

What We Come to Church to Do - Fellowship Pt. 4

August 12, 2018

Ephesians 2:19-21 ESV

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

As the Church, are we functioning according to the foundation that the original Apostles and Prophets laid? Are we today what the Church was originally intended to be?

"Here I would suggest that one of the main secrets of success in the early Church lay in the fact that the early believers believed in unction from on high and not entertainment from men....How did the early Church get the people? By publicity projects, by bills, by posters, by parades, by pictures? No! The people were arrested and drawn together and brought into vital relationship with God, not by sounds from men, but by sounds from heaven...Unction is the dire and desperate need of the ministry today."

—Duncan Campbell, "The Price and Power of Revival", Scottish Pastor and Revivalist, 1898 - 1972

Acts 2:37-47 NASB

37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"

41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

42 They were continually devoting themselves (*proskartereō - continue instant, continue steadfastly, give oneself continually, to persevere and not faint, constantly diligent, wait on constantly*) to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship (*koinōnia - communication, communion, community, joint participation, intercourse, intimacy, a gift jointly contributed*), to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

45 and they [began] selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The Church is an intimate community of:

- **Repentance** - vs. 38 "Repent..."
- **Forgiveness of Sins** - vs. 38 "...be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins..."
- **Receiving the Holy Spirit** - vs. 38 "you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- **Divine Appointment** - vs. 39 "...as many as the Lord will call to Himself..."
- **Holiness and Purity** - vs. 40 "Be saved from this perverse generation."

- **Devotion and Commitment** - vs. 42 "They were continually devoting themselves..."

Acts 2:42-47 NASB

42 They were **continually devoting themselves** (*proskartereō* - continue instant, continue steadfastly, give oneself continually, to persevere and not faint, constantly diligent, wait on constantly) **to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship** (*koinōnia* - communication, communion, community, joint participation, intercourse, intimacy, a gift jointly contributed), **to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**

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The first Christians never saw assembling together as supplemental or optional, but rather foundational and essential, without which Christian life and growth were impossible.

The passionate devotion and fervent commitment to one another in fellowship comes from the clear understanding that the eternal destinies of ourselves and our brothers and sisters are at stake.

- We are responsible to care for each other every day until we all reach heaven, understanding the ferocity of the daily warfare of sin from our flesh, this world and Satan.
- Are you devoted to fellowship and relationship like your's and other's eternities depend on it?

Hebrews 3:12-14 ESV

12 **TAKE CARE** (*blepo* - to see, observe, discern, beware, to direct the mind to), brothers, **LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU an EVIL, UNBELIEVING HEART, LEADING YOU TO FALL AWAY** (*aphistēmi* - withdraw, remove, stand off, fall away, become faithless, keep one's self from) **FROM THE LIVING GOD.**

13 But **EXHORT** (*parakaleō* - beseech 43x, comfort 23x, encourage, strengthen, console, call to one's side) **ONE ANOTHER EVERY DAY**, as long as it is called "today," **that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.**

14 For **WE HAVE COME TO SHARE IN CHRIST, IF INDEED WE HOLD OUR ORIGINAL CONFIDENCE FIRM TO THE END.**

Questions to ask when choosing a church:

1. Are there close, personal relationships where brothers and sisters can see into my life and I into theirs?
2. Is the focus the spiritual preparation for standing before the Lord, either by rapture or by death?

2 Timothy 4:6-8 ESV

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

7 I have fought the good fight, **I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.**

8 Henceforth **THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,** which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all **WHO HAVE LOVED HIS APPEARING.**

Revelation 3:11 ESV

11 I am coming soon. HOLD FAST (krateo - take hold of, seize, to continue to hold, keep faithfully and carefully) **WHAT YOU HAVE,** so that **NO ONE MAY SEIZE YOUR CROWN.**

Hebrews 2:1-4 ESV

1 Therefore **WE MUST PAY MUCH CLOSER** (perissos - beyond measure, exceedingly, extraordinary) **ATTENTION** (prosecho - give attention, apply one's self to, attach one's self to, to be given to, attach one's self, addicted to, devote thought and effort) **TO WHAT WE HAVE HEARD, LEST WE DRIFT AWAY FROM IT.**

2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,

3 **HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT** (ameleo - to be careless with, neglect, make light of, be negligent) **SUCH A GREAT SALVATION?** It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard,

4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

What would cause us to fall away from God?

Mark 4:14-20 ESV

14 The sower sows the word.

15 And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.

17 And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when **TRIBULATION** or **PERSECUTION** arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

- "The cost is higher than I'm willing to pay."

Matthew 26:35 NASB

35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too.

- "God doesn't care. He's not doing what I want."

Mark 4:38 NASB

38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Mark 4:14-20 ESV

18 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word,
19 but the **CARES OF THE WORLD** and the **DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES** and the **DESIRES** (epithymia - desire for what is forbidden, lust) **FOR OTHER THINGS** enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

- The busyness, demands and anxieties of this life.

Luke 14:18 NASB

18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'

- Seduction to wealth, success, pleasure and the things of this life.

2 Timothy 4:10 NASB

10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me...

Mark 4:14-20 ESV

20 But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

The horrific consequences of falling away.

Hebrews 6:1-12 ESV

1 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,
2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
3 And this we will do if God permits.
4 For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit,
5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,
6 and then have **FALLEN AWAY** (parapiptō - fall away, slip aside, to deviate from the right path, wander into error, apostatize), **TO RESTORE** (anakainizō - renew, renovate, restore) **THEM AGAIN TO REPENTANCE**, since they are **CRUCIFYING ONCE AGAIN THE SON OF GOD TO THEIR OWN HARM** and **HOLDING HIM UP TO CONTEMPT**.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 NKJV

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared (kaustēriazō - to mark by branding, branding with the marks of sin, cauterise, to render insensitive or callous, to deaden the feelings, sear) with a hot iron.

Hebrews 6:1-12 ESV

7 For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God.

8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

9 Though we speak in this way, **YET IN YOUR CASE, beloved, WE FEEL SURE OF BETTER THINGS -- THINGS THAT BELONG TO SALVATION.**

10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.

11 And **WE DESIRE EACH ONE OF YOU to SHOW THE SAME EARNESTNESS to HAVE THE FULL ASSURANCE of hope UNTIL THE END,**

12 so that **YOU MAY NOT BE SLUGGISH** (nōthros - lazy, slow, sluggish, dull), **BUT IMITATORS OF THOSE WHO THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES.**

1 Corinthians 9:27 ESV

27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Hebrews 12:14-17 NASB

14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

Philippians 3:10-14 ESV

10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Being ready to meet the Lord face to face, to attain to the resurrection from the dead, does not mean that sin is eradicated from your life, but that rather, when you do sin, you don't give up pursuing God. It means you put the sin behind you and strain forward.

God's design for keeping us on track.

Hebrews 10:24-27 ESV

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,

25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

26 For if we go on sinning deliberately (hekousiōs - voluntarily, willing, of one's own accord - to sin willfully as opposed to sinning from weakness or ignorance) after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

- The sin which forfeits our salvation is both:
 - repeated
 - willful and deliberate

Are we as passionate and fervent for our brothers and sisters as Paul was for the Thessalonians?

1 Thessalonians 3:5-10 ESV

5 For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you--

7 for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith.

8 For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord.

9 For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God,

10 as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

2 Corinthians 7:5-7 ESV

5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn--fighting without and fear within.

6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.

Romans 1:11-12 ESV

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you--

12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.