

June 28, 2020

# **Viewpoint** from the **Valley Grove Church Of Christ**

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## **Church Recreation**

By Keith Camp

**R**ecently I received an invitation to a facility that provided “ping pong, walking track, concerts, basketball, weights, pool table, board games, banquets, refreshments, etc.” No, the invitation did not come from the local Boy’s club. It came from a local church.

Increasingly churches have begun to take on the atmosphere of social clubs; some do rival local health spas. Yet, I do NOT read in the Bible where “the churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), in their life and death struggle to preach the gospel to a lost world, ever made such social/recreational provisions for that world (or themselves). Do you?

According to the New Testament (NT) the ONLY work God ordained the local church to do consists of: preaching the gospel (1 Thess. 1:8), assembling for worship and edification (Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:24-25), and meeting the physical needs of destitute Christians (Acts 4:34-35; 6:1ff). The work of the local church was spiritual, NOT recreational.

And it certainly was not for lack of public interest that kept churches in the Bible out of athletics and entertainment. The world into which the gospel was first preached LOVED the sports arena. Their children played five different games of ball and the Roman emperors were masters at building public baths, theaters, stadiums and using them to ‘politic’ the people. The world back then had their superstar athletes, actors and actresses too. In fact, it is safe to say that America’s enjoyment and pursuit of recreation/entertainment is equal to the people of NT times. But again, the NT is SILENT about local churches making ANY provision for the fulfillment of such interests. And get this! The hope of the gospel was still “proclaimed in all creation under heaven” (Col. 1:23). Churches in the NT understood that the world needed the gospel and its eternal benefits, not temporary distractions.

Are you disheartened, tired or fed-up with watching the church where you worship spend her time and resources to recreate and entertain herself and the world? Then, worship with a church that believes the gospel is STILL God’s power to motivate all men to faith, obedience and salvation (Rom. 1:16).

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# Abuse Of The Lord's Supper

By Leslie Diestelkamp

It is quite obvious that many Christians who may be quite devoted in other ways, do indeed “miss the mark” with regard to the Lord's Supper. Consider the following:

1. The attitude and practice of some brethren indicate that they expect forgiveness of their sins of the past week because they have had the supper on Sunday. But the Lord's Supper is not at all intended to bring pardon of sins. The body and blood which we remember in the supper were given for our forgiveness, but when we eat and drink at the Lord's table, we do that as a memorial: “this do in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:25).

2. As a consequence of the attitude (above), some seem to feel that if they cannot have the Lord's Supper on a given Sunday, they will not be forgiven and will be in jeopardy until the next opportunity. Of course, if we cannot assemble with the disciples, we do indeed miss an opportunity to “show the Lord's death till he come.” The Lord knows when we can't do it, and he knows why, but he does not expect the impossible.

3. The New Testament pattern for the supper portrays the disciples coming together for this purpose — to remember — and show forth our remembrance — together. For instance, we never read of Paul (or any other disciples) having the Lord's supper privately or in any other circumstances while they traveled, except when they were able to meet with the assembled brethren.

Now let us briefly summarize: There is certainly great benefit in regular observance of the Lord's Supper, for every remembrance means never forgetfulness. Deliberate absence from the supper means, not only loss of benefit, but disobedience regarding the Lord's directive. Besides the preciousness of this significant memorial of the death of Christ, we have the additional benefit of fellowship in togetherness with those of like precious faith. Obviously the Lord intended for the supper to BRING US TOGETHER (see 1 Cor. 11: — “that ye come together . . .” (vs. 17); “when ye come together in the church . . .” (vs. 18); “When ye come together therefore in one place . . .” (vs. 20); “when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. . .” (vs. 33).

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Two *things* I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches — Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny *You*, And say, “Who *is* the LORD?” Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God. — *Proverbs 30:7-9*

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# The Work Of The Church

By Frank Himmel

Christians have God-given work to do, both individually and collectively. While there is much overlap, passages such as 1 Timothy 5:16 clearly indicate a difference between the two. What does the Bible teach about our collective work?

## *Spiritual*

The Bible teaches that God ordained specific tasks for churches to perform. First-century congregations:

(1) Preached the gospel at home and abroad (1 Thess. 1:8). This was done through instruction given in worship assemblies (1 Cor. 14:24-25), by people talking to those with whom they had contact (Acts 8:4), and by sending men out to preach (Phil. 4:15-16).

(2) Built up the members of the congregation. Everything done in worship was to be unto edification (1 Cor. 14:26). Elders, spiritual shepherds, were charged with feeding the flock (Acts 20:28). Even severing association was an act of seeking to restore the erring (1 Cor. 5).

(3) Provided for needy brethren, either at home (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35) or abroad (1 Cor. 16:1-2; Rom. 15:26). This third area, unlike the others, was not necessarily ongoing, but as needed. Since the church is a spiritual relationship, it is no surprise that its work is in the spiritual realm.

So much of what modern churches do is conspicuously absent from the pages of the New Testament. The Bible makes no reference to churches operating schools or day care centers, providing recreational facilities and opportunities, being in the health care business, being a source for counseling and all sorts of social services, or even being a general charity.

The fact that something seems like a good thing to us is no justification for altering God's plan. Neither do we have any right to employ carnal means to attract more people. See John 6 for the result.

## *Equipped*

The Bible teaches that Christ equipped the church to accomplish everything He wants it to do. "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 3:11-12).

*(Continued on page 4)*

God’s provisions are simple, yet sufficient. It is only when we try to involve the church in an unauthorized activity that we find our resources or organization inadequate. Make no mistake: any argument that says we must go beyond the New Testament model for churches in order to be effective is a denial of the sufficiency of God’s design!

*Independent*

The Bible teaches that each church governs itself, planning and executing its own work in keeping with Christ’s directions. Elders’ oversight is limited to the flock among them (1 Pet. 5:2). No New Testament church ever directed the work of another, wholly or in part. None ever planned a work beyond its ability to carry out. Each did what it could.

No New Testament church ever paid a human institution to do its work for it. There were no add-on organizations, no subsidiary “ministries,” no missionary boards or societies.

Let us be busy doing God’s work in God’s way.

*Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.*

**July Birthdays:**

- The 9th Ruth Davis
- The 10th John Randolph
- The 29th Opal Yarbrough



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**Sunday**  
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 10:30 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 5:00 P.M.

**Wednesday**  
Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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