

Church Membership For Reformed Believers
Speech #3: The Reformed Believer's Duties Within His Congregation

Speech Outline:

1. Introduction
2. Maintain the Marks of a Faithful Believer
3. Faithful Attendance of the Means of Grace
4. Maintain the Promises of Confession of Faith
5. Maintain Active Membership in a True Congregation
6. Live and Lead a Godly, Thankful Life
7. Bear One Another's Burdens
8. Have Regular Bible and Prayer Devotions
9. Have a Desire for Reformed Education of the Youth
10. Conclusion

1. Introduction:

- a. Heidelberg Catechism, LD 21, Q. 55, "What do you understand by the 'communion of the saints'?"
- b. A.55, "That all and everyone who believes, being members of Christ, are, in common, partakers of Him and of all His riches and gifts...."
- c. A. 55, "...secondly, that everyone must know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of other members."

The Reformed Believer's Duties Within His Congregation

2. Maintain the marks of a faithful Christian.

- a. Belgic Confession, art. 29, (2nd paragraph), "...With respect to those who are members of the church, they may be known by the marks of Christians, namely by faith; and when they have received Jesus Christ the only Savior, they avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbor, neither turn aside to the right or left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof.
- b. "But this is not to be understood as if there did not remain in them great infirmities; but they fight against them through the Spirit all the days of their life, continually taking refuge in the blood, death, passion, and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom they have remission of sins through faith in Him."

3. Attend the means of grace weekly.

- a. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)
- b. "First, that the ministry of the Gospel and the schools be maintained, and that I, especially on the sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God, to hear His Word, to use the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Name of the Lord, and contribute to the relief of the poor, as becomes a Christian." (HC, LD 38)

4. Keep the promises of public confession of faith.

- a. Question #1, "Do you acknowledge the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the articles of the Christian faith and taught here in this Christian Church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation?"

- b. Question #2, “Have you resolved by the grace of God to adhere to this doctrine; to reject all heresies repugnant thereto; and to lead a new, godly life?”
 - c. Question #3, “Will you submit to church government, and in case you should become delinquent (which may God graciously forbid) to church discipline?”
- 5. Maintain an active and faithful membership in a true church (congregation, denomination).**
- a. “...hereby the true church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself.” (BC, art. 29)
 - b. The Reformed believer must remain consciously connected to the 3 special, authoritative offices of the church since they correspond to his spiritual office of believer (i.e. prophet, priest, and king).
 - c. The Reformed man must be ready to serve as an officebearer, and the believing woman must be ready to serve as the faithful wife of an officebearer.
- 6. Live a new, godly, and thankful life.**
- a. Live a thankful and antithetical life. (Genesis 5:24a)
 - b. Live by faith as a pilgrim and stranger in this life. (Hebrews 11:13-14; Hebrews 13:14)
 - c. Live in the single state in chastity. (Ephesians 5:3)
 - d. Marry in the Lord and the Reformed truth. (I Corinthians 7:39)
 - e. Live faithfully within marriage. (Ephesians 5:22ff)
 - f. Raise his children, if given by God, in the fear and in the admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)
 - g. His whole life of obedience performed by true faith out of the motive of thanksgiving to God.
- 7. Bear one another’s burdens.**
- Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”
- 8. Maintain regular devotions.**
- I Timothy 4:4-5, For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.”
- 9. Promote Reformed education for the covenant youth.**
- a. Psalm 78:5b-7, “...that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.”
 - b. Genesis 18:19a, “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah....”
 - c. Article 21 of the Church Order (PRCA), “The consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant.”
- 10. Conclusion:**
- a. We must fulfil these duties with the goal that the church function as a pillar and ground of the truth. “...But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” (I Timothy 3:15)
 - b. Who is sufficient of himself for these things?