

Why No Food, Fun and Frolic?

Romans 14:17

I. INTRODUCTION: I

- I. **2** It has become common to see churches, even some calling themselves churches of Christ, furnishing entertainment and recreation for their members and the world (raffle off a *Buick*).
 - A. Some call it “food, fun, and frolic.”
 - B. Some call it the “social gospel.”
 - C. It claims to “minister to the whole man” (i.e., body and spirit).
2. **3** But is that what the “kingdom of God,” the church, is all about? NO! Acts 20:28

****Rom. 14:17:** “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

****Lk. 17:20-21:** “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21 nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”
3. **4** In today’s lesson I want to answer the question: *Why No Food, Fun and Frolic?*

II. DISCUSSION:

Why doesn’t the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because the church is a...

- I. **5** Spiritual house:
 - A. Peter wrote, “you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 2:5).
 - B. The church is the temple of God:

Eph. 2:20-22: “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

 - (1) It is not the nature of the Lord’s kingdom to be the center of food, fun, and frolic:

Rom. 14:17: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”
 - (2) Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world...” (Jn. 18:36)
 - (3) God rules in our hearts not in our flesh!
 - (4) Jesus also said, “...he answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.’” (Lk. 17:20-21)
 - C. Acts 20:28

Why doesn’t the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because we (Christians) have...

2. **6** Houses for that:
 - A. Luke tells us in **Acts 2:46:** “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,”
 - B. In New Testament times, social meals took place “from house to house.”

- C. Paul confirms this in **I Corinthians 11:22**: *“What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.”*
- (1) Where did Paul say “common meals” belong? *“you...have houses to eat and drink in”*
 - (2) Paul emphasizes this truth again in the latter part of I Corinthians 11 (v. 34): *“But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment.”*
- D. It is not wrong in and of itself to “eat in the building” (explain, e.g., when working, etc.); but the Lord did not intend for the church building to be a “banquet center.”
- (1) We derive divine authority for the church building from the commands and examples of assembling to worship (Jn. 4:24; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:25).
 - (2) That means the church building is reserved for those purposes only! Communion plates are not meant to be frisbees!
 - (3) To use the building for our carnal pleasures (nothing wrong with eating in the right location!) is to misuse Christ’s authority and puts us in the position of *“despise[ing] the church of God”* (I Cor. 11:22).

Why doesn’t the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because there is...

3. 7 No command to provide it:

- A. We are taught to observe all things commanded by Christ, who has all authority.
- (1) Jesus said, *“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth...”* and *“...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...”* (Matt. 28:18-20).
 - (2) Where has Christ directed the church to provide food, fun, and frolic?
- B. Churches claiming to be of Christ which provide such ought to be able to furnish a Scripture where Christ authorized His body to furnish worldly entertainment and recreation (Jn. 12:48).
- (1) Where is the book, chapter, and verse? I Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17
 - (2) When the apostles sent out the letter in Acts 15 (circumcision) they wrote *“...we have found no such commandment”* (Acts 15:24); the same is true about the church being in the food, fun, and frolic business; *“...we have found no such commandment.”*
 - (3) The only Scripture I find says something quite different:
I Corinthians 11:22: *“What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.”*

Why doesn’t the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because there is...

4. 8 No approved example of the early church providing it:

- A. Is there an example where the church in the New Testament provided food, fun, and frolic with apostolic approval?
- (1) If so, where is it? I Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17
 - (2) The problematic church at Corinth did what most modern churches do in the realm of food, fun, and frolic and were roundly criticized for it (I Cor. 11:22, 34). But they did not take it nearly as far as most churches do today!

