

Church Meetings Should Not Be A One-Man Show!



Introduction

Ignorance is NOT bliss, especially in the body of Christ and especially in leadership and especially regarding ecclesiology (how to do church). Yet ignorance is the norm in the “Body of Christ” regarding how local church meetings should function in order for ALL of the members of the local body to really grow and have the most opportunities to contribute. In this article, I do not wish to focus on churches full of spiritually dead sinners but those local churches whose members are true twice-born children of their heavenly Father – true MEMBERS of the Body of Christ, corporately and locally.

It’s The Wrong System

The Body Of Christ, by and large, is STUCK in a highly dysfunctional system. Perhaps the biggest problem in the typical local church is the **Clergy System** even if the doctrinal statement of the church is right on target with major Christian doctrines. Some people would call this system the **Pulpit-Pope system** of operating a local church, where one man DOES just about everything and CONTROLS just about everything: all the talking... all the teaching... all the introducing... all the song selection... all the announcements... all the public praying and so on. This is the result of Bible schools and seminaries putting out graduates who think they are immediately qualified to lead a local church just because they have some bible courses and a degree to their name. What few of these graduates realize, is that the schools are cranking out men who will perpetuate “the system”, the CLERGY system, but who won’t be adequately equipped to help the very people they are supposed to go out and serve: other believers in the local church.

Main Function Of The Local Church

To make disciples, which is supposed to be the main function of the local church, one must understand some fundamental issues that affect the disciple-making process. It involves CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT in the local church that facilitates the disciple-making process by making it easy and natural for ALL members of the local church to use their gifts on a regular

basis. BUT, if all members are NOT even in the proper environment for total participation, then most members won't even know what their OWN gifts are., never mind be able to fully participate in weekly gatherings of believers.

What Is The Correct Biblical Pattern For Church Meetings?

Instead of patterning local churches after the highly dysfunctional public school system - which cranks out mindless unthinking zombies who can only regurgitate dogma they were mindlessly taught to memorize - the local church should be patterned more like a family reunion, where everyone is free to talk, contribute, help others, use their spiritual gifts, and dare I say - FREE TO GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER. Having a "pulpit pope" simply spoon-feed everyone every week is about as sub-optimal as a church environment can get. Christians need challenges in their lives. They need relationship building - which you cannot do by sitting closed-mouth in a pew. They need jobs and opportunities to serve in order to GROW. And leaders NEED TO GROW ALSO. And what better way for leaders to grow than to:

1. Let go of "the reigns" and oversee younger Christians leading a bible study.
2. Lead by example when it comes to evangelism.
3. Have totally open teaching sessions where the hearers can immediately ask questions or add clarification or make corrections (oh YES!).

Shepherding Without Input, Without Interaction?

How in the world can church leaders be true shepherds of a flock when the shepherds do all the talking every week? How can a shepherd have any idea of who in their congregations is genuinely saved, who is able (or not) to accurately share the gospel, who is or is not in agreement with important Bible doctrines, who has needs, who has struggles, etc.? What are those needs and struggles and who in the local church is best suited to assist those people? Can you imagine going to visit your family doctor and never having an opportunity to tell the doctor what your symptoms and ailments are? Or not being able to ask for clarification on a treatment prescribed? Where your doctor just does all the talking and just talks about his favorite medical books?

Besides Discipleship The Church Has Another Important Function

One of the main responsibilities of EVERYONE in a local church is summed up by Galatians 6:2

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

The Brethren churches, while not exactly on target with some important Bible doctrines, do have a meeting structure that allows all men in the congregation

to take turns teaching. However, this is still not interactive enough to provide the safety net (checks and balances) of having full interaction of all church members in weekly church meetings. Everyone should have the freedom to teach, share a song, share a concern and make an announcement throughout a meeting. Leaders – and others – can supervise to keep things under control but who says their job is to be the one-man-show?

Conclusion

The local weekly church meeting was never supposed to be a one-man show and until more Christians understand this, especially those in leadership roles, the local church will just become more anemic and ineffective, I fear. God-ordained shepherds don't PREACH AT people, they talk to them and LISTEN to them. They LET the sheep get some exercise, by exercising their gifts and talents. But the norm in today's church is for the shepherd to give food and water to his sheep but then tie all 4 of their legs together so they get no exercise and they are stuck with the "food de-jour" (the food of the day). They cannot ask for more food or different food. They are stuck with whatever the "pulpit pope" decides to dish out. And they are supposed to feel fulfilled having made no contribution to the local church except in the money basket and to speak or sing on command.

As others have said about this sad state of affairs and as I strongly affirm: The Protestant Reformation may have accomplished great things regarding the restoration of sound doctrine. However, those Reformers neglected to REFORM the local church. So, what we have today is not much more than a slightly modified Roman Catholic ecclesiastical system, which is a most pitiful system indeed. And the sheep and shepherds are so used to the system and so comfortable in it that to try to get them to migrate to something far richer and far better and far healthier, can be like trying to get a drug addict to want a wholesome glass of orange juice instead of a needle full of heroin. – *RM Kane*

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