

Trends

Americans are inviting people over less often. This is not to say, however, that Americans are seeing their friends and relatives less often. But it does appear that "entertaining" people in the home is a diminishing habit. In a recent survey people were asked how often they had entertained people in their home. 40 years ago about 40% said they had entertained at least monthly; more recently less than 20% said they did.

- via *Made In America*, by Claude Fischer

1 Peter 4:8-9: "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.' 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling."

Sentence Sermons

"A life of hospitality begins in worship, with a recognition of God's grace and generosity. Hospitality is not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God's love and welcome to us."

—Christine Pohl

Hebrews 13:2: "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."

News & Notes

Catherine and Jerome Forelo of the Philippines visited Westside on 11/3/19. Catherine is the daughter of Rody and Tessie Gumpad. Jerome did an excellent job preaching for us! Pray for their safe travels in the U.S. (12/4/19)!

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.

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Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

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

John 6:68

The Church: The Called Out Body

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Denominational attitudes tend to creep into the church as members are converted from denominationalism and the influence of the religious world around us spills over into the church. Christians must constantly re-emphasize the fundamentals of the gospel lest a generation arise which cannot distinguish the Lord's church from those denominations which have been founded by men. Understanding what the church is makes identifying the Lord's body possible. When you ask, "What is the church?" men will give you a variety of answers. Some think the church is a building; some think that the church is composed of all of the saved of all denominations; some use the term to refer to a part of the saved who rally around a certain body of doctrines and form of organization. Some view the church as a spiritual option, somewhat like air conditioning on a car. Each of these ideas manifests a misunderstanding of what the church is.

I. Meaning of "Church": The English word church is derived from the Greek word *kyriakon* which meant "belonging to the Lord." The English word "church" is used to translate the Greek word *ekklesia*, a noun derived from the preposition *ek* (out) and the verb *kaleo* (to call). Hence, the word *ekklesia* means "the called out ones." It can be used in a non-religious sense (cf. Acts 19:32, 41 - "assembly") to refer to any called out (assembled) body of people. However, it is used in a special sense to refer to those who have been called out by Jesus. When used with reference to those called out by Christ, the word is used in these senses: (a) **universal** to refer to everyone whom Christ has called out (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23-25); (b) **local** to refer to those in a given place who have been called out by Christ (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1).

II. The Called Out Body: Why are God's people referred to as a "called out body"? Let us consider the pertinent facts.

(1) They have received a divine calling. God Himself has "called us with an holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9). "God hath called us..." (1 Cor. 7:15; cf. 1 Pet. 5:10). If the President of the United States called together his special friends for a celebration, those gathered would have come as a result of a special invitation issued by the President. Those who gathered together in the Lord's church have received a higher and more important invitation - they have been called by God.

(2) They have been called into fellowship with God. *"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9; cf. 1 Jn. 1:14).* Even as those invited to the White House have the opportunity to fellowship with the President, those called out by God have been invited into the fellowship of God Almighty, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit.

(3) They have been called out of darkness into light. *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).* God's calling is a call to turn from sin and wickedness to walk in the pathway of righteousness. When Paul was commissioned to go to the Gentiles, he was sent *"to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God..."* (Acts 26:18). Christians have forsaken the works of the flesh in order to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit.

(4) They have been called into the Lord's kingdom. Paul wrote, *"...that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into the kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12).* Those who have heard the Lord's call and answered it are fellow citizens with the saints. They are no longer under the authority and dominion of Satan; they have become citizens of the eternal kingdom and under the authority of Jesus Christ. As citizens of the kingdom, they enjoy all of the joys and privileges of citizens.

(5) They have been called to inherit heaven. The hope of our calling is heaven. *"...knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. 3:9).* *"...that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18; cf. 4:4).* Those who have been called by God have a rich and abiding hope that they shall live eternally in the presence and fellowship of God in heaven. These facts demonstrate for us that the church is composed of those people who have heard the calling of God and answered it. Hence, the church is the saved people of the world. Those who are not part of the church are not part of the saved. A man cannot be saved without becoming a part of the called out body of Christ.

III. How We Are Called: If a man must be a part of the called-out body of Christ in order to be saved, he needs to learn how to be called of God. Paul wrote, *"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you brethren beloved of the Lord, because*

"God calls us through the gospel. This is the same gospel which is to be preached to every creature of every nation of the whole world (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16). Those that hear that gospel answer the Lord's invitation. Those that respond in obedience to the gospel answer the Lord's invitation."

God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13

-14). God calls us through the gospel. This is the same gospel which is to be preached to every creature of every nation of the whole world (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16). Those who hear that gospel preached hear the call of God. Those who respond in obedience to the gospel answer the Lord's invitation. Hence, God does not call us through some still, small voice in mysterious

ways and circumstances. He calls us through the gospel. The invitation is not limited to a few "elect"; the invitation is extended to every man. While on earth, Jesus called men saying, *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).* This invitation to come has been extended to all men in the preaching of the gospel. The conditions for answering that call are: (a) **hearing**, for one cannot answer an invitation which he has not heard (Matt. 28:18; Mk. 16:15); (b) **belief** in the gospel of Christ (Mk. 16:15-16); (c) **repentance** of sins (Lk. 24:47); (d) **confession** of faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10); (e) **baptism** in water (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16). Those who have done these things have answered heaven's call and are a part of the called out body of Christ - the church.

IV. Conclusion: All of those who have obeyed the gospel are members of the Lord's called out body - the church. None of those who have not obeyed the gospel are members of the called out body. The denominations of men do not teach the gospel plan of salvation; they delude men into thinking that they can be saved by "faith only," before and without water baptism. To speak of those who have never obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ as being members of the church deludes people into thinking they are saved when they are lost. Those who have never obeyed the gospel are not members of the Lord's church, although they may be members of the church established by Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Smyth, Joseph Smith, and other men.

Some have suggested that we ought to fellowship the Christians in all denominations. First of all, we ask how can one become a Christian without obeying the gospel? Hence, are the denominations filled with Christians (men who have obeyed the gospel)? Secondly, if these people are not Christians whose doctrine and practice are pleasing to God, we should not fellowship them (Eph. 5:11). Joining hands in fellowship with them endorses their errors in violation of 2 John 9-

"How can one become a Christian without obeying the gospel?"

11. The Lord's church is not made up of the good people of all denominations. It is composed of those who have obeyed the Lord's gospel in order to become a Christian and who continue to abide in Christ through faithful living (see Jn. 15:1-6; cvt). Instead of joining hands with the denominations, we need to be preaching

"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."

—2 John 9-11

the Lord's call for men to forsake humanly devised religion in order to become members of His church.

Editor's note: Sorry for not publishing *Words of Life* for the past three weeks. I preached and attended two distant gospel meetings and last week my printer decided to take an unexpected vacation.