

## Information and Reminders—

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Samuel Southall, and others with ongoing health battles or other trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians whom Satan will certainly attack (Matt. 13:20-23).

The men meet on the first Sunday of the month to discuss our work and duties. There is a sign-up sheet at the back for items needing their attention. The minutes from October's meeting are available in the foyer.

### **Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.**

-- Can you post Scriptures on our signboard during Oct, Nov, or Dec? Sign up!

*We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM*

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

October 13, 2013

[WWW.QVCOC.COM](http://WWW.QVCOC.COM)

## ***ENCOURAGEMENT—SOMETHING ALL OF US CAN USE***

*Bobby Thompson*

Life is so complicated and perplexing at times that we all face certain difficulties in living as Christ like we should. So many know what is right and have experienced doing what is right, yet at times, they feel a definite drag in executing the performance of righteousness. We all need encouragement! Frequently, individuals talk about how the young people need encouragement. This should be of grave concern to parents and older Christians. It would appear that we at times are prone to forget that we were once young and sorely needed encouragement to get our feet on the ground in doing the things that are approved of God. But the young people are not the only ones who need encouragement. There are middle-aged folks and old folks who sorely need encouragement in living like Christ. So many seem to think that the field of encouragement is limited to the young people. All ages need encouragement as much or more than they do.

There is a tendency of man to be selfish in all fields. The field of encouragement is not excluded! The next time you lament the lack of encouragement you have received, stop and think about how much you have given to the brother who is standing next to you. You just might be amazed at how selfish you have become! And there is even such a thing as self-encouragement that comes when we work toward helping someone else. It can make us realize how insignificant a matter our problems are as compared to the other person. Let's not forget the man who complained about not have new shoes until he observed an individual who had both feet missing.

It is understood that at one time or another, we do or will need some encouragement from others. Like most other subjects, there are some guidelines that Christians should consider and be inclined to follow. Let us observe:

**Encouragement should be scriptural.** What do we mean by such an observation? Simply, that we should not use something unscriptural in an attempt to influence anyone. Some people have the mistaken view that the end justifies the means. This

principle is unscriptural! King Saul attempted to justify his disobedience through the appeal to such a principle, but he was told by Samuel “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat or rams” (1 Sam. 15:22). In order to keep people interested, there are those who appeal to gimmicks and procedures that are not compatible with truth. It has been suggested by some that they do not approve of the procedures, but they are tolerant of such since it is encouraging others. But we ask, encouraging them to what? If it is encouraging them in anything, it is to be lax toward scriptural practices due to the fact that unscriptural practices encouraged them. If the word of God, properly applied, will not work, then individuals cannot be scripturally encouraged. Paul told the elders of Ephesus, “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). When one is commended to the word of God which is able to build one up, he is not being encouraged in some unscriptural practices of man’s foolishness. I’m afraid that some who cry for encouragement are really crying for innovations rather than the purist of God’s word with which they have become bored.

**Encouragement should not be by condoning sin.** Some people seem to have the idea that participation in sinful practices with others will grant one an opportunity to lift them out of sin. The conception is: **join them to defeat them.** There have been those who have even construed Paul’s statements in **1 Corinthians 9:19-23** as meaning this. Paul was speaking of practices of custom and expedient situations that did not conflict with matters of faith *“that I might by all means save some.”* The Christian is to live a transformed life that is not conformed to the world. *“And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* (**Romans 12:2**). We do not encourage individuals to forsake sinful practices by engaging in such practices with them. Perhaps again, some people when they cry lack of encouragement, they really mean lack of condoning our sinful practices. That’s the encouragement they want. Encouragement to do what they want to do without any restraint. Such is never from the word of God. To say “NO” to such people is in their eyes a token of discouragement. They desire to do as they please and any negative view toward them is then a breach of encouragement. Such views breed rebellion and rejection of scriptural authority. We are to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus or by His authority. (**Colossians 3:17**).

Finally, we must be aware of the fact that a man must be **willing** to be encouraged if he is to be encouraged. Try me...I could use it!

## ***A CHURCH SHUTDOWN***

*Joe R. Price*

The U.S. government remains shutdown at this writing. Here, as in other churches, brethren and their families are being impacted as they work without pay. Meanwhile, partisanship, intransigence, pettiness, name-calling, political maneuvering and the lack of effective leadership are in abundance in Washington. Principled leadership and statesmanship is seriously absent while people suffer. Yet, how many folks apply this proverb: “By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks a bone” (Prov. 25:15)? These days, just the opposite seems to rule: impatient diatribe that castigates one’s political opponent (as if that will advance a solution for the good of the country!). “Honor the king” still applies even when one does not agree with the civil ruler (1 Pet. 2:17; Rom. 13:1). “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence” (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Spiritually, churches of Christ “shut down” when neglect, toleration of error and immorality, arrogance, self-righteousness and apathy rear their ugly heads. The churches of Asia are cases in point (Rev. 2:4-5, 14-16, 20-23; 3:1-3, 15-16). A church’s “lampstand” is removed from Christ’s presence when sin reigns within it – fellowship with Christ ends (Rev. 2:5). Such a church may continue to function outwardly, but it is dead inwardly (cf. Sardis, Rev. 3:1). Spiritually speaking, Christ shuts down such a church due to its continued practice of sin and its unwillingness to correct itself through repentance.

A church of Christ “shuts down” when it fails to function under the authority of Christ. The Lord’s pattern for a local church’s **organization** is mandatory (Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13). The **work** of a local church is revealed in the Scriptures: Evangelism to the lost, edification of the saints and benevolence to needy Christians (1 Ths. 1:9; Phil. 1:5; 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:8; Acts 11:22-23; 4:32-35; 11:27-30). The **worship** of a local church is also directed by the New Testament, and cannot be altered without causing a “church shutdown” (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).

Souls are lost when this kind of a “church shutdown” happens. Still, there is time to repent if men and women of faith will rise up and break through sinful partisanship to advance the cause of truth with soberness, godliness and righteousness (Rom. 13:11-14; Tit. 2:11-15). [*The Spirit's Sword*- October 6, 2013; [www.bibleanswer.com/ssword.htm](http://www.bibleanswer.com/ssword.htm)]