

# What Am I Worth To The Local Congregation?

Answering this question requires some honest introspection. It also assumes that all members of a congregation have some interest in whether they are of any value to the accomplishment of the congregation's purposes. This is a question that is easily avoided by those who may be afraid of the answer.

To some what the congregation does is something, apparently, just to watch sort of like a spectator sport. They come to services, but hardly participate in the worship. They don't sing, and we can only wonder whether they join in the prayers. They seem to have little interest in the sermon and may sleep through most of it. The Lord's Supper seems to be observed perfunctorily. There would be no worship if it were up to them, but fortunately, others find joy and strength in participating in divine worship.

Some folks, I'm reluctant to say, view the local congregation only from the standpoint of what it does for them. The question they most frequently ask is, "What is the congregation worth to me?" They seldom stop to realize that the congregation can give to them only what someone else has contributed to it. If they are learning, it is only because someone else is willing to teach. They meet in a clean building because someone else cleans it. They profit from the singing because someone is willing to use his talents to lead it and others willingly join in. If all of these "someones" were to be like them, nothing would be done.

What am I worth to the church? Can I be counted on to help when there is work to be done? Do I accomplish what I commit myself to do? Am I carrying my share of the financial burdens of the congregation's work? Am I willing to do my share in the teaching of its members? Do I faithfully attend the assemblies of the congregation? Is my membership in the congregation worth something to the other members, or am I looking at it only from the standpoint of what they can do for me? Am I of negative value to the congregation; that is, as a constant complainer, a critic of the efforts, as one who selfishly insists on having it his own way all the time, or a pessimist who discourages everyone else? Am I one who helps solve problems that occur, or am I a part of the problems?

Instead of avoiding the answer to the question, "What am I worth to the congregation?" let me try to answer it introspectively and honestly. To paraphrase a former president, "Ask not what the congregation can do for you; ask what you can do for the congregation."

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