

Church – The Beginnings, Part 67

The Gathering of the Disciples

02/11/2018

NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Acts 20:17-21 - ¹⁷From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. ¹⁸And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and **TEACHING** you **PUBLICLY** and from **HOUSE** to **HOUSE**,²¹ solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20: 32 - And now I **COMMEND** you to God **AND** to the **WORD** of His grace, which is able to **BUILD YOU UP** and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Hebrews 10:23-25 - ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is **FAITHFUL**; ²⁴ and let **US** consider how to stimulate **ONE ANOTHER** to love and good deeds, ²⁵ **NOT FORSAKING OUR OWN ASSEMBLING TOGETHER**, as is the **HABIT** of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the **DAY** drawing near.

Acts 2:42 (ref. vv 42 thru 47 in context)

And they **CONTINUED STEADFASTLY** in the apostles' doctrine and **FELLOWSHIP**, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Matthew 6:31-34 (focus on vs. 33 – giving some context)

³¹ "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father **KNOWS** that you **NEED** all these things. ³³ **BUT** seek **FIRST** the **KINGDOM** of God **AND** His **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, and **ALL** these things **SHALL BE** added to you.

³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

(other refs: Eph. 4:11-16; Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12 thru 14; James 5:16)

The Focus: Review from Acts 2 thru Acts 20 – The Gathering:

1. **The Priorities – All Hands On-Deck – Everyone must be involved:**
 - a. **The MISSION** of Spreading the Gospel and Making Disciples ... from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the Uttermost Parts of the Earth (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20)
 - b. **Gathering and Feeding the Flock / Shepherding the Flock – The Gathering. Disciples are Made, Grown, & Multiplied ... They are Gathered into Groups (Large and Small Groups, Public and In-Home Gatherings → Acts 2:42-47, 5:42, 20:20)**
 - Temple / Solomon's Porch – Public (Acts 2:46) Worship & Teaching
 - In-Home – Acts 2:46-47 – Teaching, Relationships, One Anothers
2. **Without the Gathering of the Disciples – there is NO Church**
3. **Is this a Command? Hebrews 10:23-25**
 - a. **vs. 23 – Individual Responsibility – Personal Relationship – go into your closet and pray – and show you faith publicly.**
 - b. **vs. 24 – Relational-based Group gathering, small group, in-home group – focus on "one anothers" → "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds." – similar to our LIFE Groups – a "must" gathering.**
 - c. **vs. 25 → Large Group – similar to the Old Testament "Holy Convocation" – referencing the Public Gatherings of Israel when the Torah was read. When all people gather to the Temple, etc. "Do Not Forsake our own assembling together" ... similar to our Sunday Worship Celebration. Is this a Command? YES it is. It is NOT an encouraging "holy" suggestion – such as: "assemble**

together” when it fits your schedule – or - “assemble together” when you are in the mood - or - “assemble together” when you feel like – or - “assemble together” unless you are working – or – “assemble together” when → “fill in the blank” ...

**Who was Exempt from these Public Gathering in the O.T.?
So ... what are the implications, here? What Excuses?**

4. **What was the Attitude of the First Followers of Christ on the Day of Pentecost? Acts 2:42 (reference Acts 42, 46-47)**

“And they CONTINUED STEADFASTLY ... ” (NKJV) – “They were CONTINUALLY DEVOTING themselves” To the Apostles’ Doctrine/Teachings AND to FELLOWSHIP ...

Gathered and Participating, TOGETHER, CONSISTENTLY.

5. **But, what about ? Do the Excuses hold up to what Jesus said in Matthew 6:31-34?**

Today, the two main excuses are Entertainment and Work.

As we’ve seen before, on a rotational basis, some folks were exempt from these Public, Holy Convocational Gatherings.

- a. **Watchmen on the Wall** (Police, Firefighters, Emergency Health Workers, and the Military, etc.)
- b. **The Religious Leaders on Duty** (i.e. the High Priest, etc.)
- c. **Those who were sick or young mothers nursing babies or having babies, or related, etc.**

So, how does Christ address obeying His commands?

What were people using excuses in His day?

Same excuses people use today: that which we can obtain from working with our hands, from our jobs: **Food, Clothing and Shelter** – got to pay the bills, right? They figured God would not care about this.

They would be dead wrong. Jesus said so.

Did Jesus let people off on those needs? NO.

People were, and still are, required to **Seek first God’s Kingdom** (God being King in every area of one’s life) and **His Righteousness** (doing the right thing, living the right way, thinking the right way, having the right attitudes – all in accordance with God’s Right way of living, thinking, attitudes, etc. – **what He says is right**). If we do that (conditional) then He will Provide for us.

It is as simple as that.

So, back to our **Gathering Together** – are there any **excuses** other than those **listed/legitimate exemptions** – for not gathering together – Publicly - AND – from House to House? (again – not talking about rare occasional misses, such as vacations, etc.) Is this a consistent missing (forsaking), based upon personal, accountable decisions made – in lieu of knowing these Biblical Principles?

Thus, **how we make our decisions speaks volumes** as to our Devotion and Love we have for God in the simplest ways. Is our Aim in Life to Please Jesus Christ, alone, or are we living for ourselves – to seek to meet our own needs – our way – with a diminished view of God’s Word and His Will for our lives? **Do we view ourselves as victims of circumstances or as Victorious in Christ, Warriors for Christ – obeying God despite the consequences, trusting God that He will Provide our needs if we simply Obey Him out of Loving Trust? Our Decisions we make – tell a lot about how or if we even Trust God and want to Obey Him. (Selah)**