

Accountability Explained

Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21)

Confess your sins to each other
and pray for each other (James 5:16)

Do not lie to each other (Colossians 3:9)

Accountability is one of those eyebrow-raising words. Besides sounding a bit cultish, accountability runs against the grain of our self-sufficient, individualistic society. We like to be our own person, do our own thing, and not have someone else tell us what to do or believe.

God however saysso in **Christ**, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Rom. 12:5)

Our connectedness means we must lay aside the island mentality. We do not stand independent of one another.

As it is. there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. (1 Cor. 12:20-21. 26)

Because such interdependency exists within the Body of Christ, we are responsible to one another to do our part and to help them do theirs.

Some people shy away from the concept of accountability because they associate it with confrontation. While rebuking, challenging, warning, and admonishing may be necessary at times, accountability also yields support, counsel, encouragement, and affirmation.

If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!(Eccl.4:10) .

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

(Eccl. 4:12)

There are benefits beyond the support described in Ecclesiastes 4.

What's in it for ME?

James 5:16 indicates that healing is in store for the person who puts himself in a place of accountability. What's in it for others?

Colossians 3:9-10 states that it is a reflection of the new life we have in Christ which is a wonderful testimony to the world around us.

What's in it for God?

Ephesians 5:21 lets us know that Christ is honoured through it because this kind of accountability is the backbone of unity.

God designed the Body of Christ to function best when its members are there for each other in ways that spur them on and hold them responsible to the commitment they have made to follow Christ. How are these authentic, accountable relationships developed and maintained? Following are some suggestions.

Be patient Accountability is best built over time and as a natural outgrowth of relationship.

Be deliberate. Accountability is most likely to happen in small group settings or one-on-one not by merely attending a Sunday morning worship service.

Be vulnerable. Accountability requires you to take risks at being transparent.

Be real. Accountability comes out of depth of relationship. You can't stay on the surface and expect to experience the benefits.

Be willing to spend time with one another. Accountability requires that people communicate with one another and that translates into time.

Be teachable. Accountability is a learning process. Defensiveness and pride breaks it down.