to serve as elders.
- **Fundamental responsibilities would become uncertain.** Congregations need dependable Christians to preach, teach Bible classes, lead singing, and fulfill other responsibilities connected with the church's work and worship. If everyone simply moved from congregation to congregation week to week without commitment, who could consistently be depended upon to do these things? Who will preach? Who will

prepare the Lord's Supper? Who will maintain the building and grounds? Who will oversee the money offering? Who will pay the bills? A congregation requires people who actually accept responsibility rather than assuming someone else will always do the work.

- **Financial planning would become extremely difficult.** A congregation cannot responsibly plan its work if it never knows who is committed to supporting that work. Organized efforts in evangelism, supporting preachers, benevolence, teaching, and other ongoing responsibilities generally require dependable members giving consistently.
- **Mutual encouragement would weaken.** The local church is a body and a family. Christians must know one another well enough to encourage, strengthen, correct, serve, and care for one another. Constantly drifting from congregation to congregation works against the relationships described in the New Testament.
- **Congregational discipline would become impossible.** Jesus taught that when a brother will not hear private correction or the testimony of two or three witnesses, the matter is to be told to *"the church,"* and if he refuses to hear the church, he is to be treated *"as a heathen man and a publican"* (Matthew 18:15-17). This process assumes an identifiable local congregation with identifiable members. If no one identifies with a particular congregation, there is no identifiable local church to which the matter can ultimately be taken and no identifiable membership through which congregational discipline can be carried out (2 Corinthians 2:6).

The local congregation simply could not function as God intended if everyone refused to identify with one. These responsibilities do not belong only to elders, preachers, or a few especially active members. Each Christian must be willing to do his part rather than assume that someone else will handle such matters. Ephesians 4:16 describes the body as being *"fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,"* with *"every part"* doing its share in the work of the body. Clearly, the New Testament pattern is for Christians to commit themselves to faithful local congregations and work together in unity for the cause of Christ.

Conclusion

The New Testament does not present Christians as isolated individuals who deliberately drift in and out of congregations while refusing to identify with any of them. The biblical pattern is Christians assembling, worshipping, working, and serving together in identifiable local congregations. Apart from unusual circumstances that may prevent someone from assembling with a faithful congregation, deliberately refusing to identify with and work with one prevents a person from fulfilling the responsibilities God has given Christians toward one another.

Someone who deliberately refuses to identify with a local congregation also cannot receive the care, correction, and accountability God intended for him. The New Testament pattern is clear: where circumstances reasonably permit, a child of God should be an active, identifiable member of a faithful local church of Christ.