

Do We Really Need the Church?

Part Two

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the Boy Scouts' trying to walk a section of railroad tracks, Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, p. 83.
 - 1. Cooperation is important in so many areas of our lives.
 - a. Children on sports teams learn that in order to win a game they must cooperate with one another.
 - b. In the business world, partners in a firm often cooperate to win client's contract.
 - c. If a marriage is in serious trouble, the partners must work together in order to save the marriage.
 - 2. If we are to accomplish God's work, we in the church need to cooperate.
 - a. Surely the cooperation of believers is a reason that God established the church. Imagine if there were no church — the task of evangelizing the world, caring for the underprivileged, and worshiping God would fall on our shoulders individually.
 - b. The Bible speaks of the necessity of cooperation.
 - 1) "He [Aaron] shall be your [Moses] spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God" (Ex. 4: 16).
 - 2) "The Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them'" (Acts 13:2).
 - c. Cooperation in the church is vital.
 - 1) With the church, we are able to accomplish far more for God than we could by ourselves.
 - 2) Last week, we examined the fellowship of believers as being a reason that God established the church.
- B. This morning, we want to examine the cooperation of believers as being a reason for the establishment of the church.

THE COOPERATION OF BELIEVERS AIDS THE CHURCH IN EVANGELIZING THE WORLD

- A. Before he ascended back to the Father, Jesus told his disciples to evangelize the world.
 - 1. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Mt. 28: 19).
 - 2. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15).
 - 3. "You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
- B. The early church cooperated in preaching the gospel to the world.
 - 1. The early church prayed for those who labored in mission work.
 - a. When the church at Antioch separated Barnabas and Saul for the work the Holy Spirit intended for them, the church fasted and prayed (Acts 13:3).
 - b. For what should we pray?
 - 1) We need to pray for more workers — "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Lk. 10:2).
 - 2) We need to pray that the gospel may spread and be glorified in the workers as well as for the workers' safety (2 Thess. 3:1-2),
 - 3) We need to pray for the boldness of those who preach — "Grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word" (Acts 4:29).
 - 2. The early church sent workers into the field.

- a. The church set an example for this.
 - 1) Phil. 4:15-16.
 - 2) “How shall they preach unless they are sent?” (Rom. 10:15).
- b. It is vital that we send workers into the fields today.
 - 1) We need to give generously to this congregation so that the elders can continue to support good mission efforts — Federico Barrios, Mitchell Vick, the In Search of the Lord s Way TV program.
 - 2) It would be good for us to write these missionaries to let them know we stand behind them, to let them know we pray for them.
 - 3) We need to support those from this congregation who go on oversea trips.
- 3. The early Christians did their share.
 - a. “Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).
 - 1) The apostles were not scattered (Acts 8:1); they remained in Jerusalem.
 - 2) These “ordinary Christians” were scattered, and they preached the word.
 - b. In today’s church, we have a serious problem with individuals doing their share.
 - 1) Too many think, “We pay the preacher, we have elders and deacons, we’ll let them do the church work.”
 - 2) That is the wrong attitude — the preacher, the elders, the deacons will not stand before God for you; you need to be a Christian and serve the Lord by being active in the church.
 - 3) We are beginning a visitation program; find out what you can do, and begin doing your part.
 - 4) Illustration about Jerome Moody drowning in a swimming pool surrounded by lifeguards, Encyclopedia of 15, 000 Illustrations, #11928.
- C. We need to thank God that we have the church so that we can evangelize the world, and we don’t have to do this work alone; we can cooperate.

THE COOPERATION OF BELIEVERS AIDS THE CHURCH IN CARING FOR THE UNFORTUNATE

- A. God expects his people to be a benevolent people, to care for those to whom life has dealt a devastating blow.
 - 1. Mt. 25:34-40.
 - 2. “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).
 - 3. “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).
 - 4. “Do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb. 13:16).
- B. In the early church, Christians pulled their resources together to help those in need.
 - 1. Notice these examples.
 - a. Acts 2:44-45.
 - b. Acts 4:34-35.
 - c. Acts 11:28-30.
 - 2. The point from these texts is this: these early Christians gave money to the church leadership and the leadership distributed those funds as they were needed.
 - 3. The church cooperated to help those who were in need.
 - a. No one Christian had the responsibility of helping those in need.
 - b. The church pulled together and met this need collectively.
 - 4. There are ways that we can help this congregation help those in need:
 - a. We can bring baby items to be taken to the hospital for underprivileged women.
 - b. We can bring pantry items to be given to those who have a hard time having enough food.
 - c. There are times that money must be taken from the church treasury to help a certain need; we

can give generously so that this congregation can continue to meet those needs.

5. Illustration about Christianity being give, give, give, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #4175.
 - a. For you is Christianity give, give, give?
 - b. Are you giving for benevolent needs as you ought?

THE COOPERATION OF BELIEVERS AIDS THE CHURCH IN WORSHIPING GOD

- A. God wants the church to come together and worship him.
 1. “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Mt. 18:20).
 2. “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight” (Acts 20:7).
 3. “My brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another” (1 Cor. 11:33).
 4. We are not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together” (Heb. 10:25).
- B. Why does the Lord want the church to come together to worship him? Why can’t we just worship at home?
 1. This aids the fellowship of believers — not forsaking the assembly allows us to exhort one another (Heb. 10:25).
 2. This allows brethren to be instructed in the Word of God.
 - a. Paul preached to the brethren in Troas (Acts 20:7).
 - b. The message that is preached saves — “It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).
 - c. When the church came together, they read from Scripture that they might receive instruction (Col. 4:16).
 - d. This instruction also takes place through the song service (Col. 3:16).
 3. No doubt, the more people who come to worship, the sweeter the sound to God.
 - a. God desires all the world to worship him: “As I live says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Rom. 14: 11).
 - b. As we assemble to worship, we are helping God realize that dream of having all people worship him.
- C. This congregation needs to do a better job in this regard; we do not have the people faithful in worship that we ought to have.
 1. Far too many of you stay home on Sunday evenings and Wednesday evenings. Why? Do you honestly have something more important to do than worshiping God?
 2. If there are things in our life that are more important than God, we need to make new priorities.
 3. F. B. Meyer said, “I believe that if there is one thing which pierces the Master’s heart with unutterable grief it is not the world’s iniquity, but the church’s indifference.” What about you? Are you indifferent?

CONCLUSION

- A. Thank God for the church! The church aids us in the fellowship of believers and the cooperation of believers.
- B. Illustration about North Carolina Governor Clyde R. Hoey talking with a country preacher, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #1435.
 1. What if he had asked the Lord that question about the church here?
 2. Are you actively cooperating with your brethren for the Lord or are you actively cooperating with your brethren against the Lord?
- C. If you need to begin working for the Lord, why don’t you come as we stand and sing?