

Philosophy of What the Purpose of the Church Gathering Is For

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The assembling of Christians to worship God corporately is, in fact, the high point of the believer's week! Nothing is more like heaven than when true believers gather together to worship the one, true God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit! With that said, the corporate meeting of the saints is *not* primarily focused on the nonbeliever. It should never be! The purpose of the church is to worship God. And only believers can worship God rightly through Jesus Christ who have been regenerated by the Spirit. Thus, the gathering should never be about entertainment of men but the exaltation of God! It must never be about trying to get people in but worshipping God who already dwells in His redeemed! *In this write-up, we provide 4 purposes of the gathering of the church body.*

1. Exalting God.

The focus of corporate worship *must* be on God -- and Him alone. The spotlight should *never* be on the preacher, a band, the musicians and talents, or getting people in the doors and keeping them in the numbers. Rather, the church first and foremost is about God. Paul said: 'we proclaim Him' (Col 1.28). Everything about the ancient Tabernacle had God at the very center, even the very layout of the tent structure itself demonstrated this. So then, when believers come together to worship on Sundays, on Wednesdays, and whenever else, the primary focus is to *exalt* God and to *magnify* God and to *make much* of Him! One can ascertain within a handful of minutes whether or not a 'church service' has as the primary mission to exalt God or something (anything!) else. Come together to meet with God!

2. Preaching the Word.

The greatest way to honor God and magnify Him is to *hear* from Him. The way that we hear from God today is through the reading and preaching of the Scriptures. A church meeting glorifies God in so far as the Word of God, the written truth contained in the books of Holy Scripture, dictates what is done in worship and the theo-centric nature of worship, and the reverential atmosphere in worship. When the Bible is read, God is talking. When the preacher is faithfully expounding a text, God is speaking. Just as we need food for nourishment, strength, and life, so every spiritual child needs the regular feeding of the word of God faithfully preached by a man of God. Jesus emphasized this repeatedly to Peter: *feed, shepherd, tend* my sheep (John 21). So gather to *hear from God!*

3. Equipping the Saints.

The wise and sovereign God has given leaders to His people for the 'equipping of the saints' for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ (Eph 4.12). This means that when believers gather together, there should be a strengthening and an equipping that takes place every time the assembly is corporately gathered for worship. And the way to equip the saints is by nourishing God's people with the Word of God and filling them with God's truth so that believers stand ready to worship Him privately, publically, corporately, and even hourly! Believers gather to be equipped and scatter to engage in spiritual combat. We leave the corporate meetingplace to reach out to the lost and seek to win the lost to the Savior! So we equip and instruct and feed and preach God's truth to equip the saints.

4. Fellowship and Upbuilding.

Believers must have fellowship. And the fellowship that Christians enjoy centers on the gospel message and the commonality that is found in Christ. From the preaching, to the singing, to the conversations, to the Scripture readings, to the praying, to the ordinances, everything is to be done for the 'building up of one another' (Rom 14.19). The church meeting is to all be for the upbuilding of the saints (2 Cor 12.19). Through the power of the Spirit, by the power of the Word, in the consideration and remembrance of Christ, the body gathers for fellowship and upbuilding!