

# *For want of a nail*

Are you important to God? Are you an important member of His church? What "rank" does one have to be in God's church before he or she is considered important? Does one have to be an evangelist? A member of a board or council? A pastor? A local elder? A deacon?

In this regard, here is an encouraging, old English nursery rhyme that my wife and I used to read to our daughters when they were very young:

**For want of a nail the shoe was lost,  
For want of a shoe the horse was lost,  
For want of a horse the rider was lost,  
For want of a rider the battle was lost,  
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost,  
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.**

Members of God's church can be considered like those little nails in the horseshoe. Each has a vital function. Yes, it is true that God could, if He wanted to, raise up stones to do His work on earth (Matthew 3:9). Yet in His love and mercy, He has chosen to call you and me to do it.

I am not saying that the loss of just one "nail" would jeopardize the coming of God's Kingdom to earth. Sadly, over the years, we have seen many loved ones depart from God's truth and from His way of life. However, Jesus Christ tells us that, if it was not for the sake of His elect (which includes all of the "nails"), He would allow all human life to be obliterated from this earth:

**And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ASV)**

But does the average church member really have an important part to play? God, through the apostle Paul, tells us repeatedly that we certainly do:

**For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; (Romans 12:4-6)**

I have used the nails in the shoe of a soldier's horse as my analogy. Paul was inspired to use the more thorough analogy of the human body. He emphasizes, often, that there are no unimportant parts in the Body of Jesus Christ. They, like the many parts of the human body, are all different and are all vital. Yes, they all have different functions which sometimes change as the years go by. Still, all are necessary or our Creator would not have put them there! Paul comes back to this subject in his first letter to the Corinthians:

**For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ... For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need: but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all gifts of healings? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?**  
**(I Corinthians 12:12; 14-30 ASV)**

Could the Body of Jesus Christ survive if all its members had the same function? God, through the apostle Paul, answers "No." If we were all ministers, who would look after the many other indispensable duties? Some have thought that the only necessary functions of the regular membership are to "pray and pay." This is not true at all. Look around at your fellow members. Look at the many important and crucial jobs they are doing to serve God and His people: visiting the sick, booking and preparing meeting halls, entertaining, sending cards to the bereaved, performing special music, operating sound systems, planning social and youth activities, etc. I could go on and on. All these things are important for the smooth functioning of the Body of Jesus Christ. The fact that God has given different jobs to us all should bring unity and growth, not division. Let's hear from the apostle Paul again on this:

**From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:16 ASV)**

**And not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increasing with the increase of God. (Colossians 2:19 ASV)**

These two verses accentuate the unity that is absolutely necessary in the Body of Jesus Christ. The member who is looking after the sound system must be unified with the member who is writing cards to the sick. Both are to be unified with their pastor who, although his job might be different to theirs and his office is to be respected, is not to consider himself superior to those he serves (I Peter 5:1-3). We are all fellow-members of the church of God.

So, let me ask you again: Are you important to God and His Work? Yes, you are. If you are faithfully and uncomplainingly doing the job that God has called you to do, you may be confident that you are an important member of His Church.

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