

- ***Acts 18:24-28*** As is the case with many different things, theatric productions are often judged based upon what is scene on the stage. If what is seen on stage looks good then often all the glory goes to those who play those strong leading roles. If things go poorly then the criticisms are heaped upon the same people. However, might I suggest to you that the successes and failures of these and other productions are a result of so much more than just what happens in the spot light. There are so many behind the scenes factors that go into what is scene with the public eye. Our text that we just read follows this same kind of pattern. Apollos was the man in the spot light. He was the one that was out in the open and it seemed as if everything was great with what he was doing was right on line, but Aquila and Priscilla new that he was lacking in some of his knowledge of God's Will. They took him aside or they took him behind the scenes and did work to make sure that what he was doing for the Lord was truly accurate according to God's will. The next time Apollos God out, he message was full and whole and that is what everyone saw. They didn't see Aquila and Priscilla's work, but what they had done greatly contributed to the good that was done for God's Kingdom.
- We often find that local churches are judged in much the same way. Often the strength of our local churches are judged based upon what is seen in the public worship assembly. They are judged based upon the song service, the preaching, and other aspects of the assembly. Those who serve in those public positions are often heaped with praise or flooded with criticisms depending on their performance in the eyes of those who are present. However, what is seen during these public assemblies is a very small sampling of what the local church does as a body and what it is all bout. The truth is that there are many different groups of people within each congregation that do a lot of different things that make up the character of each local congregation. This morning, I'd like to point out a few groups of individuals who are vital to the strength of each local church. These individuals are true behind the scenes servants who play a role that helps to strengthen the local church which is to be the pillar and support of the truth. **(I Tim. 3:15)** These individuals are worthy and deserve appreciation and praise for the great work that they do each and every day within the Lord's Kingdom.

I. Elders Shepherding The Flock

- A. These men have been put into these positions for the strengthening of the Lord's body at their individual locations. **(Eph. 4:11,12)** It is their duty to look out for the needs of the flock. **(Heb. 13:17)**
- B. The vast majority of their work is never seen. They are in the homes of the flock. They are studying, guiding, instructing, and doing everything they can to strengthen their individuals members so that they will be good disciples and so the church as a whole will be strong.

II. Deacons Fulfilling Tasks

- A. We don't see deacons officially mentioned until Paul's letter to Timothy, but I am convinced that the principles behind the responsibilities of deacons is first seen in **Acts 6:1-6** with the men who were given the duty of taking care of the needy saints in Jerusalem.
- B. Notice in this text that this was something that was to be done so that the Apostles would be able to do their job of spreading the Gospel. If they did a good job then it was because these men gave them the freedom to do so. So do our deacons do the same thing. They free others up to focus on their responsibilities instead of being caught up in other stuff.

III. Wives Supporting Husbands

- A. God has set up the leadership of the local church to be headed by males, but we must recognize the need for strong women who support them in the work that they do. Priscilla was very active in supporting Aquila and that comes with the respect that they are to have for their husbands. **(Eph. 5:33)**
- B. While they do no serve in a public role, wives of the men who do play a vital role in supporting and encouraging their husbands in the performing of their duties. The part they play is invaluable.

IV. Teachers Facilitating Learning

- A. Whether they be teachers in a bible class program or teachers in private studies, teachers play a role with the church that is of the utmost importance. Their efforts help to encourage individuals to study and grow in their faith so that they might be able to handle God's Word rightly. **(II Tim. 2:15)**
- B. While much good is done from the pulpit, let me suggest that just as much if not more good is done in the classroom or at the kitchen counter where questions can be asked and good discussion can be had.

V. Young Disciples Growing In Christ

- A. The efforts of young Christians to grow in the Lord is so critical to the strength of the Lord's church. Regardless of their youth, they are to be examples to others of what a disciple of Jesus ought to be. **(I Tim. 4:12)**
- B. One day, these young people will be these elders, deacons, wives, and teachers and their preparation as young people will go a long way in their success in the years to come.

VI. Older Disciples Teaching The Younger

- A. Then there are those disciples who have served in these positions in years past and have lots of experience that they share with those who are coming up. **(Titus 2:1-8)**
- B. Individuals following the example of Paul with Timothy serve the important role of helping to bring the next generation along so that the church will continue to thrive.

VII. Parents Raising Children

- A. The first a primary responsibility of raising children in the instruction of the Lord does not fall upon the preacher or the Bible class teacher, but it falls upon the parents. **(Eph. 6:4)**
- B. Parents who take the time and see the importance of raising their children in the Lord truly serve the church well because they are laying a foundation for others to build upon. We see the good that can be done when a good foundation has been set when we look at Timothy with his mother and grandmother. **(II Tim. 1:5)**

VIII. Disciples Inviting The Lost

- A. In **Matthew 9:37,38**, Jesus announces that the harvest was ripe but the workers are few and that His disciples ought to pray for God to send workers out into the harvest.
- B. We are those workers who ought to be going out into the harvest. When we put in the effort to invite this we know to our assemblies or to study with us, then we are creating opportunities for our church to grow by adding souls to the Kingdom of God.

IX. Disciples Living Righteously

- A. Through our living according to those things that are good and godly **(Phil. 4:8,9)**, we serve the church by establishing the church as those people who have been called out of this world and into the family of God.
- B. In a world that is saturated in sin, Christians ought to stand out because of their righteous living. When we all strive to live up to God's standard, we build up the church and strengthen it so that it will be separate and apart from the sin of this world.

All of these different acts of service to the Kingdom of God and His local churches are vital and important to its health, and yet they are so often overlooked and not appreciated as they ought to be. Because of this, we sometimes are not encouraged to serve where we ought. I hope that each and every one of us will realize the importance of each and every group of individuals and the roles that they fulfill in serving this local church and others. May we not just recognize the importance, but may we show our appreciation. May we thank all those who serve in these many ways, and may we all serve in those ways that we are able to do so. May all the glory go to God as each of us do what we can to serve behind the scenes and strengthen the church and the Kingdom day by day.