

# Why Do We Meet

Neil Girrard

In one of the few places where the KJV actually uses the word “assembly” (instead of “church”) to translate the Greek word *ekklesia* [1577], Luke records, “Some [of those who had rushed into the theater] therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly (*ekklesia*) was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together.” (Acts 19:32) Demetrius the silversmith had stirred up the people and gathered the assembly to discuss what to do with Paul and the Christians (Acts 19:24-29) and the assembly was so confused that most of them did not even know why they had gathered. This is a perfect picture of the modern “church.” Few, if any, seem to remember or even know what the mission of the genuine *ekklesia* is.

Put simply, the *ekklesia* is to be spiritually able and equipped to attend to the issues and affairs of Christ’s kingdom of light. Thus, when we come together, the key item on the agenda is not to have a time of worship or to hold a Bible study or to hear a “sermon” that titillates our ears (2 Tim. 4:3-4) but rather to, in some real way, further the kingdom of God in our midst. In practical terms, the *ekklesia* then should be focusing on:

- Hearing and doing the wishes and commands of the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:22, etc.) The kingdom of God comes into our midst when we obey Christ and God through the leading of His Spirit. (Mt. 6:10, Rom. 8:14, etc.) Until the Lord is truly the Lord over any assembly, there is no possibility of furthering the kingdom of God. As valuable as corporate worship, Bible studies and spiritual messages may be, if they replace the headship of Christ over the assembly, they are out of order. He alone is to be the Administrator (Greek *leitourgos* [3011] director, “liturgy”) of the work performed in the sanctuary that is His people. (Heb. 8:2)

- Producing viable citizens for Christ’s kingdom. Discipleship is virtually a lost art in today’s apostate environment but it is a requirement for any kingdom that its citizens be taught to practice good citizenship according to its laws and ways. In Christ’s kingdom, the primary characteristics are called “the fruit of the Spirit” and they violate the law of no man’s land. (Gal. 5:22-23) These are produced, not by adherence to any list of do-s and don’t-s, but by learning to individually hear and obey the Lord. “My sheep hear My voice,” the Lord said, “and I know them, and they follow Me.” (Jn. 10:27) Those who do not hear His voice and do not follow and obey Him have no right to claim Him as either Lord or *Savior!*

- Meeting the needs of the people of Christ’s kingdom and even of this world. As any assembly practices the headship of Christ Jesus over their activities and as citizens of His kingdom are better equipped and prepared to shine light in their dark worlds, the needs of the people of the assembly and those they interact with will need to be addressed.

Peter wrote, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone serves, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 4:10-11) There are *two* kinds of gifting in view here – speaking and serving – and they are both vitally necessary for a healthy expression of the way of following Christ and God. Yet, the “church” meeting format caters almost exclusively to the speakers and virtually excludes the operation of those who are gifted primarily to serve. Service (actual work, productivity) in the kingdom of God is almost impossible to do at a meeting and it is in this light that meetings can rob the people and divert them from their mission to hear and obey God, disciple others and meet real needs.

These *three* things are the lost mission of the ekklesia. Too many think or act as if the whole purpose of assembling is to sing songs or to talk about the Bible or even just to have meetings so that we may know who each other are. Even the world’s business community knows that having too many meetings is counter-productive to actually getting any work done and that when meetings over-shadow productivity, the business is headed toward a disastrous end. The “church” is in its present straits because it has forsaken the true Head and has settled into a tradition of holding dead meetings that produce nothing of the spiritual life of Christ and which meet no real needs of the people who attend the meetings. What little of Christ is experienced in most “church” meetings is not a function of the “church’s” methodology but a testimony of the transcendence of God who will meet anyone who sincerely and diligently seeks Him in whatever environment he or she is in.

When we learn again to “minister to the Lord” (Acts 13:2, etc.) in the sanctuary of His people (and not in the abominable “sanctuary” of the “church” building that is patterned after the judgment halls, “basilicas,” of the Roman empire), *then* we will see the kingdom of God flourishing in our midst. Until such time, we will continue to witness and experience the apostasy, the great falling away from the faith that must be called churchianity. (2 Ths. 2:3, Mt. 24:10) Those who would “shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Mt. 13:43) must be true sons of the kingdom intent upon furthering their Father’s kingdom and cannot be mere “church”-ites confused as to why they have gathered together, thinking they have assembled to satisfy some purpose or agenda of their own. To further the kingdom of God in our midst is the real mission of the genuine ekklesia – all else is simply some man’s or some demon’s deceptive “church.” The time to choose which entity – the kingdom of God or this world – to which we will belong, is now.

Let he who has ears hear.

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