

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Dear Church Member

Dear Church Member,

Don't wait until the hearse hauls your cold body to the church building!

If you do...

- You will go, regardless of the weather.
- You will go, regardless of the condition of your body.
- There will be beautiful flowers, but you won't enjoy them.
- You will go, regardless of how your family feels.
- The minister may say many good things, but you won't hear them.
- There will be beautiful music, but you won't hear it.
- There will be heartfelt prayers, but they will not touch your heart.
- Friends and relatives will be there, but you won't worship with them.
- You will go, no matter how many hypocrites are present.
- You will go, no matter how much you are needed at home or at work.
- You will receive no blessing from the service.
- You won't feel concerned about your clothes.
- You will never again have to decide whether to attend worship services.
- You won't complain about the length of the sermon.
- You won't be distracted by what's going on around you.
- For the first time, you can truly say, *“I didn't get anything out of the services.”*

Please don't wait until being in the Lord's house can't do you any good! Why not make the choice today to be with God's people at every opportunity so you can benefit from the services? God leaves the choice to each one of us. What will be your choice? – *Selected and edited* ■

Entertainment or Worship?

By Steven F. Deaton

The Bible declares that men are to worship God. God is seeking for such. *“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth”* (John 4:23, 24). The primary aim and object of worship is to praise God. To honor Him for Who He is and to praise Him for His great grace. Further, the Bible teaches that when we assemble we receive blessings as well. *“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching”* (Heb. 10:24-25). We benefit by encouraging each other in the work of the Lord--we are to build each other up (cf. Eph. 4:11-16).

In contrast to the Bible's teaching, many men today *“worship”* with self being the focus, not God. They ask, “What's in it for ME?” They say, “I am looking for a church that is suited to ME.” Or, “I am searching for a church that meets MY needs.” What this amounts to is finding a place, not where truth and righteousness are the foremost concern, but where the most prominent people attend, the most entertaining “show” is put on, or a

“smooth” sermon is preached (cf. Rom. 16:17-18).

We agree that man has needs that need to be met. He needs to hear the gospel of God’s grace (Rom. 10:17). He needs to know his sinfulness (Eph. 2:1-3). He needs to know God’s plan for saving man (Rom. 1:16). He needs to know how to live right before God and his fellow man (2 Pet.1:3). This is the point and purpose of the church –spiritual matters. ***“If I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”*** (1 Tim. 3:15).

Unfortunately, there are many “churches” more than willing to cater to the carnal appetite of man. They strive to put on the biggest and best plays. They labor to assemble the best band. They offer classes on finances and weight loss. Their motto is, “If it will boost the numbers, DO IT!” What matters to you, entertainment or worship?

People will object, saying, “But, we need something to bring the people in. With these attractions we can ‘reach’ people who would not normally hear the gospel.” Well, that is the way the devil thinks. He believed man needed worldly, carnal enticements to be lured into serving God. Remember Job? The devil thought he served God because of all his material, earthly blessings (Job 1:9-11). He was wrong! Job still honored God even though his blessings were taken away. Why? Because Job had the right heart, he was determined to serve God regardless. Today, do men need some type of carnal enticement to serve the Lord Jesus Christ? Is there something better or more profound than the pure gospel of the Son of God (Rom. 1:16)? Is there something more motivating than the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 34)? No, a thousand times NO!

Charles Spurgeon once wrote, *“The fact is, that many would like to unite church and stage, cards and prayer, dancing and sacraments. If we are powerless to stem this torrent, we can at least warn men of its existence, and entreat them to keep out of it. When the old faith is gone, and enthusiasm for the gospel is extinct, it is no wonder that people seek something else in the way of delight. Lacking bread, they feed on ashes; rejecting the way of the Lord, they run greedily in the path of folly.”* Think about it. What matters to you, entertainment or worship? ■

● ● ● ● ●

Did You Know?
By Roger Shouse

That the apostles never used food, games or social activities to draw a crowd so they could preach to them?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves “Church of Christ,” the social programs are so extensive that a social director or a “youth minister” must be hired to oversee the social planning.

Although schools existed in the first century, and the apostle Paul even taught in one for 2 years (Acts 19:9,10), no churches ever supported them financially?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves “Church of Christ,” the financial supporting of “Christian schools” or “Colleges” is a regular part of the budget.

That the apostle Paul illustrated many of his epistles with analogies from sporting events (1 Cor. 9:24,25). Yet no church sponsored or had sporting teams?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves “Church of Christ,” the sporting activities are so much a part of the work that full scale gyms have been built.

If these things mentioned above were not a part of the early church and we do not find them in the Bible, WHY are churches doing them today? And who gave them the RIGHT to do it? These things ought not to be! ***“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”*** (Col. 3:17). ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodicachurchofchrist.com — Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com — Phone: 209-365-9250