

When We Meet...

By Mark Mayberry

3/19/2017

Introduction

While Christianity is primarily individual and personal, it also encompasses collective activity. Worship transcends both realms. Prayer is primarily a means of private communication with God; yet, we also read in the Bible of prayers being offered up by the church.

During His earthly ministry, large crowds constantly gathered around Jesus: He used such occasions to heal and teach (Mark 1:32-34; 2:1-2; 3:20; 4:1-3). Some who gathered around the Lord did so for ulterior motives; others acted sincerely. When we assemble, honesty demands that we ask, "Why am I here? What is my motivation?"

For Sinful Purposes

The religious hierarchy of first century Judaism gathered together to criticize (Matt. 15:1-2; Mark 7:1-5), entrap and ensnare Jesus (Matt. 22:15-17, 23, 34-36). The Sanhedrin assembled to plot against and condemn Jesus (Matt. 26:3-4, 57; Luke 22:66-69), and after the establishment of the church, to oppose the spread of the gospel (Acts 4:1-7, 23-28). Roman soldiers gathered together to mock Jesus (Matt. 27:27-31).

Demetrius, a silversmith at Ephesus, upset over the preaching of Paul, gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and caused a riot. The city was filled with confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, where tumult reigned for several hours. False charges were recklessly hurled about and there was much shouting, but the majority did not know why they had come together (Acts 19:23-41).

For Sanctified Purposes

Faithful disciples assemble for the purpose of encouragement (Acts 4:23-31). Prospective converts gather to hear the proclamation of the gospel (Acts 10:23-33). Believers come together for the purpose of edification, instruction and spiritual growth (Acts 11:19-26). They receive reports concerning the spread of the gospel (Acts 14:24-28). Disciples meet for the purpose of prayer and other divinely authorized acts of worship (Acts 12:6-17; 20:7-12). Faithful Christians also assemble for the purpose of exercising church discipline (1 Cor. 5:3-5).

Conclusion

Children of God gather in submission and obedience to Christ's authority (Matt. 18:20).