

Not Getting Anything Out of the Assembly

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Psalm 122:1

David expressed the attitude we must have when it comes to assembling to worship the Lord – gladness. This ought to be a time we look forward to. Unfortunately, many do not look forward to this (maybe even us at times); yet there is a tendency to blame others for this. Often the excuse is given: “I’m not getting anything out of the assembly.” Is this a legitimate reason for failing to attend as we should? Or is it a reflection of something else?

Problem of Perspective

- The complaint of not getting anything out of the assembly demonstrates a misplaced focus – it elevates SELF above what one ought to think (Romans 12:3)
- Jesus said we are to put God first and others second (Matthew 22:36-40) – this principle applies to the assembly; we come to WORSHIP GOD (John 4:23-24) and to ENCOURAGE OUR BRETHREN (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- When one chooses not to assemble because he doesn’t “get anything out of it,” he does two things – he fails to worship God as he should (and as God deserves) and he fails to encourage his brethren as he should (and as they need)
- It’s not that we should expect to get NOTHING out of the assembly – we just need to be sure our priorities are in order to start with

What We Do in the Assembly

- When we focus on what we are to DO in the assembly, it is clear that the focus is not on SELF
- Singing (Colossians 3:16) – directed to both God and our brethren; sing to God with thankfulness in our hearts; sing to our brethren to teach and admonish them
- Praying (Acts 2:42) – directed to God; also for the benefit of the congregation by offering teaching, encouragement, peace
- Preaching/teaching (Acts 20:7) – directed to the brethren (2 Timothy 4:2); it is profitable for them (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 20:20, 27); also done to glorify God (1 Peter 4:11)
- Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) – primarily to God, remembering the death of Christ; also for others as we proclaim the Lord’s death as a reminder
- Giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) – for God as He “loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7); also for others, “the saints” (1 Corinthians 16:1; 2 Corinthians 9:12-13)

Should We Get Something Out of the Assembly?

- YES – BUT it is a byproduct of what we PUT INTO the assembly
 - Singing – we are taught and admonished
 - Praying – we can obtain the peace of God that surpasses all comprehension (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - Preaching/teaching – we learn or are reminded of the truth of God's word
 - Lord's Supper – we are reminded of the sacrifice of Christ for us
 - Giving – we have fellowship in the work of the church
- Our focus must be on worshipping God and encouraging our brethren (John 4:24; Hebrews 10:24-25) – as a byproduct, we are also taught, admonished, reminded, and encouraged
- There may be times when we are truly not getting what we need out of the assembly – but it should not be because of a lack of effort on our part; it will only be when the church is simply not interested in serving God according to His word; in that case, we would need to find a church that is striving to follow the NT pattern (2 Timothy 1:13)

Conclusion

- Our first questions should always be – what can I do? what can I contribute? how can I help?
- As each part works together, the body will be built up (Ephesians 4:16) – including us