

## ***The Christian's Responsibility to the Local Church (2)***

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**O**ur consumer oriented society encourages us to evaluate things by the benefit we receive from them. We shop where we can get the most for our money; we invest where we can get the greatest return; we insure for the most protection at the least premium. This is not wrong; on the contrary, it is good stewardship.

But the danger arises when we allow a consumer mentality to dominate our outlook on life. Just how many things do we do in the course of a day that are completely voluntary and for the sole purpose of helping or pleasing others?

Some folks allow consumerism to affect their view of the local church. They may evaluate the church on the basis of “what it does for me.” When relocating to a new area, Christians commonly visit nearby churches for the purpose of deciding where they wish to be a member. But apart from the issue of true doctrine and faithful practice, what else is considered in this evaluation process?

It is my personal experience that many Christians are looking for what they will get from rather than what they can give to the local church. Some go where the “name” preacher is. Others go where the “popular” Christians attend. Yet others go to the closest congregation regardless of other considerations. It is not wrong to attend where we will receive personal benefit, but some might be confused on what is truly beneficial. Often, the best benefit is received by contributing: teaching classes, leading prayers, directing songs, helping the discouraged, etc.

Some Christians may excuse themselves from Bible classes or other services on this same basis. “I didn’t attend because I just don’t get anything out of it.” It just doesn’t occur to them to attend *for the sake of what they can put into it*. Interestingly, the first controversy that arose in the Jerusalem church concerned those who felt their needs weren’t being met (Ac 6:1). Such an outlook provides fertile ground for envy and strife.

A Christian’s responsibility to the local church begins with a spirit of service and a love for doing that which benefits others.