

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“Will Coffee And Bagels Improve Our Worship?”

By Ken Weliever

“During our years of church planting, we tried to change people’s perceptions about what the Sunday worship would look like,” wrote Michelle Lazurek, in a recent Crosswalk.com article. “We took out pews and replaced them with pub tables and chairs, added lights and a stage and most importantly, the award winning author and preacher’s wife said, “(We) added a breakfast bar where people could grab bagels and other breakfast foods and coffee during the service.” Lazurek admitted, “Not everyone loved the changes.”

Some of the reasons she shared why they added breakfast to worship included, *“It brings us closer together. And of course, it brings us closer to God.”* Also, she said, *“It increases the church’s level of hospitality.”* And, *“It creates opportunities for people to use their gifts for God.”*

It’s amazing the ideas and innovations that church growth experts employ to prod people to attend church. Of course, the thousand-word article failed to contain any Scripture to justify the addition of a breakfast bar.

Disrespect and desecration of the worship service is nothing new. It was a problem that Paul addressed in his letter to the Corinthians. He said there were divisions among them. The factious spirit among Believers had spilled over into their worship. He said their assembly was, “Not for the better but for the worse.” (1 Corinthians 11:17).

One of the specific issues he mentioned was turning the Lord Supper into a common meal. *“When you come together, it is not the Lord’s supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.”* (1 Corinthians 11:20-22 ESV).

Following this, Paul restated the purpose of the Lord’s Supper. It is a time to remember Christ. To remember His broken body hanging on the cross as we eat the bread. To remember His shed blood as we drink the fruit of the vine. To remember the new covenant He established. To remember who we are, why we serve Him, and what the service means to us personally and as a witness to the world, it “proclaims the Lord’s death until He comes again.” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Here are a few thoughts that might help us improve our worship without adding a breakfast bar.

1. Remember We Come Together In A Special Way To Worship God.

Sure, we can praise God and pray to Him anytime, anywhere. But the Bible teaches us that we are “to come together as a church.” (1 Corinthians 11:18). Jesus told the Samaritan woman that the Father is seeking true worshippers to worship Him. (John 4:21-24).

Several years ago a preaching colleague of mine, the late Bill Feist, offered this warning and reminder regarding worship:

“It is time for us to remember, in the midst of self-indulgent period of our nation, that our primary purpose in gathering together is not to please ourselves; or because it is psychologically sound for us to do so; or that it supports the family structure; or that it partakes of traditional family values (though all of these things may be by-products of our gathering together).”

Then Bill emphatically stated, *“Our purpose in gathering together is to prostrate ourselves before the Almighty God of heaven and pay him homage.”*

2. Worship To God Contains Two Important Elements.

Jesus said, *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* (John 4:24). Worship must be accurate, according to God’s Word, which is truth (John 17:17). In reading the New Testament, I find the disciples assembled to take communion, hear the word of God, contribute to the common treasury, pray and sing praises to God (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 2:12; 1 Corinthians 14:15).

Regardless of the term you use to describe these expressions of worship, it is apparent they are according to Truth. Worship must be authentic, genuine, and that emanates from within. Our worship needs to be heart-felt, spirited, and enthusiastic. It is not a time of mere ritual, but fervent and sincere praise to our Creator.

3. Worship Should Edify Other Believers.

Regarding the Sunday assembly, Paul wrote, *“All things are to be done for the edifying of the Body.”* (1 Corinthians 14:26). In our worship, we exhort one another. Motivate one another. Inspire one another. We *“Stimulate one another to love and good works.”* (Hebrews 10:24).

Most Christians living is done outside the assembly. Not everything is collective. Hospitality, for instance, is an individual command (1 Peter 4:9-10). The church can’t do it for me by offering a breakfast bar.

My individual gifts are demonstrated most often in my daily interactions with fellow Christians, as well as non-Christians: being merciful, doing good, sharing my resources, offering encouragement, and ministering “to the least of these.” (Matthew 25:40).

Improved lighting, comfortable seats, and a hot cup of coffee may make us feel cozy— but will do little to stir our hearts, awaken our conscience, and challenge our thinking. The power to convince and convict sinners is in the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16), not coffee and bagels.

"My Thoughts And Appreciation For the Previous Article"

By Brian Meade

Many times I look for articles that express a need or concern for all of us to be aware of at the church at Meeks Street. This particular article shows us the mentality and focus of the social gospel gone awry. The social gospel is more concerned about feeding one’s appetites, rather than feeding the inner man with God’s word.

