**CH “UR” CH**

It has been estimated that 7000 churches close every year and 1500 pastors quit the pastorate every year. If those numbers are correct, it is certainly a sad state for the American Church. The question is to why? Why do churches close and why do pastors quit? Churches do not close because the buildings get tired of being used; churches close because the people stop being the church. Many pastors quit because of a feeling of ineffectiveness with the people. Nothing frustrates the pastor more than the people not applying the Word of God. Today’s message title is the spelling of the word “Church” in a unique way -. Open in prayer. Today I want to cover the responsibilities of the Church in being the Church.

1. **UR the Church – 1 Cor. 3:9 -.** Notice that we believers are “laborers together with God”. The Church is body of individual believers who are called upon to serve God while serving with God. This universal body of believers is broken down into local NT churches. It is within these local churches that God’s people serve God and serve with God. It is not just the pastor and deacons; it is all of us. If you have settled into this local body, God has called you to serve this church in every way that you can – 1 Cor. 12:27-28 -.
2. **Total commitment is required of every believer – 2 Cor. 11:2 -.** Paul was telling these believers who made up the local church at Corinth that he was “jealous” for them in the way that God would be, because they were committing themselves to other things and not to God. Let me say this – you cannot be totally committed to God if you refuse to be totally committed to church. Just like in a marriage, we must show total commitment to our spouse, the Lord. We don’t require every minute of your life, but ask yourself, how much of the few requirements am I meeting? If you conducted your marriage with the same commitment that you do church, how would that work out? Expand on time, money, service and the over and above required in marriages.
3. **If you give yourself to the Lord, you’ll give yourself to the church – 2 Cor. 8:5 -.** The churches of Macedonia were a great example to the Corinthians in their giving. The churches in Macedonia were poor and yet they abundantly gave to help the saints at Jerusalem. They gave their funds because they gave first had given themselves to the Lord. That is how you tithe.
4. **Give cheerfully – 2 Cor. 9:6-7 -.** Every church needs cheerful givers. How many of you give cheerfully? How many of you look forward to giving to God what God has blessed you with? How many of you give wishing you had more to give? How many of you give grudgingly? How many of you don’t give at all? Now if God loves a cheerful and willingly giver, how do you think He feels about those who give grudgingly, less than they should or not at all? Beyond the clear application of money here, we should also be cheerful and willing in the time and talents that we give. I wonder how many churches would close if everyone cheerfully and willingly gave of their time, talents and money?
5. **How do you fit in to this church?** How should every church member see their connection to their church? The first thing is:
* **Perception.** You should see the church as “your church” not “the church”.
* **Financing.** Every believer should tithe to fund the church. Less income means less that can be done. Missionaries may be cut, pastoral salary may be cut, programs may be cut and big repairs may go without repairing.
* **Mission help.** Since the church is you, you should be an active part in the mission of the church. Wherever you can sacrificially help, you should.
* **Building upkeep.** Church buildings do not repair themselves. If you have two hands and enough energy, you should help on workdays to upkeep the church. Perception is everything here – if it is “your” church, you will help; if it is “the” church, you probably won’t.
* **Your own personal spiritual growth.** You should see every service as another opportunity to worship, give, be a blessing to others and to learn. If church is just a“service”, you’ll get it out of the way; if church is a spiritual training ground, you’ll never miss a service.