

Trends

American adult attitudes toward self-fulfillment:

- ☛ 91% The best way to find yourself is to look within yourself.
- ☛ 86% Fulfillment is achieved by pursuing the things you desire most.
- ☛ 84% The highest goal in life is to enjoy it as much as possible.
- ☛ 79% Believe whatever you like as long as it doesn't affect society.
- ☛ 69% Any kind of sexual expression is acceptable among consenting adults.

- via Barna Research

Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps."

Sentence Sermons

"...If we believe that God wants us happy above all else, rather than acknowledge that our role is to serve God, we wrongly believe that God exists to serve us. God becomes a means to our end: happiness."

—Craig Groeschel

Matthew 22:37-40: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

News & Notes

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She is an encouragement to all of us!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

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.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?! Let me know.

Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

Words of Life is published by the Westside Church of Christ meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

Times of Service: Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

Editor: Craig Thomas (812-320-9569); craigthomas82000@gmail.com

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

Aug. 18,
2019

Vol. 11,
No. 29

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

John 6:68



Will Bagels and Coffee Improve Our Worship?

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 these changes."

Some of the reasons she shared why they added breakfast to worship included "it brings us closer to each other." 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 1,000-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."

One of the specific issues he mentioned was turning the Lord's 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."

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 Cor. 11:17-26).

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 that we are *"to come together as a church"* (1 Cor. 11:18).

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that the Father is seeking true worshippers to worship Him. (Jn. 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 a 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"* (Jn. 4:24).

Worship must be accurate. According to God's Word, which is truth (Jn. 17:17). In reading the New Testament I find the disciples assembled to take communion. Hear the Word of God. Contribute into the common treasury. Pray. And sing praises to God (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Heb. 2:12; 1 Cor. 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 worship emanates from within. It should 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 Cor. 14:26). In worship, we exhort one another. Motivate one another. Inspire one another. We *"stimulate one another to love and good works"* (Heb. 10:24).

Most of Christian living is done outside the assembly. Not everything is collective. Hospitality, for instance, is an individual command (1 Pet. 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."*

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 (Rom. 1:16). Not bagels and coffee.

Never Give Up!

Greg Gwin

Winston Churchill is remembered as one of the great motivators of the past century. His leadership qualities were a deciding factor in helping the British people through the darkest hours of World War II.

Later in life Churchill was invited to return to the preparatory school he had attended as a youth. He was to address the students, and they had been told to expect "one of the greatest orators of all times." Their instructions were to listen carefully and take notes.

Churchill's speech to the student body was incredibly brief. You, no doubt, are familiar with the entire text of that speech. Sir Winston said, *"Young Gentlemen, Never, never, never, never give up!"* That was it. No more. But it was a message that could not be forgotten.

Others have pointed out that the key to success is not necessarily talent, or training, or luck. It is patience, persistence, and perseverance that wins the prize.

This principle also applies in spiritual pursuits. We've known of some incredibly talented folks who have given up. And others who have received the finest opportunities have simply quit.

We need determination to continue on no matter what comes our way. Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Don't whine and drop out at the first sign of adversity.

The book of Hebrews was written to Christians who were tempted to give up. The words of encouragement written to them are needed by us today: *"Cast not away therefore your confidence. . . ye have need of patience. . . we are not of them who draw back (10:35—39) . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us (12:1)"*.

Never give up!

"For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 'For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.'"

Hebrews 10:36-38