

In Fear of Church

Contributed by Pastor
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During the last 20 years years, while pastoring Calvary Bible Baptist Church and during the years that I worked for the New York Telephone Company as a computer repair technician, I came to the knowledge of two truths. First, that a great many people desire to know more about God and the Bible than they admit publicly. Second, due to some inner apprehensions, they find it direful to attend a Bible Church where they can learn about God's word, the Bible.

There is no doubt that we at Calvary desire your attendance at church with us for several good and moral reasons. The first and foremost being a desire to share with you our knowledge of God's salvation and the Bible.

When I first started working in the Syracuse area many years ago, most of the people I worked with were very apprehensive and fearful of discussing the Bible. The reasons are many, but one of the principle fears of most people is that they will be forced or compelled to do something against their will.

With time and patience my then co-workers (I've since retired from the phone company) began to realize that it was not my desire to force my beliefs on them, but to educate them in the word of God. It is true that far too often the zeal of many Christians outweighs their wisdom, but time and experience teaches all that "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still".

After several years, those co-workers became more and more at ease with discussing the Bible. In time they understood that I would not thrust the Bible upon them against their will. Soon their apprehension began to decrease. Over time it became a rare day that one of my co-workers did not ask a serious question about the Bible.

The question I receive most often come from friends of different religious beliefs, yet there are atheists and agnostics that are inquisitive as well.

My friends and former co-workers understand that as a Bible believing Christian, I respect their human right to worship God under the dictates of their own conscience.

If you have been raised in another Christian faith, a non-Christian faith, or you are an atheist and wish to learn about the Bible, don't be afraid to attend Calvary. At Calvary, anyone may visit and learn the word of God. All that we ask is that you conduct yourself as a responsible adult.

One evening I shared with my wife my discovery that many people were very inquisitive and desired to know more about God and the Bible, but they revealed a fear and apprehension of church and church attendance. She suggested that I write an article that explained the role and function of Bible Churches. I believe that most people who take the time to visit this site also show a desire to know more about God and his word and would like to attend a Bible Church for instruction. Yet, they are afraid of being forced to commit to some obligation they may not be willing to fulfill. The truth is that all churches need good dedicated and regenerated Christians to serve in them and to make commitments to accomplish the various ministries of each church.

At Calvary we are more than happy to have visitors attend who are interested in learning about God and the Bible and may not be ready to make commitments. At Calvary we look to our church family to meet the needs of the church and not to our church friends. If you came to our house as a guest for dinner, we would not ask you to serve dinner or wash the dishes. The members of our family would do that. All we would ever expect of any guest is that they conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen should.

There are two major methods in Biblical instruction employed by a Bible Church, preaching and teaching. Preaching is what some people may find difficult to digest on occasion and teaching is what is more desired by the general public.

Both are important to be understood correctly if the student of God is to prosper by them.

Preaching in a Biblical sense is much like your mother reminding you to wash your hands before dinner or a cheerleader exhorting a competitor on to victory. The purpose of preaching is to compel me to follow Jesus Christ. When you attend church and hear Bible preaching, the mature person will not be offended by the strong exhortation of a loving pastor to serve God, denounce sin and uplift righteousness and morality.

Athletes do not despise the exhortation of their coaches, nor good children the loving rebuke of their parents.

Good pastors do not always find it easy or comfortable to preach on sensitive issues, but if they are to be men of God they are duty bound by God to preach against sin. "Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." II Timothy 4:2 A good mother would never stop preaching to her children because it upset them or hurt their feelings, but she would continue because she loved them, compelling them to do right. Remember it is an immature nature that most often resists doing right.

The faithful and loving man of God is commanded to do likewise with God's word. His duty is to compel men to honor, morality, truth and salvation. The purpose of preaching is not to look down on those in sin but to help those in sin to overcome the weakness of human nature. Good Bible preaching then will draw a solid and clear line between right and wrong, good and evil and exhort men and women to choose correctly.

Teaching is what I love most as a pastor. It is the explanation of preaching or the explaining of Bible doctrines. Preaching says "Thou shalt not commit adultery" Exodus 20:14 Teaching explains why adultery is bad. As a pastor I prefer to teach the Bible over preaching the Biblical doctrines since teaching does not offend the immature nature as quickly as preaching.

Yet, the forsaking of preaching by most modern ministers is what has given us so many selfish inconsiderate and obnoxious people to contend with in our society today. Biblical preaching purifies and is needful, while teaching educates and is desired.

At Calvary almost every Sunday morning there is a Bible study, followed by Bible preaching. Every Wednesday night there is a Bible Study and on Sunday evening we often have a mixture of both, with a tendency toward teaching. If you wish to learn about God and his word but feel that you are not ready for preaching yet, I recommend you attend Sunday evening service or Wednesday Bible study first to learn God's word. Remember it is Bible preaching alone that develops your personal character for the service of God.

At Calvary there is no need to allow apprehensions or fear of obligation to keep you from learning about God. Yes! there most definitely are obligations involved in Church membership just as there are obligations in joining the fire department, the Elks, or a little league baseball team. If you attend the field days or a baseball game as a visitor, the only obligation you have is to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner.

While shouting and yelling are warranted at field days and baseball games, church attendance falls under educational guidelines, so all that we expect of those in attendance is to have consideration for others attempting to learn. Questions are answered by raised hands and disruptive behavior will be addressed for both adults and children. The church is a place of higher learning and reverence.

We place great value on many organizations of merit only the Church prepares a soul for this life and the life to come.

We provide a nursery for children up to five years of age and recommend that all children eligible for the nursery attend the nursery for their benefit and the benefit of all others present. Your young child may not be burdensome to you, but they can be very disturbing to others about you. Your child, once accustomed to the nursery and it's toys, will soon prefer the company of playmates to the adult oriented Bible Study. By the age of five, good parents should have their children trained enough to sit through a church service with minor fidgeting.

Do you want to learn about God and the Bible? Come to Calvary and learn for yourself. Our doors and hearts are open to all who wish to learn of God.