

Question Time: Why Should We Meet Together Often?

--- by Elder Don Thomas

The psalmist wrote, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." (Ps 122:1) While visiting the western hemisphere, Christ commanded the multitude, "...ye shall meet together oft..." (III Nephi 8:53) The office of Teacher is specifically charged to "... see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty." (D&C 17: 11b)

We have just read three examples, one from each of the three standard books, conveying the commandment and need each of us has to come together in the corporate worship of our King. Why? Just what is so important about worshipping together? Why is personal or family worship not enough? Who cares whether or not we go to the Lord's House?



The short answer is, "Because He said so." Recognizing that that answer rarely satisfies our children and we are all His children, let us reason together and seek to better understand Our Father's heart.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favor with all people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

-Acts 2:41 - 47

This account from the first century church offers valuable insight as to how and why the church met so often. With the influx of three thousand souls new to the Gospel of Christ, the most effective means by which the apostles could reach and teach so many was by interaction and example.

In corporate worship, they witnessed "many wonders and signs" at the hands of the apostles which nourished their minds and taught them to fear (love and revere) their God, recognizing their nothingness before His throne. Through persistent fellowship, during meals and chores, they encouraged one another and maintained their focus on Jesus Christ. In this case, iron was continually sharpening iron and the saints were able to quickly mature from milk to the meat of the gospel.

Today, corporate worship allows us to give as well as receive strength and encouragement from our brothers and sisters. It continues to be a means by which we grow in love and maturity toward the establishment of the Celestial Law within our hearts, both corporately and individually.

A popular campfire song from the early 70's begins, "No man is an island. No man stands alone." Never have these words been so true. While it can be argued that one can pray, and study, and draw close to God on their own or within their own family, this only works well to a point. Such isolation may provide a fertile bed for the growth of pride and independence (rebellion against authority). The view tends to be myopic [short-sighted] and self-centered. This ought not to be, for Moroni 7:49, 50 reminds us, "...none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly of heart; And if a man be meek and lowly of heart, and confess by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity: for if he have not charity, he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity." Charity (the true love of Christ) cannot exist in a myopic environment. It must be outward focused.

The commandment is clear: "Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing, and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God; that your incomings may be in the name of the Lord; that your outgoings may be in the name of the Lord; that all your salutations may be in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the Most High." (D&C 85:36 b, c)

Let us each have joy in our hearts, quickly responding when we are invited to commune with our brothers and sisters in the presence of our Savior, wherever that may be.

"... corporate worship allows us to give as well as receive strength and encouragement from our brothers and sisters . . . we grow in love."