

Whose Responsibility Is It To Visit?

There's much confusion within the church these days as to who it is that is responsible for visiting the sick, shut-ins, bereaved, erring, etc. Many believe it falls solely on the preacher. I couldn't begin to tell you how many times brethren have approached me and said, "You need to go visit so and so," as if I were the only one capable and responsible for such a task. I've also been asked on occasion, "Where's brother or sister so and so been lately?" as if I were the only member qualified to obtain such information. Don't get me wrong, I, as well as any other Gospel preacher, need to be reminded from time to time as to who it is that needs visited. I too should be concerned about the delinquency of some brethren and do what I can to encourage them. But is it the minister's duty, and his alone, to visit? No! It is the duty and privilege of all Christians to visit, whether it be by means of a personal visit, a phone call, sending an email, dropping a card of encouragement in the mail, etc.

God's people, throughout Sacred Script, are admonished to visit, encourage, and assist others. James writes, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (**Jam. 1:27**). Jesus, just prior to His crucifixion, spoke of a coming judgment, and He had this to say: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto

me...Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (**Mat. 25:34-36, 40**).

Obedience to the Gospel does not stop at baptism. We must be engaged continually in works befitting a Christian, which includes visitation. Who's responsibility is it to visit? It is the responsibility of each and every Christian!

-Terry R. Townsend