

# The Lakeview Lamp

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105*

**September 2, 2007**

## *“Church” Obligations*

Robert Turner, end note by Mike Davis

A lot of loose talk makes the rounds these days about a Christian having no obligation to the church. I can appreciate the need for teaching prior obligation to the Lord – to combat “party” allegiance talking precedence over our allegiance to Christ. This is a real danger; and there is evidence that some are more concerned about being “faithful to the church” than they are about being faithful to the Lord. If those who depreciate church obligations have this in mind they should make this clear – joining hands with the many faithful preachers who have pounded on this through the years.

But some have apparently gotten “carried away” in their zeal – or oratory – and have ignored the essence of congregational activities. A local church is a “team” composed of fellow-Christians who have covenanted together to work and worship as a unit. The fact that a local church can hear and speak (**Matt. 18:17**), pay wages (**2 Cor. 11:8**), discipline (**1 Cor. 5:4-5**), have servants (**Rom. 16:1-2**), messengers (**Phil. 2:25**), send as a unit (**Phil. 4:15-16**), receive as a unit (**Acts 11:30**), write letters (**1 Cor. 16:3**), are called a “flock” having shepherds (**1 Pet. 5:2f**), and many other “unit” characteristics testify to the team or collective status. It will take more than ambiguous ravings to remove these facts.

Teamwork does not remove individual responsibility. In fact, it adds individual responsibilities – to meet one’s obligations that grow out of such associations. If I join hands with several other Christians to support a gospel preacher in some needy field, I have (1) my original obligation to teach the truth (as an individual) PLUS (2) my share in the collective endeavor. I will be judged as an individual – on the basis of how well I met *both* of these obligations.

If some tend to ignore their individual responsibilities, under the false assumption that the term “team” will do all the work, this is error. But it doesn’t invalidate God’s plan for collective action – the local church.

The overseers of a local church have the right to expect each member to carry his share of the load. This imposes obligations with respect to assembling, assisting with the teaching program, finances, supporting the gospel meetings with enthusiasm – in fact, it can summed up by saying, being a good teammate.

Of course this is an obligation to the Lord! Such team work is ordained by the Lord, and when done in keeping with His plan constitutes service to the Lord. But the “team” relation imposes obligations that would not exist in its absence; and that is what I mean by obligations to the church.

And a lot of ridicule of “proxy” service misses the mark. In things divinely authorized to be done collectively the church frequently acts through an agent. Ephaphroditus worked on behalf of the Philippian church in serving Paul (**Phil. 2:25f**). See also **Col. 4:12; 2 Cor. 8:19-23; 11:8**, etc. “Wages” for Paul meant he did these churches a service, as well as the Lord. We won’t help the Lord’s cause by ridiculing His plan for working.



“To the work! To the work! We are servants of God. Let us follow the path that our Master has trod; with the balm of His counsel our strength to renew, let us do with our might what our hands find to do!” Indeed, songs teach (**Col. 3:16**). We need to be workers in the kingdom, and not mere spectators! Souls are starving for the goodness of God’s Word. If any one of us who holds that word dear to our hearts fails to purposely share that gospel with others who have not received it, those souls with the truth are guilty of hiding it to the lost (**2 Cor. 4:3**). We’ve asked it many times, brethren: “If souls are lost because the gospel is hidden from them (and that’s what this passage teaches!) then, what will God do with those who do the hiding?” **Matthew 28:19-20** necessarily includes us who have obeyed the gospel. WE are the messengers of this truth within this “mess age.” The inspired Paul said, “[Be] not slothful in business; [but be] fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (**Rom. 12:11**). No righteous member of the local church has the authority from God to “sit on the sidelines” and watch as the other “team members” do the work! Instead, each member is a part of the “team” and has a work they can and must do to the furtherance of the cause of Christ. This is how our Lord’s work is accomplished!

*“I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness.” – Psalm 101:3-4*

# **Family News**

**Connie Cobern** is out of the hospital and plans to be here today.

**Quinton Coppage** has two different doctor visits this week.

**Charles Cox**, James Hunt's nephew, is still in Baptist Hospital with various health issues, mainly an infection. He will probably be there for six weeks.

**Elmo Ferrell** remains in room 101A at NHC.

**James Hunt** has a spot on both lungs - one is fluid, and the other is infection. Nothing will be done about either one right now. He will be on oxygen at night for six months.

**Sandra Hunt** is still waiting for a date for surgery on her shoulder.

**Allen Malone** made it into Vietnam yesterday. See report.

**Cindi Malone** is on an antibiotic but plans to be here today.

**Cotton Read** is having a very rough time breathing.

**Laura Reed** fell Tuesday last week and is bruised and sore.

**Terri Wenger** received a lower dosage of nuclear medicine than first planned, a good indication for her.

**Robert Wray** is suffering with his dizzy spells.

**Out of town, traveling, or visiting:** None known.

**New Reports from men we support:** **Gary Hunt** (NY), **Allen Malone** (Vietnam).

**Note** – If you have any news for the bulletin (out of town, sick, etc.), then please let me know. I will be printing it most weeks on Saturday night, so please get the news to me by then. Thanks! – Troy

# Lakeview church of Christ

132 New Shackle Island Road

P.O. Box 514

Hendersonville TN 37077

Building: 615-824-1376

[www.BibleSaints.com](http://www.BibleSaints.com)

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Troy Nicholson  
[troyjenn@bellsouth.net](mailto:troyjenn@bellsouth.net)

*"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).*