- (3) Even the five churches of Asia who were in danger of being rejected by Christ did not provide food, fun, and frolic for their members so common among churches today.
- B. The first-century church not providing entertainment and recreation is not because there were not any forms of it in the first century.
 - (1) Paul spoke of the Isthmian games in I Corinthians 9:24-27:
 - (2) He said, "...they which run in a race..." (1 Cor. 9:24), and, "...if any man also strive for the masteries..." (2 Tim. 2:5).
 - (3) To strive for masteries is to compete in athletics.
 - (4) However, Paul uses the term, not referencing competing in an athletic event, or participating in a church-sponsored recreational activity.
 - (5) Paul uses the term in a spiritual context:

2 Tim. 2:3-5: *"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."*
 - (6) In other words, "Timothy, if you are going to lay hold of the eternal crown you must be willing to make sacrifices (e.g., self-control, endure trials, temptations, persecutions) AND you must follow the rules laid forth by Christ!" (i.e., Matt. 28:20: "...observe all things I have commanded you.").
- C. Though there were athletic events and activities in the first century, there is no indication the church ever planned, promoted or provided such.
 - (1) Jerusalem was known for its great hippodrome (e.g., the movie *Ben Hur*): Did the church at Jerusalem sponsor a chariot race?
 - (2) Did the church at Corinth sponsor a carnival? Raffle off a Buick?
 - (3) Did the churches of Galatia sponsor neighborhood block parties?
- D. Don't argue from silence! **Heb. 7:14:** *"For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood."*

Why doesn't the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because the church is...

5. 9 Not equipped for that:

- A. Ephesians 4 reveals the gifts Christ gave to equip the church for service:

Eph. 4:11: *"And He gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."*

 - (1) He did not give some to be cooks, coaches, and clowns!
 - (2) He did not give some to be "ministers of social service" or "coordinator of puppet show ministries."
- B. ****** Would you drive to the local hospital emergency room, rush in shouting, "I have an emergency! Come quick!"
 - (1) When the hospital personnel run out and ask, "What do you need?"

- (2) And you say, “My engine on my car is overheating! See the steam coming out from under the hood?!”
- (3) The hospital emergency room does a lot of good work, but they are not equipped to treat an overheated car engine.
- C. ** Or, would you go to the car dealership and say, “I’ll have a hamburger, fries, and large coke.”
 - (1) Why not? What would pharmacist’s answer be?
 - (2) “We’re not equipped for that!”
- D. ** Similarly we should not look to the local church to provide food, fun, and frolic!
 - (1) God did not equip His body, the church, for that!
 - (2) God provided “apostles...prophets...evangelists...pastors and teachers” for...

Eph. 4:12-16: *“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love..”*
(KJV)

Why doesn’t the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because it is...

6. **10** Not the work of the church:

- A. The work of the church is set forth in Ephesians 4:12:
 - (1) “...the perfecting of the saints”
 - (2) “the work of the ministry”; and,
 - (3) “the edifying of the body of Christ.”
- B. If that is what you you’re seeking we can provide that; we are equipped for that.
 - (1) All three of these are spiritual activities.
 - (2) None of them includes entertainment and recreation.
 - (3) Food, fun, and frolic are not edification, relief of needy saints, or evangelism!

Why doesn’t the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because the church has...

7. **11** No funds for it:

- A. Notice what 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 say:

1 Cor. 16:1-2: *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”*

 - (1) Did you notice what that “collection” was “for”?
 - (2) It was “for the saints”! Not for food, fun, and frolic!

- B. We also read where the church at Philippi “...sent once and again...” to support the preaching of the gospel (i.e., Paul in Thessalonica; Phil. 4:15-16).
 - (1) Did the church at Philippi set aside funds to provide social meals to the congregation?
 - (2) Did they set aside funds for recreational purposes? e.g., softball bats, gloves, etc., gymnasiums, swimming pools, exercise equipment?
- C. A big resounding “NO!”
 - (1) They were totally committed to spiritual activities!
 - (2) Evangelism, edification and the relief of needy saints.
 - (3) That leaves no funds for worldly endeavors, no matter whether they are not necessarily sinful in and of themselves.

Why doesn't the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because the church is...

8. **12** The pillar and ground of the truth:

A. Paul wrote Timothy the following:

1 Tim. 3:15: “...I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

- (1) A “pillar” is that which provides support for something (e.g., pillars of limestone on my front porch).
- (2) The church does not exist to provide support for entertainment and recreation.
- (3) The church is not the “pillar and ground for food, fun, and frolic.”
- (4) The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth”!

