

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

February 18

2018

6 Ways to Boost Attendance

A while back I attended my first University of Tennessee football game. Boy, it was great! Being a student of human nature and psychology, I learned several things at the game - basically, how we can boost our church attendance. Here is what I have come up with:

1. We're going to replace our cushioned pews with steel benches and remove the backs.
2. We're going to make people sit very close to each other - especially close to those we don't know.
3. We are going to let those who smoke sit in front of those that don't and blow smoke back in their faces.
4. We're going to take the top off the building. There must be something about having a top on the building that keeps people from coming.
5. We're going to have someone holler real loud into the loud speaker. I guess that will be me, since I'm the preacher.
6. Oh yeah, one last thing. We're going to make everyone pay \$40.00 to get in, even before they know the outcome.

UT is second only to the University of Michigan in attendance at football games, averaging over 100,000 per game. But, we'll settle for 95,000 in church.

Oh, and one more thing, we're going to change our services to last three hours instead of one. Boy, with these changes, you'd better come early next Sunday to get a good parking place!

✍️ Larry Acuff

ATTITUDES

The preceding article is not to be taken seriously but it does show that people do what they enjoy and really want to do. Have you ever noticed how much our attitude toward something or someone can make any task either one of joy or one of weariness? The priests in Malachi's day viewed their service to God as "what a weariness is it" (Malachi 1:13). Their attitude toward God (a lack of love and devotion) caused them to have this attitude toward serving Him. Is it possible that the same could be true today? When we hear those who claim to be Christians complaining about everything they are called upon to do (assembling with the saints, giving, study of His word, etc.) it tells us a great deal about their attitude toward God. Their attitude is the same as that of the priests mentioned in Malachi. More importantly, God's attitude toward them is the same, also. See Malachi 3:6; 1:10.

✍️ James Hahn



"MAKING EXCUSES"

In Luke 14 Jesus tells of a man making a great supper and inviting many to come. The Bible says "*they all with one consent began to make excuse*" (v. 18). No one likes to admit that he makes excuses, however if each of us would be honest we would all have to plead guilty to making excuses.

Why do people make excuses? Some, when making excuses, say they are "not making excuses" but just giving "reasons" for their failure. They fail to realize that their "reason" for failure is in reality an excuse. Excuses are not made to "explain the facts." They are made to conceal the facts from others and in all probability, ourselves as well. Men do not make excuses for doing right. It is when we fail to do what we know we should do that we make excuses.

Some have the idea that so long as we tell the truth we are not making excuses. The person who believes this is surely deceiving himself. In the parable noted above there is no indication that the people were lying about buying property, buying oxen or getting married. However, they used these things to conceal the real

problem; they simply were not willing to put forth the effort to attend.

The same is true with many today. Some fail to assemble with the saints. When questioned about their failure to attend they reply, "We had company come in" or "We were out of town." Both statements may be true but they do not explain the problem. The real problem is lack of dedication and conviction. In the beginning when God asked Adam if he had *"eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat"* Adam replied, *"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat"* (Genesis 3:11,12). What Adam said may have been true but it did not change the fact that he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. He was still responsible for his own actions.

Someone has said that when you don't want to do something one excuse is as good as another. I wonder how many of us have really listened to the excuses we sometimes offer for not doing the things we know we should be doing. It does not make us feel good to be forced to admit that the only reason we are not doing what we should be doing is that we simply do not have the will and determination to do it. Excuses may soothe our conscience but they will not make us acceptable in the sight of God.

Excuse making is a poor substitute for obedience. When we fail to obey the Lord we have no excuse. Each of us can obey the Lord if we want to. When a person determines that he is going to do the Lord's will there is nothing nor anyone that can prevent him from doing so. If you have never become a Christian you may make many excuses. You may try to blame your parents; you may point to "all those hypocrites" in the church or you may talk about all your personal problems and difficulties, however there is only one reason why you have not obeyed. As of this time you simply have been unwilling to make the commitment necessary to become a Christian.

Making excuses does not solve any problem. The people Jesus referred to in the parable still did not attend the supper. When you offer excuses for your failure to obey you still have not obeyed. This is why excuse making is so serious. It may give us a feeling of false security and, of even more importance, keep us from gaining heaven.

How do we overcome excuse making? Some do not want to quit

for in so doing they will be seen as they really are. The only way to overcome excuse making is to start doing the things we have been making excuses for not doing. When we do this we will be pleasing to the Lord and there will be no need for excuses.

Are you a Christian? Are you faithfully serving the Lord? If not, what is your excuse? You may give one, but the truth is you can be a faithful servant of Christ if you want to. Why not lay aside all excuses and obey Him (Hebrews 5:8,9). ✍ James Hahn



"The church is God's missionary society – God's chosen means of getting the gospel to the lost. And just as the gospel is God's only power of salvation, the church is God's only organization to take the gospel to the lost. God has purpose for the church (Ephesians 3:8-11). The purpose of God for His church is its mission. A part of that purpose is to "build up" the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11, 12). This involves the preaching of the word of the kingdom that others might be brought into it. I think I am safe in saying that in addition to the responsibility to worship, this preaching responsibility is the primary responsibility of the church." ✍ Cecil Willis

From an article titled "The Church: All-Sufficient In Evangelism" Truth Magazine IV:12, pp. 5-7; September 1960

Belleville church of Christ
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www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

James Hahn	(317) 745-1507
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