

How To Support A Gospel Meeting

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The New Testament presents ample reasons to support a gospel meeting. There is the **DEDICATION** Jesus talked about in the Sermon on the Mount, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33). There is the **DESIRE** that has accompanied the faithful all across the centuries that the ancients talked about in places like Psalm 119:10, "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments." You may wish to read similar references in Psalm 119:34, 58, 69, 145. There is the **DETERMINATION** that goes with being a Christian that is essential to salvation Jesus spoke of in Revelation 2:10c, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." There is the **DEVOTION** to the things of God the Psalmist declared in Psalm 62:6, "He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved." There is the respect for the Christian's call to **DUTY** that Jesus taught in Luke 17:10, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." But, *HOW* to support a gospel meeting is something different; it requires the proper application of these and many other scriptural principles to a specific opportunity which has been set before a congregation of God's people in general and before each and every Christian that is a member of that congregation in particular. Think along with me as I discuss with you for a few minutes, "How to support a gospel meeting."

The special series of assemblies has the ultimate goal of bringing glory to God, as is the rightful goal of each individual member (I Cor. 10:31). This is why the speaker selected is one of the keys to the success of the effort; he is known, knowledgeable, and capable of kindling interest and keeping interesting studies going

throughout the meeting. So, support for a gospel meeting begins long before the actual meeting convenes in the **PLANNING** stage. Leadership can ill expect a good turnout if the membership considers the speaker uninteresting.

Pleading with the congregation to remember the speaker and the overall meeting in their **PRAYERS** also begins to support the meeting even before the first session starts. Proper prayer is effective (Jas. 5:16). Is this the reason some gospel meetings are not well attended, because precious few were taking the upcoming opportunity to glorify God before his throne seeking his approval and blessing?

If I'm not planning on being in attendance, then I am the very one that needs the gospel meeting the most! I need to rededicate my life to Christ because I am not living a Christian life.

PREPARING for good attendance by clearing schedules and personally inviting associates, acquaintances, and even anonymous individuals through flyers and other advertisements is vital to the support of the meeting. Obviously, how could anyone expect good crowds coming out to hear the gospel if they have not heard about the meeting and have had the details of the date and times relayed to them? Have you ever had someone say to you, "Why don't you ever come to my house?" Such a statement shows the need for understanding the principle of preparing for attendance by *inviting* someone to come. Many have been embarrassed by the reply, "Well, when was the last time you invited me over?" Sometimes people are lazy and do not want to clean up the

house or prepare something special for their guests to eat, and so they whine about not having visitors. A gospel meeting is an excellent time to let visitors know special arrangements have been made for their coming, and their presence is especially sought. Someone about whose soul we are concerned must be invited by us! Do folks depend on the kind providence of God to somehow get an advertising flyer into their hands when they are conversant with this person every day? God's providence is thwarted if we do not see ourselves as the instrument through which God wants the lost saved, the wayward retrieved, and the faithful edified. Specific commitments yield the best results. The difference may be illustrated in a common invitation. Note the difference between the invitations, "We'd like to have you come to our gospel meeting next week," and "I would like to invite you this coming Sunday morning at 9:30 to our gospel meeting." Possible turndown replies may be, "Well, I'm going to be busy next week" made to the general invitation, which could void the invitation altogether since the meeting will not be going on the following week, and "Well, I have plans for Sunday morning at 9:30." In reply you might possibly say, "We are going to go through Wednesday night" to the first answer and "Could you come Sunday evening at seven then?" to the second. The inclusion of specifics tends to yield the best results.

Your **PRESENCE** cannot be over emphasized in support of the gospel meeting. If I cannot make the necessary arrangements to attend, then how and why should I expect anyone else to support the meeting? This point is the most crucial because all the planning, praying, and preparing in the world cannot take the place of my being there! And, in the event I choose not to be there what does that say about my dedication, desire, determination, devotion, and duty? If I'm not planning on being in attendance, then I am the very one that needs the gospel meeting the most! I need to rededicate my life to Christ because I am not living a Christian life.

PARTICIPATION includes but is not limited to our **PRESENCE**. **PARTICIPATION** also involves actively engaging in the worship of God during the meeting. I have some teaching to do during the meeting through the song service (Eph. 5:19). I have some praying to do at that time (Jas. 5:16). I have some studying to do at that time (II Tim. 2:15) because I want to present myself approved unto God. I have some **PLEADING** that I want to do at that time when the invitation song is being sung because I know some Christians who are wayward who may be there, and I know some penitent sinners who may be there that Jesus died to save, and I do not want his death to be in vain for them!