

January, 2004

# Pause Ponder Profit

## Support Your Local Church

By Jim Everett

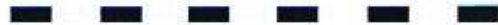
Within the last several months we have observed signs in many front yards that say, "We support our President and our troops." Depending on which social interest one has, appeals are made to, "Support your local PTA...boy scouts... girl scouts...community projects...fire department...police, etc." People have no problem understanding that "support" means to get behind them, encourage them, stand behind what they are doing, give money to help, commit yourself to what needs to be done, etc. It means to be proud of them and their efforts. But more than anything it means to GET INVOLVED in some way -- you can't support something while remaining detached and aloof.

We should want to be strong Christians, to build up other Christians and to save the lost. In doing this we need the help of other Christians. This is why we should want to support the local church -- NOT TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION BY NUMBERS, BUDGET, OR EDIFACE.

But to have a strong congregation there must be some loyalty to the group -- such loyalty is not a displacement of or substitute for loyalty to Christ. There is no implication here that this is different from Christ loyalty or that it is putting the kingdom before the King. Neither is group loyalty and association an end within itself. Just belonging to a congregation and being a loyal worker does not mean one will go to heaven. My relationship to a congregation of God's people grows out of my relationship to God and not the reverse; however, my strong support of our together relationship is directly related to how loyal I am to Christ.

Based on Christ loyalty, group loyalty is essential to a strong together relationship. In our marriages, we must put the relationship before our individual preferences. So it is true in congregations -- we must put our brother to brother relationship before our own personal likes and dislikes. What is good for the congregation should motivate us, as long as it is scriptural. This congregation needs the commitment, interest, enthusiasm and loyalty of all the members in order to be the most effective in its work. It needs the mutual encouragement that comes from assembling together. It also needs the emotional support of all the members to its leaders, a willingness to share in the workload, and the financial support of every member to do the God-given work. You cannot have a strong, active congregation without the support of ALL of those who belong to it. Just a few who have an "us" versus "them" attitude can greatly hamper the effectiveness of many others who are diligently trying to do the Lord's work.

*(Continued on bottom of page 4)*



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## Authority For Bible Classes

By David J. Riggs

**O**ccasionally, some of our brethren ask, “Where do you find authority for your Bible classes?” They say, “You claim to have a ‘thus saith the Lord’ for everything you do, but where does the Bible say anything about having classes?”

We have authority for Bible classes in two ways. First, we have authority for them in the general command for the church to teach and edify (Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Tim. 3:14-15). The classes are simply one of the expedient methods of getting this done. There are several expedient ways the church can do this work - preach over the radio, print a bulletin, etc., and although they are not specifically mentioned, they are authorized in the general command to the church. The classes do not need to be specifically mentioned to be authorized. Preaching over the radio and printing a bulletin are not specifically mentioned, but they are lawful because of the general command for the church to teach and edify.

I know of a church in South Alabama which insists that having Bible classes is unscriptural and wrong because they are not mentioned in the New Testament. However, that same congregation has a baptistry and uses song books neither of which are mentioned. They have these things because they are necessary aids or expediencies in carrying out the commands to baptize and sing. So it is with the Bible classes. One cannot fulfill the commands of God without using some type of aids or expediencies to accomplish them. Our English versions of the Bible are aids in fulfilling the commands to study the word of God. Those who insist on only those things “specifically

Secondly, Bible classes are authorized because in the New Testament there are examples of disciples meeting in groups smaller than the whole church. If there were only examples of the gospel being taught when the whole church was together, that would be all that is authorized. However, part of the church met for special purposes (Acts 12:12,17; 20:17-18). They met at times other than the Lord’s day (Acts 2:46; 19:9); they taught in situations other than the whole church (Acts 18:26; 20:20). This gives us authority to meet in groups smaller than the whole church at a time other than when the Lord’s Supper is observed. If part of the church could meet for a specific purpose, the rest of the church could do likewise because that which God authorizes for one group equally applies to the other.

If one takes the position that the teaching of the church must be done only when the whole church is together, all teaching of the church must be done at that time. If he says that the teaching may not be done in groups smaller than the whole church, it follows that all the teaching must be done only when the whole church is together.

Bible classes are an expedient method for the church to fulfill its obligation to teach and edify. They are not additions, but aids in carrying out the commands of God.

