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First things first
A.W. Tozer

A Chicago minister got his name in the papers by his efforts to persuade all the members of his congregation to vote. No w good Christian citizens should vote, but that is each person's private business. I do not intend to needle non-voters—except to remind them that, by and large, we get the kind of leaders we deserve. I am much more deeply concerned a bout people's relationships to God and about believers' continuing spiritual lives. Before there were Democrats and R epublicans, or Tories and Whigs, or Socialists and Christian Fronts, there was God. And before men and women ever kn ew the privilege of the ballot, there was God.

There is no doubt in my mind that a person's relationship to God must come first—absolutely! After that comes his or her relationship to others, followed by such matters as service for our Lord and habits of life.

What about corporate prayer? It is a high Christian privilege to pray for one another within each local church body and th en for other believers throughout the world. As a Christian minister, I have no right to preach to people I have not prayed for. That is my strong conviction.

Some like to shy away from the word duty. But I have a duty to pray for those who are striving to walk with God in the fell owship of the church. A frisky young colt in the pasture knows nothing about duty. But that colt's well-trained, hard-wor king mother in the harness pulling a wagon or a plow is well acquainted with duty. The colt only knows freedom; the wor k horse knows duty.

I cannot help but wonder if our inordinate desire for freedom and our strange fear of duty have had an effect upon the lif e of the church. People ought to consider it a privilege as well as a sacred duty to pray for their church and for others wh o are included in the fellowship of the Christian faith.

I know there are those who attend churches where there is never any appeal or desire to engage in effectual prayer for others. Church members can recite the name of their church, the date it was organized and what part it plays in the "rel igious community." But that is not enough. Strictly speaking, no one can bring a true segment of the body of Christ into being simply through organization.

From:
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