

IS IT ANYONE'S BUSINESS?

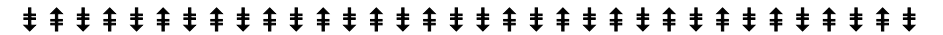
Does it really matter how we live? **Absolutely!** First, it is God's business how we live because He made us and wants us to live "soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12). He has given each of us freedom and power (authority). We each, Christian or not, have the freedom to choose to serve God or self. Paul made clear in Romans 6:16 that we can choose to serve sin and thus die, or serve God and be called righteous: "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Romans 6:16).

Before one chooses to serve God, we were "free" in regard of righteousness (Romans 6:20). But, as it is God's desire for all to come to repentance and be saved (II Peter 3:9; I Timothy 2:4), he made possible and available for us to become his children, and that, through his Son Jesus. Note the record: "But as many as received him, *to them gave he the right to become children* of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). So, when we exercise that right (power or authority) to become Christians, we become servants of righteousness and are made free from sin (Romans 6:22).

Second, it is the church's business how we live in that the church is charged to make a judgment of those who are in the ranks of the saved. We have no business judging those outside the body of Christ, God will judge them (I Corinthians 5:13). But, we have the right and obligation to judge those within the body of the saved (I Corinthians 5:12). This judgment (a discerning between evil or righteous behavior) is to be made **not** according to an outward appearance, but according to a righteous standard (John 7:24). We ought never to feel "put upon" because the elders or some other concerned Christian seems to "poke

their noses into our business," because they have the obligation to do so, whether elders (seeing they "watch for our souls" and "must give account"[Hebrews 13:17]), or spiritual brethren (Galatians 6.1).

Finally, it is your own business how you live. See to it, then, that you live according to "thus saith the Lord" and learn "not to go beyond the things which are written" (1 Corinthians 4:6).



WHAT ARE OUR SYMPTOMS?

Is it possible for a congregation to die? Listen to the words of Christ that He and John wrote to the church at Sardis: "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead" (Revelation 3:1). God forbid that the Lord should ever write such a thing to us. Sardis did not have to die, nor be considered dead. Indeed, the Lord told them how to correct the situation: "Wake up . . . repent!"

A dead church will go through some changes and show forth some symptoms before it dies. Here are a few:

*When the church is more concerned with form than with conviction. Yes, there is a form to be observed. Let us never neglect doing what God has commanded regarding worship and undefiled religion (John 4:24; James 1:27). But it is possible to just go through the motions of being religious, "holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power therefore" (2Timothy 1:1). And, it is possible to go through the motions of Bible study,

"ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2Timothy 3:7). James told us to "be ye doers of the word" (James 1:22). Let us never "play church," it is a deadly game!

*When churches compromise the truth, from without and within. There are multitudes of pitfalls awaiting us, many of which have already swallowed brethren and sometimes whole congregations. These pitfalls are not the real danger. The real danger lies within the Christian who will not study to recognize, avoid and overcome them (II Timothy 2:15; I John 4:1). It also lies within the leadership who will not "hold to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that they may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9). It lies within "preachers" who will not "speak the things which befit the sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

*When churches lose sight of their reason to exist. Brethren, the church is to glorify God, making know His manifold riches and eternal purpose by preaching the gospel to save souls and edify the saved, doing works of benevolence (Ephesians 3:10,11...v21; Mark 16.15; Colossians 1:10). The church that does not keep about the Lord's business (which is her mission) has no right to exist and ought to be dead! Some will consider those as harsh words, but not as harsh as those the Lord could use against us were He to say, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:26,30). We are the church . . . it will be as alive or dead as we are. What are our symptoms? Pray that in areas in which we ought to awake, we shall!

RAGER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

SUNDAY MORNING	BIBLE STUDY	9:30 A.M.
	WORSHIP	10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY EVENING	WORSHIP	6:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY	BIBLE STUDY	7:30 P.M.
Preachers:	Robin W. Haley	614-751-1082
	James Grayson	614-409-0941

May 3, 2009

Weekly Budget: \$1360.00

Wednesday's Wisdom:

"Truth is precious: it saves, restores, secures and will judge!" Richard Bates

Sara Rath is doing well.

Naomi has had bronchitis, we hope she is doing better by now!

James went to Alabama for his cousin's funeral. He is to be back today.

Lloyd & Barbara Moore were due to head back home here from Florida last Wednesday, 4/29. We hope they have (had) a safe trip home.

Robin had a safe, mostly dry trip home last Friday. The meeting at Sullivan went very well. There was one Bible study, and the man (**Randy**) is not far from the kingdom. Pray that he will obey the Gospel.