The Importance Of Our Individual Relationship To God.
Romans 14:11,12

Introduction:
A. The relationship of each person to God is the point of emphasis in the New Testament
   a. Each stands on his own. (Rev. 3:4; Gal. 6:4-10)
   b. Each to be judged on his own. (Rom. 14:4-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:1-5).
B. The relationship between each individual to God may be replaced in our emphasis.
   1. We tend to follow society in emphasizing group action and responsibility.
      a. Tend to think of church’s responsibility rather than my responsibility.
      b. Tend to look to “church” to solve problems rather than individual study and action.
      c. Tend to shift most of responsibility for lost and wayward to church.
   2. We tend to look more to relationship to church than personal relationship to God.
      a. Tend to look to “church” to assign and guide us in Lord's work.
      b. Tend to think of relationship to church than to God--what church teaches or allows.
C. Relationship between each individual and God is basic to the “church’s” relationship to God.

Discussion:
I. Individual Christians Make Up The Universal Church.
   A. They share a common salvation. (Jude 3; Acts 2:47; Heb. 12:23).
   B. They share a common faith. (Tit. 1:4; cf. 1 Cor. 4:17).
   C. They work only as individuals in the Lord’s work.
      1. No joint fund, oversight, nor work.
      2. Each fulfills individual responsibility. (Gal. 6:6; Jas. 1:27).
II. Individual Christians Make Of Each Local Church.
   A. Individuals joined together at a given place.
      1. No part of larger organization.
      2. Not “a congregation of the church of Christ”.
   B. Bound together for mutual edification and joint action.
      1. Mutual edification either by joint or reciprocal action:
         a. Teaching and preaching. (Eph. 4:11-16).
         b. Worshipping together in assembly. (Heb. 10:25; 1 Cor. 12-14)
         c. Discipline (1 Cor. 5:4).
      2. Joint action by pooling resources.
         a. To support preaching. (Phil. 4:4)
         b. To support needy saints. (Acts 11:26; 1 Cor. 16:1,2).
   C. Working together as church requires actions of each individual.
      1. Some things done by individuals rather than as the church. (1 Tim. 5:16).
      2. Some things done by individuals acting together as the church. (Eph. 4:16).
         a. Church work is combined action of individuals as the group.
         b. Individual work is work done independently of the group.
   D. Working together as the church still requires individual initiative.
      1. Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:28).
      2. Contribution. (1 Cor. 16:1,2; Acts 11:29).

Conclusion:
A. Helps greatly to understand this basic principle.
   1. Keeps us from making unnecessary judgments. (Rom. 14:4-12).
   2. Keeps us from over reacting to judgment from others. (1 Cor. 4:1-5).
   3. Makes us aware we must obey God regardless of others.
   4. Makes us aware we will be judged as individuals not as a church.
   5. Causes us to look to Christ, not church, as savior and authority.
   6. Causes us to do our duty without waiting to be told by church.
B. Takes nothing away from the importance of the church, properly understood.
   1. Universal church a host of saved individuals–each serving God independently.
   2. Local church a group of saved individuals working together as a unit–or group.