

# Bedford Bulletin

Columbus Street church of Christ  
512 Columbus Street Bedford, Ohio 44146

----- Building Phone: 440-232-2231 -----

Website: [www.bedfordcoc.com](http://www.bedfordcoc.com)

E-Mail: [dave.evangelistcoc@gmail.com](mailto:dave.evangelistcoc@gmail.com)

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“GOD  
Made us  
Alive...”

Together  
with Christ

Ephesians 2:5

## The Good Minister and the Good Church

### The Good Church – Part Two

In the previous article we considered some of the obligations of a Good minister / evangelist and now in this article we turn to what the local body of believers must do to be a good church. Church, or the body, is used two ways in scripture. First it is the universal body of Christ that Jesus said He will build (Matt. 16:18). It is spiritual and every soul that has obeyed the gospel is added to that church by the Lord (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:38, 47). The universal church connected spiritually by the blood of Christ and the word of God. I have never met any Apostles, but they were and still are members of the same spiritual body with me. The “local church” is different in that it is a physical, local group of Christians who meet together in a given community to worship God and to do all things He commands. What are the responsibilities of individual members who together are the good church?

First a good church is a church that has **RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD**. Every good church had its beginning by the hearing and accepting of the Word of God which then defines its very nature as did the church at Thessalonica. They, “*received the word of God*”, which they heard preached, then “*welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God,*” and the powerful word, “*effectively*”, worked in those who “*believe*”. Effectively works means they modeled themselves according what was preached and imitated Paul in the same manner and work. A good church,

therefore, understands the word power of the gospel (Rom. 1:16), and the incredible value of the “*ministry of reconciliation*” (2 Cor. 5:18-21) so that it wills to share it with the rest of the world. A good church continually receives the word of God which causes growth and change in each member’s life, turning then from idols to serve the living and true God as they wait for His risen Son from heaven to return (1 Thess. 1:9-10). Today, good churches everywhere have the same willingness to receive the word of God as did these saints in Thessalonica. Can you say we are a good church? An unmistakable sign of a good church: **THEY PERSEVERE**. According to Luke’s record in Acts 17:1-9 the church in Thessalonica faced intense and sometimes brutal resistance. Paul and Silas taught for three weeks in the synagogue resulting in, “*great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women...*” being converted. The jealous Jews “*set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason*”, stirring up a riot against the Christians involved local authorities with false accusations. Of this Paul made special note saying they had “*received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit*” (1 Thess. 1:6). Concerned for the brethren there because of tribulation and suffering for the faith Paul sent Timothy to them to encourage them, saying, “*that no one should be shaken by these afflictions*” (1 Thess. 3:3). But this was a good church and to Paul’s comfort Timothy’s report was, “*good news*” of their faith (1 Thess. 3:6-8). Because of their perseverance in the face of persecution, this church is an example to many. Many a church has faltered, wilted, and even died under much less pressure let alone that of persecution. But the good church perseveres. Does your church persevere?

A good church will have **LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER**. Brotherly love is not something that members of a good church need instruction in. When one becomes a Christian love for each member must follow. Paul noted this trait in the members of the church in Thessalonica. He wrote, “*But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more*” (1 Thess. 4:9-10). This is one unmistakable mark seen in every true child of God. Jesus told his disciples just before His crucifixion, “*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*” (John 13:35). John wrote, “*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God*” (1 John 4:7). This love termed so from a Greek word [agapé] is at its root, sacrificial: “*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Rom. 5:8). This love makes its abode in the heart of every true child of God

# Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

manifesting itself in perfection of love toward every member, reflecting the love God has for us all. *"Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world"* (1 John 4:17). Does your church love like this?

A good church must be comprised of **FAITHFUL BRETHREN**. Paul in writing to the church at Colosse referred to them as, "...the saints and faithful brethren in Christ" (Col. 1:2). It was James who said, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26). If we apply this spiritual principle to the church we will understand if a local church is not working it is either dead, or soon will be dead. So many churches today started off being evangelistic, only to stop, and die. Blame is often placed on one person for the failure of all. The good church of Thessalonica was commended for their evangelistic prowess. Their contentment came not in a nice building with heating and air conditioning, a paved parking lot, or padded pews but was in spreading the gospel of Christ to reach the hearts and souls of men. ...Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything" (1 Thess. 1:7-8). Far too many churches lack fervor, dedication, passion and zeal in spreading the gospel, too many are content just to "keep house" and death is just around the corner as baptism get fewer, members get older, and one by one members go the way of all the earth until only a handful is left. Does the church of which you are a member have this vision?

