

Accountability Is Scriptural

James 5:13-16

James 5:13-16 (NASB)

¹³ “Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

¹⁵ and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

There are plenty of biblical directives about making ourselves accountable to one another. But for many, the idea of revealing personal information seems restrictive or even an invasion of privacy. Such confession may feel like a hindrance to the pursuit of pleasure, prosperity, and prestige. Most people prefer to keep to themselves and not involve others in their business.

The Bible, however, makes it clear that Christians are to be mutually supportive and accountable: “**Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed**” ([James 5:16](#)).

Accountability in the body of Christ is a biblical principle. Church members take direction from their pastor ([Hebrews 13:17](#)).

Hebrews 13:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ “Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

Paul tells us to be subject to one another ([Ephesians 5:21](#)); yet he was answerable to the church ([Acts 14:27](#)), just as Timothy was subordinate to him ([1 Timothy 4:13-16](#)).

Ephesians 5:21 (NASB)

²¹ “And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

Acts 14:27 (NASB)

²⁷ “When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they *began* to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.”

1 Timothy 4:13-16 (NASB)

¹³ “Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching.

¹⁴ Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

¹⁵ Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

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¹⁶ Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”

The apostles were certainly under the authority of Jesus ([Luke 10](#)), even as Jesus was subject to the Father ([John 8:28-29](#)).

John 8:28-29 (NASB)

²⁸ “So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

²⁹ And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

Of course, the Bible tells us that the whole church is obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ ([Ephesians 5:24](#)).

Ephesians 5:24 (NASB)

²⁴ “But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.”

Regardless of one’s position, everybody is accountable to somebody. And this holds true for the entire family of faith, from the congregation to the ministers to Jesus Himself, who serves God the Father.

People avoid accountability for various reasons, including pride, ignorance, fear, and self-reliance. This is a dangerous approach to life. Our enemy knows our weaknesses and how to exploit them. But we can prevail with the support of friends. There is strength in the body of Christ.