

"GOSPEL MEETINGS"

Why Some Succeed And Others Fail

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Gospel meetings can be useful tool in work of local church. (special series of services, lasting a few days, a week, or longer, in which lessons are presented by guest preachers accompanied by congregational singing and prayer)
- B. Purpose of meetings can be twofold: **Evangelism**: provide opportunity to invite others to hear gospel and **Edification**: building up the members through teaching of God's word. Some gospel meetings focus on one purpose or the other
- C. Not all meetings have same effect. Some are successful in sowing seed, and building up members; Others are failures discouraging those who attend rather than uplifting them
- D. Why the difference? Why do some succeed, and others fail? The difference may be found in the attitudes of the members of the congregation hosting the meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Sometimes, a gospel meeting fails to rise to the occasion despite the faithful efforts of a fervent preacher. One major is reason Apathy (not suggesting this is a particular problem here, but that it could be)

I. APATHY LEADS TO FAILURE

- A. Apathy toward the Word Psa 119:97; 1:1,2
 1. Manifested by indifference toward gospel meeting
 2. Observable by poor attendance of members
 3. Noticed by visitors from churches and community
 4. Does our absence not say something about our reverence for the Word of God?
- B. Apathy toward praising God 1Cor 14:15
 1. Evident in late arrivals disrupting service in progress
 2. Expressed in song & prayer lacking zeal and fervor
 3. Does not service to God deserve same courtesy we show other appointments we keep?
- C. Apathy toward brethren 1Pet 1:22
 1. Visible by our absence and empty seats
 2. Apparently our concern for one another is not sufficient to make the effort necessary to attend
 3. Does not our absence suggest indifference about the growth and well-being of the church?
- D. Apathy toward visitors Matt 5:16; 22:37-40; Mk 16:15
 1. Shown by failing to welcome them
 2. Conveyed by our quick departure after the services
 3. Can we expect visitors to take message seriously, when we fail to take their presence seriously?
- E. Yet sometimes a gospel meeting is very successful and again the reason is the attitude of the members.

II. ENTHUSIASM LEADS TO SUCCESS

- A. Enthusiastic preaching 2Tim 4:2
 1. Lessons designed to stir heart; presented by preacher on fire for the Lord Jer 15:16; 20:9
 2. Listened to by audience, who receive Word with all readiness Acts 17:11; inspires preacher in his efforts
 3. Rarely a problem with preacher being on fire; yet the audience can have an impact on preacher's zeal!
- B. Enthusiastic worship Jhn 4:24
 1. Singing that uplifts and inspires; led by enthusiastic song leaders; joined by joyful congregation Col 3:16
 2. Prayers, often worded by visiting preachers or elders; preparing us to receive Word 1Thess 5:17
 3. Enthusiasm in worship further blesses the audience by firing up the preacher!
- C. Enthusiastic attendance Heb 10: 24,25
 1. Members coming to every service of meeting as is possible, arriving early, glad to be present
 2. Brethren from area churches, supporting efforts and contributing to occasion by their singing and prayer
 3. Visitors from community who accepted invitation to come, whose presence indicates spiritual interest
- D. Enthusiastic welcome
 1. Before service by members arriving early welcoming visitors, leaving premium seats for visitors
 2. After service by members staying around, talking to visitors and showing hospitality by inviting visitors into homes or to a restaurant for a snack 1Pet 4:9
 3. Added to efforts of visiting preacher, such interaction between members and visitors enhances edification
- E. Even if not a single soul responds to gospel invitation, a meeting is success when Word has been proclaimed and saints have been edified. Rom 14:19; 1Thess 5:11

CONCLUSION

- A. As with any service rendered to God, success or failure is affected by attitude
- B. Enthusiasm increases the likelihood of success; Apathy guarantees the likelihood of failure
- C. In the service of God, attitude is important
 1. Diligence & fervor essential in service to Lord Rom 12:11
 2. Lukewarm in service is abominable to Lord Rev 3:15-16
- D. As we plan our involvement in our gospel meeting, what will our attitude be?
- E. Success or failure of gospel meetings rests heavily upon attitude. And so does our eternal well-being! 1Cor 15:58

(revised from sermon by Mark Copeland)