

THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE

Toward Brethren in the Local Congregation

Our attitude is important because (1) it reveals the condition of our heart, (2) determines our actions, and (3) affects all those with whom we associate.

WRONG ATTITUDES

Self-ambitions and love of preeminence. Mar.9:33.34, Mat. 20:20-24, 3Jo.1:9

Party-spirit. 1Co.1:11-13

Demanding personal rights at the expense of others. 1Co.6-8

Jealousy and rivalry. 1Co.12-14

Fault-finding. 1Pe.3:16

RIGHT ATTITUDE: LOVE ONE ANOTHER. Joh.13:34-35

Love defined: active good will. Love seeks the welfare of all, works no ill to any, seeks opportunity to do good. It is *not* an impulse of feelings. It *doesn't* always concur with natural inclinations. It *doesn't* spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. [Vines Expository Dictionary]

Brotherly love is commanded. 1Jo.4:7-11, 20-21, 2:10-11.

Brotherly love cannot be neglected or relegated to a position of unimportance. Without it one cannot love God.

NOTE: *It is easier to love "brotherhood" than the brethren in the same congregation.*

BROTHERLY LOVE TO BE OF ANY VALUE, MUST BE EXPRESSED. 1Jo.3:18

Brotherly love is expressed by each member being: considerate, courteous, cooperative.

BEING CONSIDERATE

Think of others. Phi.2:3-4

Edify one another. Rom. 5:2-3

Encourage one another. Heb.13:3, 10:24

Share with others. Eph.4:28

Regard others as individuals with feelings, opinions, preferences, shortcomings.

Everyone has their own life-situations.

Refuse "perfect-people" images. Make demand of perfection first upon yourself.

Be not haughty (holier-than-thou). Rom.12:16

Show concern for others. (relate to others). Rom.12:15

NOTE: *There is no justification for ill-temper, bad-manners, sour dispositions—which really demonstrates self-love rather than brotherly love.*

BEING COURTEOUS

Courtesy defined: that which is distinguished from legal right. What is done out of love and concern for others.

Brethren in congregation have a right to expect our best behavior.

We owe it to them as a debt of love.

What we do to the "least of the brethren" we do (as) unto Christ. Mat.25:40

Our best behavior is to include:

Humility, modesty. 1Pe.5:5, Rom.12:13. (note Pro.27:2)

Kindness. Eph.4:31-32

Gentleness. Tit.3:2 (Gentlemen and ladies)

Maturity. 1Co.16:13

Honesty. Eph.4:25

Morality. Rom.12:16. 1Ti.5:21

NOTE: *Behavior which lacks these qualities is devoid of brotherly love.*

BEING COOPERATIVE

Every group action is dependent upon cooperation by those who comprise the group.

Cooperate by being united, not divided. 1Co.1:10, Phi.2:1-2

The quickest and surest way to hinder the work of congregation is to be divided. Mat.12:25

Unity is desirable, necessary, and commanded. Eph.4:1-4

Cooperate by being peaceful. Rom.14:19, 12:18

There is no room for a contentious person in any congregation.

Cooperate by being active.

In every group action, *each* member is to *operate*. Each member is to make his contribution to the effort. Thus: *co-operation*.

NOTE: *Freeloaders, complainers, fault-finders, and those who demand "my way or else" are non-cooperative.*

CONCLUSIONS

Proper attitudes are needed by every Christian in the local church. Preachers, elders, deacons, teachers, every member! It takes effort to acquire and maintain a desirable climate in the congregation—one which not only can be tolerated, but enjoyed.

Even though the members of the local congregations have been called from different walks of life, yet all can work and worship together in peace and harmony, IF all are led by the Spirit.

Let the Spirit (through the Word) mold our thinking and guide our actions.

Let the welfare of others take precedence over that of self.

Big "I" being replaced by little "me".

"I want" being tempered by what "others want".

"What is best for me" superseded by "what is best for all."

The more the members are willing to show their love for one another through CONCERN, COURTESY, and COOPERATION the more the climate of the congregation will be an enjoyable one...the more the work of the Lord will progress...the more the Lord will be glorified.