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***Come Worship With Us***

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## Can Women Be Pastors?

By Shane Williams

This morning on "The Early Show" it was told that the Southern Baptists were at it again with more controversy. This time it didn't have to do with a woman's relation to her husband, it had to do with whether or not a woman could be a pastor. Two sides were portrayed. The first was a man that talked about how little our opinions mean in this matter. "The issue is on what the Bible says," he stated. **1 Timothy 2:11-12** was quoted, *"Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet."* A woman who was the head of a woman's rights group represented the second side. She said the problem wasn't on what the scriptures said, the problem was discrimination. She also stated that many people were leaving the Southern Baptists and going elsewhere. The other side denied this.

All of this brings up an interesting question: What does the Bible really say about women in the role of pastor's? This article will deal with this question.

The first thing that should be addressed is what exactly is a pastor. Who we see in scriptures as a pastor is not the same as who we see called pastors today. The word pastor comes from the greek word, *"poimen."* Consider what W. E. Vine's has to say about this word. PASTOR, *"a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks" (not merely one who feeds them), is used metaphorically of Christian "pastors," Eph 4:11. "Pastors" guide as well as feed the flock, cf. Acts 20:28, which with v. 17, indicates that this was the service committed to elders (overseers or bishops); so also in 1 Peter 5:1,2, "tend the flock... exercising the oversight," RV; this involves tender care and vigilant*

Vine's tells us, and rightly so, that the duty of being a shepherd was the responsibility of the elders. Eph. 4:11 makes it very clear that a "preacher" is not a pastor. **Eph 4:11**, *"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers."* Notice that evangelists and pastors are two separate terms. To be an evangelist is NOT the same as being a pastor.

In our religious world a pastor and preacher are just the same thing. The qualifications for elders are clearly laid out in the scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1). Elder, bishop, overseer, and pastor all refer to the same office. Among many qualifications, an Elder must be the husband of one wife and have believing children. I have been called "pastor" more times than I can count. Although I have been married for over 3 years, I only have a little girl who is thirteen months old. This hardly qualifies me to be a pastor, let alone all the other qualifications that must be met. I've told countless people, "I'm not a pastor, I'm just the preacher." The response I normally receive is a smile along with, "Well, it's the same thing isn't it?" Friends, let's make sure we use Bible names only the way they are used in the scriptures.

A woman cannot be a pastor, in the Bible since of the word. She cannot be "the husband of one wife." I don't care how you try and turn it, she just can't do it. You can call me old-fashioned, prejudiced, or unloving but the Bible still says an elder is to be the husband of one wife.

Well, what about a woman being a preacher. I can't show you a verse that says a woman can't be a preacher. However, the verse we started off with (1 Timothy 2:11-12) clearly shows that a woman is not to teach or exercise authority over a man. Why? Well, that's a difficult question but the only answer I can give is what Paul went on to

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tell Timothy. Vss. 13-15, "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint." You can argue about how unfair that seems and how Paul must have been a woman hater, but that doesn't change what he said. Paul was not a hater of women. He understood their roles. He went on to spend an entire chapter (5) talking about taking care of widows. In his letter to Titus he talked about some responsibilities of older women as well as what the younger ones were to be taught (2:3-5).

To be a preacher you must be able to teach (both men and women). To be a pastor you must be able to meet specific qualifications. A woman cannot fulfill these offices. This in no way makes her less of a person or worthless. She has just been given a different role than men. It's not a matter of equal right or discrimination. It's a matter of understanding what God has said and respecting the fact that we are made differently and for different purposes.

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"Members-at-large," "perpetual visitors," or "floating members" destroy a brother-to-brother relationship. What would this congregation be, if every member were like me? Would there be a congregation here? If so, what would it be like – strong, weak, indifferent, growing? Based on my knowledge, would it be a congregation which teaches the truth and is sound doctrinally? Based on my teaching, how much would others know? Based on my interest would it be alive or dead? Based on my efficiency would it be a congregation that was doing God's work?



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<b>Sunday</b>		
Radio 1490 AM .	9:00 A.M.	
Bible Study .....	9:45 A.M.	
Worship.....	10:45 A.M.	
Worship.....	6:00 P.M.	
<b>Wednesday</b>		
Bible Study.....	7:00 P.M.	

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