
Words of Truth

A Congregation Exists For Reasons Other Than Worship

By: Brian A. Yeager

So very often I have talked with people that are “looking for a congregation to worship with.” In this line of thinking, people are only concerning themselves with what is going on in the “worship service” when considering if a congregation is sound or not. To top it off, people then want to know what is being preached and who is doing the preaching as though that is the most important thing during a “worship service”. Certainly, all of those things matter (John 4:20-24, Philippians 3:2-3, I Timothy 1:3-7, II John 1:9-11, and Revelation 2:14-16). However, even if a congregation has a Scriptural “worship service” including “sound teaching”, that congregation can be completely and wholly in error (Revelation 2:1-7).

A congregation of the Lord’s people (a.k.a. the church; the assembly), is not just a people with a location for worship. Yes, the faithful local church assembles to worship (Acts 20:7-11, I Corinthians 11:23-33, Ephesians 5:19, etc.). However, there is much more involved in God’s reasoning for the local church to exist. Let’s start by considering that even in assembling together, the church has more to do than just worship God.

Assembling For Purposes Aside From Worship

One of the duties we have toward each other as Christians is to help one another to stay faithful to the Lord (Hebrews 3:13) and part of that is done through our assembling together (Hebrews 10:22-25). If a brother or sister in Christ were to err from the faith, they should be able to depend on their brethren to aid them in being restored (Galatians 6:1 and James 5:19-20). This may bring about a time wherein the congregation, as a whole, must assemble aside from worship to act in regard to an erring saint (Matthew 18:15-17). That means, the local church has some reason to exist and assemble aside from worship. There is more too.

The local church is supposed to assemble to be taught and such is not specific only to the first day of the week and/or worship assemblies (Acts 14:21-22). The fact is, sometimes the church will be called upon to assemble at times that were not already planned for the purpose of hearing about the work of the Lord (Acts 14:24-28). So, the church assembles for reasons aside from worship and discipline. Yet still, there is more to it.

Sometimes things are brought into question and studies must be conducted to find the truth. This may happen aside from the normal assembling of the local church. In such

cases, special studies and even meetings of the congregation must occur to discuss and handle the problems that may arise from such questions and/or errors (Acts 15:1-35). Thus, we now have three reasons for the church to assemble that are in addition to worship services to the Lord. As you can probably guess, we could keep adding on too (i.e. I Corinthians 16:1-4). Rather than adding on reasons to assemble, let's take another approach in seeing that there is more to the local church than just an assembly for worship.

The Church Has Purposes Beyond Worshiping God

If a congregation exists only to serve as an assembly for worship, that congregation is erring in many ways. For one, back to a context you should have already looked at twice in this article, what about having qualified leadership in a congregation in the form of elders (Acts 14:23 and I Timothy 3:1-7)? If there are no elders, what is being done to correct that (Titus 1:5-9)? How can a congregation of sheep be properly led without qualified shepherds in place (I Peter 5:1-4)? The work it takes to appoint elders has much more involved than just assembling to worship (again, Titus 1:5-9)!

The church is to be a spiritual family (Ephesians 3:15). That family needs to know each other and work together (Ephesians 4:16). We are called brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers for many reasons (Matthew 12:46-50, Romans 16:1-4, I Timothy 5:1-2, Titus 2:3-6, etc.). Being able to help one another requires knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses to lawfully compensate for those weaknesses (I Corinthians 12:14-27). How is that accomplished if the congregation exists only for a place to worship? When do brethren get to know each other when their time together is limited to formalities?

The spiritual work of supporting and edifying each other goes beyond songs, prayers, remembering the Lord's death, etc. (I Thessalonians 5:11-14). In our Bible discussions together, we have to be studying things that are relevant to current needs within the local congregation. Knowing about those needs and being able to discuss them does not happen in a service dedicated to the worship of God. How can we rejoice and weep together if we have no idea of what's going on with each other (Romans 12:15)? The spiritual support we are to gain from one another, in collective situations, requires more than just a worship service.

Conclusion

So many have become content in our generation by finding a group of people to "worship with". What those people are finding is NOT the Lord's church. The real body of Christ is much more involved in the spiritual matters of each other than just assembling together for worship. The local church is supposed to be members one of another (Romans 12:5). The church is not just about worship, but about membership. The church is a community to belong to, not just visit. Be a working PART of the church!