I have said before in a lesson that the social gospel aims for the belly and misses the heart in approach and appeal. The logic is like the old saying, “The best way to man’s heart is through his belly.” That may work occasionally in getting someone to be attracted to someone, but it is a superficial approach. If someone doesn’t appreciate us for who we are without being coaxed by food, then they may not appreciate us without the meals. It is not a sure means to keep someone for very long. Good cooking should be the icing on the cake, not the focus of a long lasting relationship for a lifetime.

The same is true in converting men to Christ, without having to lure and coax them to follow Him. We should genuinely want to follow Christ because of the love He showed to us at the cross of Calvary (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:14), for salvation for the bondage of sin (John 8:32), and everlasting life in a home in heaven (John 14:1-6). Not to mention, getting to finally see Jesus face to face and living with Him eternally, along with the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the myriad of angels!

More than anything else, Jesus debunked this method of luring disciples by the use of food and other carnal means, when He said, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life,”* (John 6:26-27).

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Hunt, David Taylor, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Randy Ferrell, J F Dancer, Earl Mitchell,

Robbie, Sheila, and Sherry Doles.

Sandra Oliver had her surgery the 16th and is recovering.

Nannette Chancellor has requested our prayers, as she has been diagnosed with cancer in her left eye.

Kevin Hayes And Tammy Harmon (Kentucky)

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer:	Nathan Meade
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon #1:	<i>"The Danger Of Following Our Own Way"</i>

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Fred Johnson
Galatians (Randy Blackaby)
Page #6 Question #1

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements:	Paul Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:	Danny Sheffield <i>Psalm 4:1-4</i>
Song Leader:	Brian Meade
Lord's Supper:	Jerry Kennemur
Assisting:	— —
Singing Service:	<i>Men of the Congregation Lead Songs</i>
Invitation:	Jerry Kennemur
Closing Prayer:	Brian Meade

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

March 2nd:

Auditorium Bible Class:	Paul Johnson
Workbook:	Jeremiah And Lamentations (John Humphries)
Starting Page & Question:	<i>Page #8 Question #1</i>
Invitation:	Dan Cottrell
Song Leader:	Paul Busby
Closing Prayer:	Nathan Meade

“The Danger Of Following Our Own Way”

Lesson Text: **Jeremiah 10:23; Isaiah 5:20-21; Judges 21:25.**

Man Is Prone To Want To Follow His Own Way....

I. Examples:

- God Told Adam And Eve Not To Eat- **Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6.**
- Without Moses, Aaron Made A Golden Calf- **Exodus 32:1-6; 20:3-5.**
- Jeroboam Devised His Own Way- **1 Kings 12:33.**
- Jonah Fled To Tarshish Than Go To Nineveh- **Jonah 1:1-3.**
- Naaman Preferred A Different Way- **2 Kings 5:10-12.**

II. Application Today:

1. Christians Commanded To Assemble- **Hebrews 10:23-25.**
 - Some Go Fishing, Hunting, Stay Home Without Valid Reason.
2. Jesus Said Not To Exalt Men On The Earth- **Matthew 23:9-12.**
 - Catholics Call Priests Father, Protestants Call Preacher Reverend...
3. Jesus Prayed For And Paul Plead For Unity Among Believers-
John 17:20-21; 1 Corinthians 1:10.
 - Many Teach Denominationalism, Unity In Diversity As Right And Proper.
4. The Disciples Broke Bread On The First Day Of The Week- **Acts 20:7.**
 - Many Take The Lord's Supper Annually, Bi-Monthly, Or Monthly.
 - Some Take It On Days Other Than Sunday.
 - Sabbatarians, Church Of God Meet On Saturday, Not Sunday.
5. Christ Warned Not To Make A Show Of Religious Faith- **Matt. 6:1-6; 16-18.**
 - Many Denominations Make Worship Entertainment.
 - Choirs, Solos, and Praise Teams Worship For Them.
 - The Focus Is On How Good The Singing Is— Not On What Glorifies God.
6. Christ Commands Obedience To His Will- **Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46.**
 - Religious Leaders Say There's Nothing To Obey— Just Believe.
 - Faith Alone Saves Is The Most Popular Teaching In Our Land.
7. We Are Commanded To Sing Only In Worship- **Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.**
 - Many Want To Use Instrumental Music In Worship To God.
 - They Want To Do Things Like David In The Old Testament.