

Why Do We Gather?

Acts 19:30-32

Introduction: Crowds gather at church buildings each Lord's day. Do you think many, if not most of them, know why they come together? You say, "That's a silly question. Of course they know why they gather." Consider with me the crowd that gathered in Acts 19:23-41. Demetrius, a silversmith and one who feared that Paul would ruin his trade, worked up a crowd that gathered in a theater (Acts 19:32). Amazingly, most of this crowd didn't know why they gathered! In fact, they had no reason for their gathering (Acts 19:40). It seems that most of these people let their emotions get away from them. They gathered for an emotional reason. Do we gather on the first day of the week for an emotional reason? Again, do we know why we come together?

Many people come to services for emotional reasons. When Brother Impressive is speaking, they are excited to be there. But what happens when Brother Unimpressive speaks? Do they want to be at services?

Perhaps you have heard the pleasantries offered after services about how much our members enjoyed being at church. But what happens when they don't enjoy the services? Do they come to church anyway?

I. Church is not about pleasing people (Gal. 1:10)!

A. Yet, some of our brethren act as if it is about pleasing themselves.

1. Some brethren don't like singing, so they don't try to sing.
2. Other brethren may find prayers too long so they don't pray along.
3. Still others find the sermons boring, so they doze during the lesson.

B. Our actions suggest we would rather be somewhere else.

II. Church is about pleasing God!

A. We are commanded to worship Him (Luke 4:8).

B. It's not that He needs us to worship Him (Acts 17:24-25).

1. It's because we need Him! He gives us everything we need including our lives and our breath.
2. He is the creator and we are the creatures. He deserves our love and respect!

III. Church is about building each other up spiritually.

A. 1 Cor. 14:15-17

1. We should edify one another in our prayers, in our songs, in our giving thanks to God. The acts of worship are what builds us up (edifies).

2. As Paul suggests here, do we understand what we sing? Do we listen when the prayers are being offered? Are we truly thankful when we don't even say "Amen" to a prayer?

B. Heb. 10:24-25

1. This "assembling" is from the same Greek word used to describe our gathering together with Christ in the end (2 Thess. 2:1). A virtual gathering is not the equivalent! If our coming together with Christ is required when He returns, then our coming together **in one location** is also required when we assemble.

2. We should gather together to stir up love and good works in one another.

3. We should gather together to exhort one another. Exhort means "to call to a person, to entreat, to admonish, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct... looking to the future" (Vines). What should we exhort one another to do? We are to love, to do good works and to assemble together.

IV. Why then do we assemble together?

A. To break bread (Acts 20:7).

B. To hear God's word even if it is a long-winded sermon (Acts 20:8-12; Mark 2:1-2).

C. To pray (Acts 12:12; 4:31).

D. To be with Christ and to receive His blessings (Matt. 18:19-20).

E. To edify through songs and teaching (1 Cor. 14:26; 2 Cor. 12:19).

F. To discipline the wayward (1 Cor. 5:4).

V. A profound lesson - Parable of the Unprofitable Servant (Luke 17:7-10).

A. Even when we gather for the right reasons, we are still unprofitable to God because we are only doing that which is our duty to perform!

B. It's unfortunate when we can't even do our duty. For example, the coronavirus has caused many churches to close their doors without consulting scriptures. King David made the same mistake when he moved the Ark of the Covenant improperly (1 Chron. 15:12-13). They "*did not consult Him about the proper order.*" David suffered for this error (1 Sam. 15:22-23). God calls disobedience to His commands rebellion and stubbornness that rejects Him. David's reasons were logical and dare I say reasonable. It didn't matter.

Conclusion: "But the hour is coming, and now is..." for true spiritual worship (John 4:23-24). This verse tells us God is looking for those who are willing to worship him! Are you willing to worship God in spirit and in truth? Do you truly want to please God?