

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

December 9

2018

## Church Recreation

Recently I received an invitation to a facility that provided “ping pong, walking track, concerts, basketball, weights, pool table, board games, banquets, refreshments, etc.” No, the invitation did not come from the local YMCA. It came from a local church.

Increasingly churches have begun to take on the atmosphere of social clubs; some do rival local health spas. Yet, I do NOT read in the Bible where “the churches of Christ” (Romans 16: 16), in their life and death struggle to preach the gospel to a lost world, ever made such social/recreational provisions for that world (or themselves). According to the New Testament (NT) the ONLY work God ordained the local church to do consists of: preaching the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:8), assembling for worship and edification (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25), and meeting the physical needs of destitute Christians (Acts 4:34-35; 6:1ff). The work of the local church was spiritual, NOT recreational.

And it certainly was not for lack of public interest that kept churches in the Bible out of athletics and entertainment. The world into which the gospel was first preached LOVED the sports arena. Their children played five different games of ball and the Roman emperors were masters at building public baths, theaters, stadiums and using them to ‘politic’ the people. The world back then had their superstar athletes, actors and actresses too. In fact, it is safe to say that America’s enjoyment and pursuit of recreation/entertainment is equal to the people of NT times. But again, the NT is SILENT about local

churches making ANY provision for the fulfillment of such interests. And get this! The hope of the gospel was still “proclaimed in all creation under heaven” (Colossians 1:23). Churches in the NT understood that the world needed the gospel and its eternal benefits, not temporary distractions.

We still believe the gospel is God’s power to motivate all men to faith, obedience and salvation (Romans 1:16).

✍️ *Keith Camp*



## The Obligation of Man

When thinking about the word obligation things such as commitment, duty, and responsibility should come to mind. So, knowing that let’s take a look at the three-fold obligation of man. Starting with...

### 1) **Man’s Obligation To God.**

In the book of Ecclesiastes we learn that the whole-duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). So, a man’s obligation to God is to fear Him (i.e. have a deep reverence toward Him) as the Hebrew writer instructs in Hebrews 12:28. Man is to likewise whole-heartedly love God with thy all (Mark 12:30), and man is to always put God first above all else (Matthew 6:33). Man is to obey God in all that He has instructed and commanded (Matthew 7:21; 1 Corinthians 7:19), man is to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), and man is to serve God and Him only (Matthew 4:10, 6:24). Now, I ask, how are you doing concerning your obligation to God?

### 2) **Man’s Obligation To Others.**

Not only does the Bible speak about man’s obligation to God, but it likewise speaks of man’s obligation to others. You see, contrary to the thought of many man does have an obligation to others. For instance, man is instructed to love his neighbor as himself (Mark 12:31; Romans 13:8-10), man is to seek the well being of others (1 Corinthians 10:24; Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:3-4), man is to teach others (2 Timothy 2:24-26), and man is to treat others as he himself would like to be treated (Luke 6:31). So, I ask, how are you doing concerning your obligation to others?

### 3) Man's Obligation To Self.

Now that we have discussed man's obligation to God and to others, let's examine man's obligation to self. You see, my friends, we are all responsible for ourselves (Galatians 6:5), and we must all strive to keep ourselves pure (1 Timothy 5:22). A man's responsibility also includes being productive and providing for self (2 Thessalonians 3:10), and last, but certainly not least, man must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). My friends, it is very important to understand that we will all someday stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of ourselves to God (Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Therefore, take responsibility for yourself, and do what is required of you to do concerning your obligation to God, to others, and to self!

Once more, my friends, you are encouraged to sincerely consider how you are doing concerning your obligation to God, to others, and to self.

✍️ Brad Phillips



## PREACHING

We have heard of a business meeting where some disgruntled members presented the elders with the reasons for wanting to change preachers. One offered, *"My daughter says he preaches too long."* The elders weren't too impressed with that, but suggested they might ask the man to plan his lessons for a better use of time.

A second complained, *"But my wife says he preaches too loud."* The elders thought they might turn down the public address system and solve that weighty problem.

And the third said, *"The bad thing is, the liberals just don't like him."* Well, now, that is going to be a bit harder to handle. It makes me think of a bumper sticker: *"Get a taste of religion -- BITE A PREACHER."* The man who devotes his full time to preaching deserves better than that.

There are bound to be good and bad preachers – and some who should be doing something else. But aside from the "professionals" and the con-men who think it is an easy way of making a living, preachers are a pretty decent lot. With the education drive, and self-

confidence necessary to make a reasonably successful preacher, a man can make more money and have a less demanding life doing something else. This is why those who are in it for the money usually drop out in eight or ten years and get into some other field.

It takes a good man, Charlie Brown, to go right on doing research, preparing the sort of lessons you and your elders feel are most needed, and presenting them to an audience of note-passing teenagers, sleeping parents, ceiling-gazing gum chewers, and a liberal sprinkling of crying babies and their struggling mothers. More than once I have had the temptation to close the book and shout, *"OK, you win, you can have it!"*

And then I see the sober, thoughtful look on this teenager; the nod of approval on that parent; and a young mother comes to me after service with an apology for her child and a request for a copy of my outline so she can study it when the child sleeps. If there are problems that fret and discourage us, there are also people who need the Lord and are appreciative of our efforts to bring the two of them together. When you speak of good and bad preachers – remember the good and bad people they work with, and the fact that, despite rumors to the contrary, preachers are people.

Mothers and Dads, encourage your boys to accept the challenge of the greatest "service" job on earth.

✍️ Robert Turner

### Belleville church of Christ

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[www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

#### Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study . . . . .	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship . . . . .	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship . . . . .	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study . . . . .	7:00 p.m.

#### Evangelist

James Hahn . . . . . (317) 443-1938