

The Church Coming Alive and Remaining Alive

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

In chapter 4 of 1 Thessalonians, we focused on the Second Coming of Christ. We saw, among other things, that the Lord could return at any moment, and that we are to be prepared to meet Him. Among the Thessalonians, this caused some to take on the attitude, “Why get involved in anything since Christ will come back at any moment?” But that’s not the way the Bible intends us to live. The biblical perspective is that Christ’s return should motivate us to dedicated service so that we will be found faithful when He returns.

This is the reason why the Apostle Paul, directly after discussing the Lord’s coming, gets into the subject of the Christian’s responsibilities in daily life and ministry. His point is that these things enable the waiting church to *come alive and remain alive*—to be a vibrant, growing body that can spread the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

What responsibilities make a congregation come alive and remain alive?

1. Recognition of church leaders, 12-13

- Church members are told to both “respect” and “esteem” their spiritual leaders. What is the difference? Do you find one easier than the other?
- “No church can function adequately without proper leadership—which implies proper ‘followership’.” Explain
- How does a right attitude toward leaders enable the church to come alive and remain so?

2. Consideration toward one another, 14-15

- Verse 14 mentions three types of church members with particular shortcomings. How would you deal with each one?
- Verse 15 tells us not to retaliate. How can we manage to do this when we are hurt and angry?

3. Maintenance of the right inner attitude, 16-18

- How does each of the admonitions listed in this section contribute to the church coming alive and remaining alive?
- What is the significance in this context of the phrase “*for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*” (18)?

4. Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, 19-22

At this point Paul shifts from the personal life to communal worship.

- What does it mean to “quench the Spirit”? Do you have a specific example of this?
- Why is the command to not quench the Spirit so vital for a church to come alive and remain alive?

5. Faithfulness in daily conduct, 23-28.

- What is sanctification and how do we pursue it?
- What part does God play in the process of sanctification?
- How does sanctification contribute to a church coming and remaining alive?