

## Five Ways Every Member Can Strengthen and Love the Church

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If you want, you can pay someone to wash your car. You can pay someone to iron your clothes. You can pay someone to make food for dinner. You can even pay someone to take care of your children for large parts of the day. It seems that everything worth doing can be done by someone else. Just pay up.



I once listened to a church member recall a conversation with a fellow member after a sermon where the pastor had confessed the need in his own life to be more active in evangelism:

“That message was really convicting to me.” The reply came as a surprise, “Really? Why? That’s what we *pay him* to do.”

That person said it, but how many of us have had that thought? It is so easy to excuse ourselves from responsibility when we think we’ve already paid up. I’m not saying that generosity isn’t beautiful or that we shouldn’t support our leaders but, paid leaders are not responsible for all the work. Every Christian bears responsibility to the church. We need to keep pushing to de-professionalize ministry.

But what can you do? Well, there is good news—lots of it actually. All Christians have an important place in the body and unique gifting from the Spirit to build others up in love. The New Testament is filled with ways that every believer can love and serve in the local body where God has put them. Here are five:

### **Therefore, confess your sins to one another.** *James 5:16a*

When is the last time you did this at a church meeting? Because forgiveness is given to confessors, we should be eager to do it when necessary. Additionally, I’ve found that some of the most encouraging moments of a church meeting are when others open up in confession. What you’ll find is that your confession will convict others, encourage them to keep killing their own sin, and remind everyone of the forgiving grace of Christ that covers them.

### **Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.** *Galatians 6:2*

Everyone in your church is carrying something. Personal sins or struggles and even harmful tendencies weigh some down quite heavily—especially during certain seasons. Let their difficulty become your own by finding ways to encourage and

even exhort when necessary. Don’t allow one person in your church to experience hard things by themselves.

### **Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.** *1 Peter 4:9*

Showing hospitality is giving someone food to eat and a place to sleep. It can apply to people who know each other already, so loving others in your church by providing meals or inviting them over is a wonderful way to serve. But, a main application of hospitality is for people who are traveling through with nowhere to stay and nothing to eat. Hospitality can be a substantial sacrifice. That’s why Peter makes mention of not grumbling. If you have a home and food, you can do this for a missionary traveling though, or the needy one among you with nowhere to go.

### **And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.** *1 Thessalonians 5:14*

If you didn’t know better, you might think these were instructions to pastors, or those in positions of authority. Now, pastors aren’t free from these commands, but Paul’s focus here is on the *brothers and sisters*—all those who gather as the church in Thessalonica. If another believer in your church is idle or weak, you are just the person God wants to use to admonish or help them. Likewise, that older widow who seems more and more distant since her husband’s passing is waiting for you to come over with encouragement. Understandably, some situations may require wisdom or experience that you don’t have, but this exhortation is aimed at you.

### **Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.** *1 Peter 4:8*

Have you been underestimating love? Some of you are suffering with a wrong idea that goes something like, “Oh, little me, what can I do?” When you think that way you can’t love, because all your thoughts reside upon your own interests. Raise your eyes to see the needs of others, and you’ll quickly find that there is plenty that you, no matter your strengths or weaknesses, can do.

So, let’s put out of our minds any thought which excuses us from loving others and start serving them in every way that God allows, asking him for strength to keep going. A stronger and more loving church has everything to do with you.