

Let's Take a Vote

Suppose that next Sunday morning after worship, we all stayed for a few minutes to cast our votes on an important issue. Here's the question for consideration: Should the Lord's church in this location cancel all worship services except the one on Sunday morning as well as all Bible classes? It would be a simple yes or no vote. Either you're for cancelling all services but one or you're against the notion. Which would you choose? (Of course, some might want them all cancelled, but that's material for another article.)

Actually, we would have no authority to take such a vote. The elders have determined that Sunday morning and Wednesday evening Bible classes and Sunday evening worship are for the spiritual benefit of the members. Since the elders are responsible for the spiritual direction of the congregation (I Peter 5:2-3), it is well within their God-given power to set aside these times and insist that all members be faithful in attendance. As members, it is our charge to heed Paul's exhortation regarding our relationship to elders. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17).

Why would we even want to take such a vote? Adding up just the time spent in worship and Bible classes, we find only a paltry four hours per week taken out of our schedules. Even if we factor in the time it takes to get to the church building, arriving early and staying after for awhile to enjoy the fellowship of the saints and then driving home, we're still giving less than 5% of our week to these soul-building efforts. How much do we value our souls (Mark 8:37)? If Christians are to be sacrificial in the giving of our time, talents and money (and we are – Mark 8:35, et al.), how can we even begin to think of so few hours per week as sacrificial? We need to give God much more time than the time we devote to worship and Bible classes, but are we guilty of not even giving Him these few hours?

Let's go back to the scenario painted in the opening paragraph. Although we wouldn't have a voting session like that, the fact of the matter is that far too many Christians vote against the other times of assembling every week. Each time that a child of God ignores worship services and Bible classes, he or she is casting a vote to shut them down altogether. Maybe they wouldn't be so brash as to come right out and say we should no longer have these worship times and Bible classes, but what is the difference between saying it with words and showing it with actions?

The arguments against additional times of assembling are numerous. "I only have to come once a week." "I don't need that extra time in worship and Bible study." We could keep on going with these arguments, but what's the point? None of them bespeaks a person who loves God and who wants to worship Him, learn more about Him and be with His people as often as possible. Now, that may make some folks quite angry. So be it. The truth is that a faithful Christian is never trying to see how little he or she can do but is instead looking for more and more opportunities to learn, to grow, to teach and to influence for the Lord. Faithful Christians don't argue against these opportunities. They seek them out.

One's justification of his or her purposeful absence from worship services and Bible classes must be addressed to God. It is a waste of time and energy to argue with fellow Christians about why one doesn't attend these other times of assembling. He or she should take it to the Lord and tell Him why He is not deserving of this time. Of course, God won't audibly answer now, but each of us will give answer to Him in judgment (II Corinthians 5:7). Kneeling before the mighty God who gave the best of heaven in sacrifice for our sins, do we really want to try to explain why we gave Him less than we could have?

Mike Gifford
Gifford7777@yahoo.com