Why Does The Church Exist?

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It is both surprising and alarming the lack of understanding many brethren have when it comes to the work of the Lord's church. For several decades, brethren, have so intertwined activities of the home with the church that many think they are one and the same. Bulletins are filled with various functions that have absolutely nothing to do with the work of the Lord's church. Brethren have accepted the false notion that it is the work of the church to meet "their needs" in matters of recreation and entertainment. Even our terminology woefully betrays how much we have been influenced by the denominational world. The influence of denominational thinking into the mindset of the Lord's church has contributed to our lose of distinctiveness! It is common place, for example, to read of:

Church of Christ college, Church of Christ softball team, Church of Christ gymnasium, Church of Christ baby shower, Church of Christ skating party, Church of Christ Boy Scouts, Church of Christ Cafe, etc.

The Biblical fact is that that all of these activities have absolutely nothing to do with the work of the Lord's church! Because of wrong terminology brethren have contributed to these false concepts. Now, if individuals want to have skating parties, baby showers, etc., that certainly is their right. However, to put these as responsibilities of the Lord's church is without scriptural authority! For someone to argue otherwise they must present biblical authority (Col.3:17; I Pet.3:15), and this cannot be done! The truth is recreation and entertainment has never been a part of the Lord's work.

The purpose of the church of Christ is NOT entertainment, political, economical, nor is it to be a glorified country club! The church exist primarily because of three areas:

EVANGELISM. All accountable people are lost in sin (Rom. 3:23), and in need of salvation (I Tim. 2:3-4). It is the responsibility of the church to go into all the world with the life changing message of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15-16). Since the gospel is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), it is imperative that Christians do all they can to evangelize the world! Day-by-day evangelism resulted in tremendous growth in the early church (Acts 5:42; 6:7). In order to see the same results today, we must have a great sense of urgency in taking the gospel to a lost and dying world!

BENEVOLENCE. Although the word "benevolence" does not appear in the New Testament, the execution thereof does. Jesus, of course, was a living example of benevolence, and we are instructed to follow His steps (I Pet.2:21). Again the scriptures inform us, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal.6:10). Of this matter of benevolence, James writes, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). The word "visit" carries more meaning than merely drinking coffee and eating cookies. In Acts 15:36, we read, "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." Thus to "visit" one is to "see how they do" and to help them in their "afflictions." In other words to help according to their needs. In Acts 11:27-30 we read of Agabus telling the brethren of a famine that was to come. The brethren in other places were also told of this, and responded by sending relief (Rom. 15:26). Thus an example of "benevolence" at work!

EDIFICATION. According to Vine's Words Study, edification is, "the act of building up." In Acts 9:31 we read, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied." Paul sets forth that which truly builds up the church. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for
peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19). Truly one of the greatest needs in the church is to build one another up. Take note please, biblical edification is referring to spiritual matters. The more one studies God's word and puts it into practice truly edifies both the individual and the church!

The devil wants to sow seeds of discouragement, and to tear down while God wants His people to build one another up. Let every child of God determine not to allow anyone or anything to distract them from the Lord's work of evangelism, benevolence and edification all to the name, honor and glory of Almighty God!

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