

Trends

"According to the American Center for Disease Control (CDC), more than 65 million people (or 22% of the U.S. population) live with one or more incurable sexually transmitted diseases ("Tracking...", 2004). Those who refuse to abide by God's laws pertaining to sexual relations risk becoming one of these infected ones, who frequently suffer with lesions, warts, and genital inflammation, and may also experience pain while urinating or during sexual intercourse. Women with various STDs sometimes suffer with pelvic inflammation, cancer, infertility, and can even have problems with pregnancy and childbirth."

- via Apologetics Press

Matthew 5:28: "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Sentence Sermons

"The Christian religion, in its purity, is the basis, or rather the source of all genuine freedom in government...and I am persuaded that no civil government of a republican form can exist and be durable in which the principles of that religion have not a controlling influence"

—Noah Webster, 1829

News & Notes

Pray for one another: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please consider donating funds to Zach & Taya Martin. Zach is a medical student and he and his wife Taya are planning to assist Ron Halbrook on one of his preaching trips to the Philippines. The Martins are worthy of our support. You can contact Zach at: zcmartin30@gmail.com.

Please pray for one another! "comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Please pray for Ryan & Jennifer and the brethren of the Northern Michigan church of Christ. They are now meeting in their newly purchased building in Roscommon, Michigan.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets a great example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



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Church Recreation

Keith Camp

Recently I received an invitation to a facility that provided "ping pong, walking track, concerts, basketball, weights, pool table, board games, banquets, refreshments, etc." No, the invitation did not come from the local YMCA. It came from a local church.

Increasingly churches have begun to take on the atmosphere of social clubs; some do rival local health spas. Yet, I do NOT read in the Bible where "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16: 16), in their life and death struggle to preach the gospel to a lost world, ever made such social/recreational provisions for that world (or themselves). According to the New Testament (NT) the ONLY work God ordained the local church to do consists of: preaching the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:8), assembling for worship and edification (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25), and meeting the physical needs of destitute Christians (Acts 4:34-35; 6:1ff). The work of the local church was spiritual, NOT recreational.

And it certainly was not for lack of public interest that kept churches in the Bible out of athletics and entertainment. The world into which the gospel was first preached LOVED the sports arena. Their children played five different games of ball and the Roman emperors were masters at building public baths, theaters, stadiums and using them to 'politic' the people. The world back then had their superstar athletes, actors and actresses too. In fact, it is safe to say that America's enjoyment and pursuit of recreation/entertainment is equal to the people of NT times. But again, the NT is SILENT about local churches making ANY provision for the fulfillment of such interests. And get this! The hope of the gospel was still "proclaimed in all creation under heaven" (Colossians 1:23). Churches in the NT understood that the world needed the gospel and its eternal benefits, not temporary distractions.

We still believe the gospel is God's power to motivate all men to faith, obedience and salvation (Romans 1:16).

'Justification' For Drinking?

Greg Gwin

A study by Harvard researchers tracked 38,000 men, aged 40 to 75, for 12 years. The results revealed that "those who drank alcohol had 35 to 40 percent fewer heart attacks" and that "the best results came from drinking almost every day." The study was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

We are certain that there will be some folks, even some of our brethren, who will quickly latch onto this study and use its results as a further argument to "justify" the practice of "moderate, social drinking." This is anticipated, unfortunately, because there have always been some who desperately want to prove that drinking—at least moderate drinking—is "OK." Their arguments are flawed, and their conclusions are wrong.

For sake of argument, let's say that the new Harvard study is correct. Never mind that such studies are routinely discredited by the next "research" that comes down the pike. Also disregard the obvious and awful consequences of 'problem drinking' that wreck the lives of millions of people every year. Even if we ignore these things, the argument still fails to "justify" the practice. Consider this parallel example:

Imagine that a "new study" finds that the adrenaline rush that comes from robbing banks is beneficial to one's health. It invigorates the nerves, expands cardiovascular function, and stimulates one's immune system—it may even provide a cure for AIDS (why not!!). Now, if such research was true (obviously it's not!), would one be "justified" to go out and rob a bank? Certainly not! Any health benefit, real or imagined, would not offset the plain condemnation of stealing found in the word of God (Ephesians 4:28).

Now, here's the point: God's Word clearly and absolutely condemns drunkenness AND so-called "moderate" or "social" drinking (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Peter 4:3). Questionable "studies" about health benefits notwithstanding, it is still a sin to drink alcohol. Think!

*"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?
30 Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine.
31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup,
When it swirls around smoothly; 32 At the last it bites like a serpent,
And stings like a viper. 33 Your eyes will see strange things, And your heart will utter perverse things."*

Proverbs 23:29-33

Why I Go to Every Service of the Church

1. I go to every service of the church because I am made stronger. Power is given in worship to live a nobler life (Acts 20:32). There is the sweetest fellowship on earth. Why should I want to miss ANY service?
2. I go to every service of the church because God wants the church to grow (cf. Acts 2:47; 4:4). The church always grows when members put God first by loyal attendance. Here is a way all can help in the finest work on earth.
3. I go to every service of the church to set a good example. Many look my way and follow in my steps (Matthew 5:14-16). Influence is either good or bad. Any hour the church meets, my influence is with or against Christ.
4. I go to every service of the church to prove my love and gratitude. One who truly loves God does not ask if he must attend all services. His love compels him to! If I show love to God by attendance, I show lack of love by absence (Matthew 22:37-39).
5. I go to every service of the church to obey God. The Bible says, "*forsake not the assembling of yourselves together*" (Hebrews 10:25). Any service where the Bible is taught, prayer is made, and God is worshipped, is good, and "*to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin*" (James 4:17). If it is good to be present for all services, it is bad to be absent from any.
6. I go to every service of the church to put first things first. "*Seek ye FIRST his kingdom*" (Matthew 6:33). Jesus said the church must be first to the Christian, even before seeking food, clothing or drink.
7. I go to every service of the church because it is safe to do so. All who forsake an assembly wonder if they sin, but I know I am safe in attending EVERY service (Romans 14:21-23).
8. I go to every service of the church to abound in the Lord's work (1 Corinthians 15:58). A true Christian wants to do ALL he can and not as LITTLE as he can. Since the assemblies of the church are vital, I must abound in attendance.

☛ **selected**

*"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some,
but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."*

Hebrews 10:24-25