

Asking for a Friend

Questions and Answers (Part 7)

- Introduction:
1. As we ask questions about spiritual matters, we must always remember that the Bible is our only source.
 2. Furthermore, we must remember to be content with the information that is given and not go “beyond what is written” (1 Corinthians 4:6).

I. Why Do We Have an Invitation at the End of Every Service?

- A. Does this suggest we are bound by traditions?
- B. More and more congregations are opting not to extend an invitation.
- C. Frankly, I cannot understand why?
 1. The goal of preaching is to elicit a response.
 2. A preacher’s goal shouldn’t be to have nice talks, but to call people to change their lives (Isaiah 30:10).
- D. Yes, this is a tradition, but I believe it is a good one.
- E. Can it be a “rote” tradition?
 1. Absolutely.
 2. We must give care not to let to turn into that, like everything we do in service to God.

II. Must One Place Membership with a Church

- A. First of all, the term “placing membership” or what other will call “identifying with” are terms that are not found in the Bible.
- B. But the fact that a term or expression is not explicitly stated in the Bible does not mean the concept is unbiblical.
 1. Trinity.
 2. Eldership.
- C. So, the question is whether or not the concepts of “identifying with,” “joining with,” or “placing membership with” are taught in Scripture.
- D. Consider the following.
 1. If an eldership has the responsibility to watch out for souls (Hebrew 13:17),
 2. But, they are not to oversee souls that are “not among them” (1 Peter 5:2),
 3. Then, how are they to do their job if there isn’t some recognition of who is and is not under their care?
- E. Also consider... If we would not tolerate a “roving” eldership or and eldership-at-large,” then why would we think it is permissible to be a “member-at-large?”
- F. Both, elders and members have an obligation to each other.

III. When Does the Act of Worship (Giving) Take Place in Our Assembly?

- A. Covid has changed a lot of traditional ways of fulfilling God's commands – arguably, some for the better and some for the worse.
- B. At the time this question was asked, the giving was done online, some gave entering the building, some gave exiting the building, and some gave online during the service.
- C. Would we have allowed this to happen to the Lord's Supper? (i.e. giving people the elements and allowing them to partake whenever they wanted)?
- D. I think a fundamental difference in the two would be that we are nowhere told how and when (apart from the first day of every week) this contribution was to be collected.
- E. One of the abuses of the Lord's Supper at Corinth was that they were not waiting for one another (1 Corinthians 11:21, 33).
- F. Same thing with singing, it is reciprocal (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19).
- G. But, with regard to the giving, we are told to "lay by in store," but there is no reciprocity indicated while doing it.
- H. Consequently, whether we give in the beginning, middle, or end, we are engaging in an act of worship toward God.

- Conclusion:
- 1. Baptism is an important topic, but it is not our Savior.
 - 2. Jesus is. Our allegiance is to Jesus and not baptism.
 - 3. Because we trust Jesus, we will do what he says, and baptism was a line of demarcation between a sinner and a saint; being dead or alive; and being in the world and in Christ.