

Edification or Entertainment?

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 4:11-16

INTRODUCTION.

- A. When you attend the worship services of a given church, are you edified or entertained?
1. Some denominations pride themselves in a worship service composed of edifying elements:
 - a. Bands
 - b. Soloists
 - c. Motivational speakers
 - d. Plays
 - e. "Spirit Filled" speakers
 2. Some churches talk about their ministries which provide socials or opportunities for the people to come together for fun, entertainment, and a little Bible study.
 - a. Youth ministries
 - b. Singles ministries
 - c. Married couples ministries
 - d. Nursing home ministries
 - e. Divorced ministries
 3. Even without all the above, it is possible for a church to intentionally structure their worship services and Bible classes so as to make them more appealing to a larger group of people.
 - a. A "well liked" speaker who motivates, is very eloquent in his speaking, and holds fast the attention of the audience with his length conscious sermons. He seldom steps on the feet of other beliefs and softly encourages the brethren to live morally right.
 - b. Their Bible classes emphasize fun and entertainment.
- B. In the era of television, movies, professional sports, the temptation placed upon churches and religious groups is to make their worship services more entertaining, all

under the name of edification.

- C. With this lesson, we will examine the process of edification as taught in the scriptures and show why churches should not seek to entertain.

I. INDIVIDUALS CAN EDIFY EACH OTHER BY:

- A. Encouraging their brethren to remain faithful. (1 Thessalonians 5:8-11)
- B. By helping to restore a fallen brother. (Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19-20)
- C. By respecting the judgments of other brethren. (Romans 14:19-21)
- D. By showing love in their actions for their brethren. (Romans 12:9-21)

II. HOW DOES THE LOCAL CHURCH EDIFY?

- A. The body of Christ (church) is to be edified by: (Ephesians 4:11-16)
 - 1. The teachings of the apostles.
 - 2. The teachings of the prophets.
 - 3. Evangelists who proclaim the gospel of Christ and the teachings of the apostles and prophets.
 - 4. Pastors (elders or bishops) who guide the flock among them using the teachings of Christ, the apostles, and the prophets.
 - 5. The local teachers who proclaim the gospel of Christ as well as the teachings of the apostles and prophets.
- B. The local church is to be edified through the worship process. (1 Corinthians 14:26)
 - 1. Singing songs (cf. vs 15; Colossians 3:16)
 - 2. Teaching
 - 3. Prayer (cf. vs 15; 1 Timothy 2:1-3)
 - 4. Lord's Supper (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:26-34)

III. REGARDING THE LOCAL CHURCH, DO WE EDIFY OR ENTERTAIN?

- A. Many people confuse edification with entertainment.
 - 1. A family visits "Church A" where the singing is somewhat slow and dull, the preacher is monotone and long-winded. The following Sunday, the family visits "Church B" where the singing is energetic and "uplifting" and the preacher is animated, a great speaker, and is finished in under 20 minutes. The visiting family comments, "We were much more edified at church B than we were at

church A.” Where they truly edified more or where they simply entertained?

2. A family comments that “Church A” has no youth groups for their children, no fellowship hall for socials, and no gymnasiums for exercising and basketball games. However, they learn that “Church B” does provide youth groups funded by the church, a fellowship hall with regular socials, and a nice gymnasium. The visiting family comments again that “Church B” provides more edification for their family. Again, this family is confusing entertainment for edification.

B. Turning to entertainment, secular pursuits, and social concerns is not the work of the local church nor are they scriptural processes of edification on the part of the local church.

1. Youth groups, organized and funded by the local church, provides entertainment mixed with a portion of teachings.
2. Fellowship halls, built by and funded by the local church, are used for social purposes and entertainment.
3. Family life centers, built by and funded by the local church, are taking the local church into a realm of social involvement not seen within the New Testament.
4. Gymnasiums, built by and funded by the local church, serve no spiritual purpose, only social entertainment.
5. “Christian rock” concerts, magicians, clowns, parities, etc., all sponsored by the local church, are methods of entertaining the young people of that church.

C. The process of edification, on the part of the local church, is limited to what is found within the scriptures. The local church is to edify the members through the process of teaching.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Through the teachings of the apostles, the local churches seen in the first century were well equipped to do the work of the Lord. The same instructions and examples will work today.
- B. Let us seek to add to the instructions found with the New Testament. Let each local church stick to the pattern of sound words found within the scriptures.

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Preached at the Seminole Pointe church of Christ in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma