

WHY WE DON'T PROVIDE FOOD, FUN, AND FROLIC

by John Isaac Edwards

It has become common to see churches, even some calling themselves churches of Christ, furnishing entertainment and recreation for their members and the world. Why don't we?

1) THE CHURCH IS A SPIRITUAL HOUSE. Peter wrote, *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”* (1 Pet. 2:5). The church is the temple of God. *“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit”* (Eph. 2:20-22). It is not the nature of the Lord's kingdom to be the center of food, fun, and frolic. *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”* (Rom. 14:17). Jesus said, *“My kingdom is not of this world...”* (Jn. 18:36).

2) WE HAVE HOUSES FOR THAT. Acts 2:46 reports, *“And*

they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46). Social meals took place from house to house. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul asked the Corinthians who were feasting with the Lord's supper, *“What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not”* (v. 22). *“And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation....”* (v. 34).

3) NO COMMAND TO PROVIDE IT. We are taught to observe all things commanded by Christ, who has all authority. Jesus said, *“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth...”* and *“...to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...”* (Mt. 28:18-20). Where has Christ directed the church to provide food, fun, and frolic? Churches claiming to be of Christ which provide such ought to be able to furnish a Scripture where Christ authorized His body to furnish entertainment and recreation. Where is the book, chapter, and verse? We have found *“...no such commandment”* (Acts 15:24).

4) NO APPROVED EXAMPLE OF THE EARLY CHURCH PROVIDING IT. Is there an example where the church in the New Testament provided food, fun, and frolic with apostolic approval? If so, where is it? The church not providing entertainment and recreation is not because there were not any forms of it in the first-century. Paul spoke of *“...they which run in a race...”* (1 Cor. 9:24) and *“...if a man also strive for masteries...”* (1 Tim. 2:5). To strive for masteries is to compete in athletics. Though there were athletic events in the first-century, there is no indication the church ever planned, promoted or provided such. Did the church at Jerusalem sponsor a chariot race? Did the church at Corinth have a carnival? Did the churches of Galatia have neighborhood block parties?

5) WE ARE NOT EQUIPPED FOR THAT. Ephesians 4 reveals the gifts of Christ to equip the church for service. *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers”* (v. 11). He did not give cooks, coaches, and clowns! Would you drive to the emergency department of the local hospital, rush in and say, “I have an emergency! Come

quick!" Then hospital personnel run out and ask, "What do you need?" And you say, "My engine is overheating! See the smoke coming out from under the hood?" They do a lot of good work, but they are not equipped for that. Or, would you go to the pharmacy counter and say, "I'll have a hamburger, french fries, and a large coke?" Why not? They are not equipped for that. Nor should we look to the church to provide that which the Lord has not equipped His body to do.

6) IT IS NOT THE WORK OF THE CHURCH. The work of the church as set forth in Ephesians 4:12 consists of "...the perfecting of the saints," "the work of the ministry," and "the edifying of the body of Christ." If this is what you are seeking, we provide that. We are equipped for that. None of these spiritual activities includes entertainment and recreation. Food, fun and frolic is not edification, relief, or evangelism!

7) NO FUNDS FOR THAT. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 mentions "...the collection for the saints..." We read where the church at Philippi "...sent once and again..." to support the

preaching of the gospel (Phil. 4:16). Where were funds of the first-century church set aside or used to provide meals for social or recreational purposes or to furnish entertainment of any kind? Since funds are used for evangelism, edification and relief, that leaves no funds for other endeavors.

8) THE CHURCH IS THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH. Paul wrote Timothy, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). A pillar is that which provides support for something. The church does not exist to provide support for entertainment and recreation. It is not the pillar and ground of food, fun, and frolic; but the pillar and ground of the truth! Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). In His prayer to the Father Jesus stated, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). This is what we provide.

9) THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS THE ATTRACTION. Jesus

declared, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (Jn. 12:32). Paul reminded the Corinthians, "For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). To suggest we need entertainment and recreation to get folks to come and to keep them coming, is to say the cross of Christ is insufficient and ineffective!

10) THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS GOD'S SAVING POWER. Paul informed the saints in Rome, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). If you are looking for gospel preaching, we cordially invite you to come be with us.

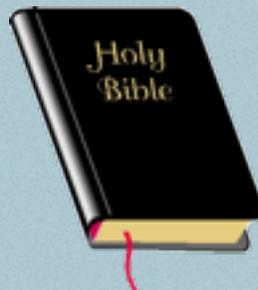
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