It should go without saying that every good church **must be UNITED**. Jesus taught: *"...Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation..."* (Matt. 12:25). We are member of the kingdom (Acts 8:12, Col. 1:13, 4:11, 1 Thess. 2:12), we are *"...the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is the body (Col. 1:18, 24), and there is only one body (Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15), thus, to be a "good church", that body must be unified. The good church at Philippi was taught to have *"...one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"*, *"...being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind"* (Phil. 1:27; 2:2). Psalm 133:1 says: *"...how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"* Is this a description of the church here, are we together striving to this end?

Of course, as mentioned before to be a good church, members **must always OBEY** and that is one quality Paul saw in the good church at Philippi. *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation*



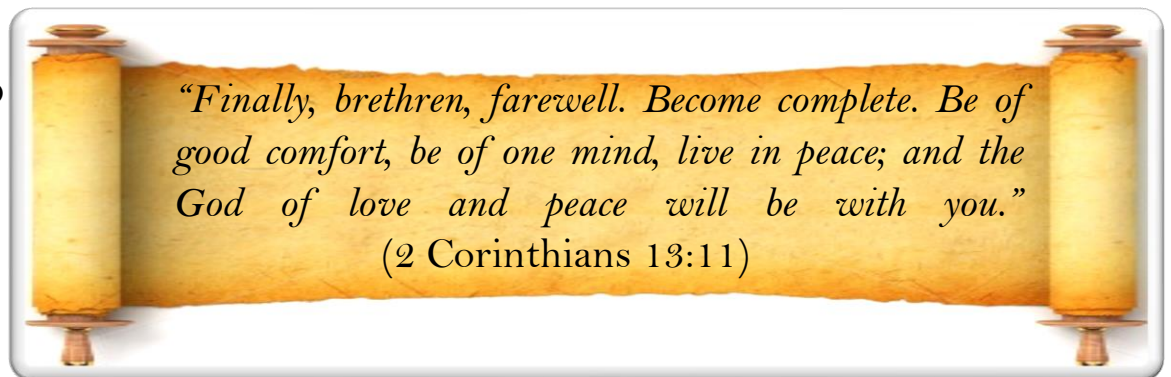
*“<sup>13</sup> But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. <sup>14</sup> And if anyone does not obey our word in this <sup>[b]</sup>epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.”*

*with fear and trembling”* (Phil. 2:12). What a great quality this is! One does not need to guess, are these brethren obeying God, because it will be obvious. A good church will be found obedient worshipping and preaching (Acts 20:7), remembering the Lord’s Supper, praying (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 2:42), giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and singing (Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12). There are many “churches” who refuse to practice these, but a good church will be found doing all every first day of the week. Are you helping the local church to be a good church?

To say, we are a good church is to say every members of the body is being **STEADFAST**. The Colossians were said to be a steadfast church. *“For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing [a]to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ”* (Col. 2:5). Paul commanded the church, *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”* (1 Cor 15:58). Jesus makes this very clear in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 where He speaks warnings like this one to the church of Ephesus, *“Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent”* (Rev. 2:5). Every member of the body must be steadfast willing to work in His church, evangelism (Mark 16:15), benevolence (2 Cor. 8:1-7) and edification (Col. 1:8, 3:16). Is this church enthusiastically pursuing these things? Are you steadfast!

In Love

David Scarpino





**Our faithful Creator** is worthy to be praised in this assembly.

All praise to Him who reigns above in majesty supreme! He gave His Son to die, for all mankind, that He might redeem all. Our blessed Redeemer suffered and died for our sins and is now risen and sitting at the right hand of God as Head of the church. Let us offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, knowing that He is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. (Hebrews 5:8-9) *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”* (Isaiah 6:3)

Times of Our Services	
Sunday Morning Bible Study	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30 PM

- What Must I Do to Be Saved?**
1. Hear the gospel-----John 6:45; Romans 10:17
  2. Believe the gospel-----John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
  3. Repent of sins-----Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
  4. Confess Christ-----Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10
  5. Be baptized-----Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
  6. Remain faithful unto and until death-----Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22