

# The Local Church 5 - Part 2

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald emphasizes the significance of biblical literacy, the joy of serving in ministry, and the importance of Christian fellowship in the local church.*

**Duration:** 9:02

**Scripture:** Matthew 13:11

**Topics:** "Christian Fellowship", "Serving Others"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being immersed in the Word of God and the impact it can have on individuals and communities. It highlights the privilege of serving with others, the joy of Christian fellowship, the power of God's Word when taught in the Holy Spirit, and the blessings that come from giving and sacrificial service for the Lord. It also touches on the significance of Christian literature, the impact of visitation and caring for others in times of need, and the contrast between a supportive Christian community and the isolation experienced by those without such fellowship.

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## Transcript

We sat under the ministry of the Word of God and how indebted I feel to those men. The first Sunday school class I ever remember, I was taught the parables of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13. Can you imagine it? A kid studying that, still with me today.

And I can remember sitting around tables in that assembly and going through the book of Isaiah. Isaiah? What about John's Gospel? No, Isaiah. And you know, it's still with me today.

What a privilege. I tell you, I'm very indebted to the fellowships that I had the privilege of being in down through those years. And I wasn't even a Christian.

But God was, the Holy Spirit was putting the coals on the fire to ignite them some years later. I personally have a great sadness of heart when I think of how biblically illiterate the church in the United States is. Biblically illiterate.

Used to be that you could talk to people and they had a smattering of ignorance about the Bible. But they really don't have that anymore. And so what a wonderful privilege it is to be in a fellowship where the Word of God is taught and where people's minds, young people's minds, are filled with the Word of God, a sacred deposit.

And then of course, there's the blessing of serving with others. And we heard about that last night a great deal. The blessing of serving with God in the Sunday school class.

And who can know, who can know, I think of teachers who have become discouraged along the way. They thought nothing's going to happen. Things do happen.

I want to tell you, the Word of God is never taught and ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit without producing results. Do you believe that? I believe it. Well, the Bible says it.

He said, my word, his word will not return to him void. It will accomplish a thing that he has sent it forth to do. So when you're engaged in that work, in ministering and teaching the Word of God, you're in a work that can't fail.

It's got the promise of success right in the Word of God. Privilege of serving the Lord in gospel work and witnessing for the Lord. Recently, a hundred people went out to Little Rock, Arkansas and they paid their own expenses out there.

And they paid their own hotel out there, a hundred people. And they worked in every, they went to every house in Little Rock, Arkansas. Every house, including the house of Hillary Clinton's mother, and left a packet of literature with her there.

And if you'll read the last issue of Uplook magazine, it's really historic. It has stories of the things that happened in that outreach. And I want to tell you, the people were bubbling.

They were really overflowing with praise to the Lord. They had, they were out there in 107 degree temperature and they went to one door and knocked on the door and person came to the door and said, you people must have something if you're willing to go house-to-house in 107 degree temperature. They went to another door and the lady opened the door and they talked to her about the Lord Jesus.

And she said, I've lived here for 24 years and you're the first people who ever came to talk to me about Jesus. And that magazine is just filled with stories like that. Fellow went to a home to see if he could get the little fellow to come to the children's meetings and it was a foster home and the foster mother said to him when he went to the door, well, he doesn't like men.

I think he had been abused, this little fellow. And she said, he doesn't like men and the little fellow said, I don't like men. But you know that dear brother, he kept persisting.

He'd go back and he'd bring gifts to that little fellow. And pretty soon the little fellow went to the meetings and pretty soon he was practically glued to that Christian worker. He wouldn't leave him out of his sight and now they're thinking of adopting him.

I mean the magazine is filled with stories. I don't know whether that one is in it, but it was told to me personally. The joy of serving with others.

I'll tell you it made an impact on the lives of a hundred people that they'll never forget. The joy of visitation. Including hospital visitation.

You know, a lot of people are afraid to visit in hospitals. I don't know why but there's a tremendous joy in doing that kind of work. And oftentimes you come away more blessed than any blessing that you were able to give.

The thrill of Christian literature work. And I might say this just in passing that I believe that the distinctive ministry that God has given to assemblies like Hillview down through the years has been the ministry of Christian literature. It has had an impact on the whole evangelical world.

Then the privilege of giving. Perhaps we don't think of giving as being a privilege, but it is a tremendous privilege. It's a tremendous privilege to be reaching out to the far ends of the earth with our gifts and sacrifices for God.

And who knows what is ever accomplished by that? But nothing is ever done in the name of the Lord Jesus and for his glory that will not be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ. I think that's wonderful. God is a good record keeper.

He's a good accountant and nothing you ever do and nothing you ever give for him passes without its reward. And I tell you it's thrilling to think of the reward that some people are going to get in that term, in that connection. The privilege of fellowship, of being with Christian people.

We feel this very strongly in a country where the anti-Christian bigotry is increasing all the time, where the media never loses an opportunity to whack away at Christianity, at Christ, and at Christian people. It's a wonderful thing just to come together and with like-minded believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and be able to talk about the things that matter. And then of course a caring family in times of sorrow, trial, and distress.

It's a wonderful thing, a caring family. Maybe somebody's hospitalized. Maybe some mother is hospitalized and the meals just flow over into that home.

Nobody has to worry about the food. People there to help, take care of the children, and just moving together. Let me give you the other side of that story.

There was a fellow in the Navy with me. I prayed for him for 50 years and he died as far as I know without ever coming to the Lord Jesus. His wife would call me, his widow would call me, and she would just be reffed.

And I said to her, incidentally they had no faith at all, I said to her, do you have any friends? She said, we don't have any friends. She said, we just saved money until we had enough money to go on a tour. I said, do any of your neighbors take it? No, she said, we have not associated with our neighbors.

And she was sitting there all by herself in a home in Arizona. And nobody cared. That's the way she had always lived.

That's the way it was now. And I had what a contrast. What a contrast, a fellowship with like-minded Christians and how they just come together.

A beautiful thing happened up recently with us. A young fellow had to go to University of California, San Francisco for a liver transplant. You know what an emotional rollercoaster oftentimes it is when something like that is happening.

Well, his wife went to home of one of our sisters one day, and she was really at the edge as it were. She went in and there were two ladies talking, two Christian ladies talking. And she just was about ready to dissolve.

And when one of those ladies saw her ready to dissolve, she quickly got up from her seat and went over and sat beside her and put her arm around her. And she said, I'm connected with a prayer.

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