

Congregational Fellowship

Text: Colossians 4:12-13

Introduction:

1. The Christian has a personal, individual fellowship with God (1 John 1:7).
2. The Christian also has fellowship with the local congregation (Acts 2:42).
3. The Christian also has fellowship with the brotherhood worldwide - the "universal church" (1 Corinthians 16:19-20; 1 Peter 2:17).
4. Thus, the Christian is a member of a local church, but he must be concerned about and even labor for his sister congregations...

I. Labor in Prayer

- A. "*Always laboring (striving) fervently*"
 1. The word "laboring" comes from the Greek root *agon* (αγων) from which we get the word "agonize" or "agonizing."
 2. The word is often used for the labor that goes into preparing for an athletic contest. {"*No pain, no gain*"}
 3. Consider Paul's example (1:29 - 2:2).
- B. "*For you*"
 1. Epaphras labored for his home congregation.
 2. However, he also labored for others (4:2-4).

II. Long for Perfection

- A. "*Stand*" = grounded (Cf. Ephesians 6:10-14)
- B. "*Perfect*" = complete (Cf. Ephesians 4:11-16)
- C. "*Complete*" = fully assured (Cf. Luke 1:1; Heb. 6:11; 10:22)
- D. "*In ... God*" = the Truth (Cf. 2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:5)

III. Love with Power

- A. "*Great zeal*"
 1. This word is translated as "pain" in Revelation 16:10-11 and 21:4.
 2. The idea is of the fatigue that results from labor.
- B. Epaphras labor was an example of the power of his love for his brethren in Christ - his sister congregations.

Conclusion:

1. The fellowship a Christian shares with God, his local church and the brotherhood is vital to his life and spiritual health.
2. We must labor for the Lord in our local congregations.
3. However, let us not neglect to labor for and love our sister congregations.
4. Together we can do much good for the cause of Christ.