B. Jesus said,

Jn. 8:32: “...you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

- (1) In His prayer to the Father, Jesus stated,

Jn. 17:17: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”
- (2) That is what the church is to provide!
- (3) Imagine the church spending its precious resources on softballs, musical extravagances, knitting classes, Father-daughter dinners and the like.
- (4) Now as you conjure those images; consider the use of those funds for those carnal purposes would not be available for evangelism: reaching a lost and dying world with the saving message of the cross.
- (5) Which would you rather answer for on the Day of Judgment?! Evangelism, edification, relief of needy saints? Or, basketball hoops, donuts & coffee, and playground equipment for the kids?

Why doesn't the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because...

9. **13** The cross of Christ is the attraction:

A. Jesus declared:

Jn. 12:32: “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”

B. Paul reminded the Corinthians:

1 Cor. 2:2: *“For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”*

C. ** To suggest (and many do!) we need entertainment and recreation to get folks to come and to keep them coming, is to say the cross of Christ is insufficient and ineffective!

(1) Ruminates on that! Chew on that!

(2) ** One preacher wisely said, “A church that uses fried chicken, iced tea and ice cream to attract people is as cold as the cream, as weak as the tea, and as dead as the chicken.” (Not sure, but think Foy Wallace said that.)

Why doesn't the local church provide food, fun and frolic, because...

10. **14** The gospel of Christ is God's saving power:

A. Paul stated this great truth to the saints in Rome when he wrote:

Rom. 1:16: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”*

B. Paul told the brethren at Corinth that:

1 Cor. 1:21: *“...it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”*

C. And, to the brethren at Thessalonica, Paul informed:

2 Thess. 2:13-14: *“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

D. The gospel of Christ is God's “drawing card.”

(1) The gospel informs man how to be “reconciled to God”:

Rom. 5:10-11: *“when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”*

(2) Jesus said He came to “...seek and to save that which is lost” (Lk. 19:10).

E. ** These are the purposes of the gospel.

(1) God intentionally fashioned “the message of the cross” (1 Cor. 1:18), the gospel, to “draw” men to Him for salvation.

Jn. 6:44-45: *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.”; cf. Lk. 8:11-15*

(2) ** God fashioned the gospel message to tell us of His love and mercy:

Eph. 2:4-7: *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly*

places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

F. ** When the church uses any other means to draw men to God; they are using a false "calling card" incapable of saving men's souls!

(1) Whatever is used to draw men is what is needed to keep them!

(2) If the church uses "food, fun, and frolic" to 'draw' men:

(a) They will need to use "food, fun, and frolic" to keep them!

(b) Why? In reality, when we use "food, fun, and frolic" to draw men; we have not drawn men to God at all.

(c) We have simply drawn them to "food, fun, and frolic."

(d) "Food, fun, and frolic" is why they came; not the gospel of Christ!

G. I have no doubt, that if we offered men the entertainment and recreational activities offered by the denominations and our liberal brethren; we could fill this building (e.g., I know because of the telephone inquiries I receive! **Jn. 6:66:** "*From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.*").

(1) We would probably have to build a new building.

(2) But all we would have is a big building full of lost people

III. CONCLUSION: 15

1. Here at Westside we simply offer the "gospel." Why? Because...

A. The "gospel" is "*the power of God unto salvation*" (Rom. 1:16).

B. The "gospel" is God's "calling card" to salvation (2 Thess. 2:13-14).

C. The "gospel" is the message of "*reconciliation*" (Rom. 5:11).

2. That's all we can provide for you here at Westside.

A. Food, fun and frolic is not necessarily wrong in and of itself (i.e., in the realm of the home!).

B. No matter how good one's intentions might be; food, fun, and frolic will not and cannot save you!

C. Only the gospel of Christ can save.

3. If salvation is what you're looking for you've come to the right place.

4. If not; if you're looking for entertainment and recreational activities, I would recommend one of the many denominational churches in town; or one of the liberal 'churches of Christ' (e.g., North Central in Bloomington).

A. They will offer you plenty of "food, fun, and frolic."

B. But they will not and cannot offer you a home in heaven when you die.

C. Here at Westside we are "*determined not to know anything...except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*" (1 Cor. 2:2).

5. Invitation

Adapted from an article (Why We Don't Provide Food, Fun, and Frolic) by John Isaac Edwards, in *The Terre Haute Speaker*, Vol. 7, No. 31; August 5, 2018.