

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

October 16

2022

Fellowship Halls

One of the many things that make us different from those in the religious world is the absence of dining rooms funded with church funds. Many have asked questions like, “Didn’t the early church meet for common meals?” or “Doesn’t the lack of dining rooms and the like make fellowship in the church difficult or impossible?” In this article, I hope to explain why we don’t have a “fellowship hall.”

One reason we don’t have “fellowship halls” is because we don’t have the Bible authority for them. When one takes the time to study the work of the church in the Bible, we see there were three things that they did: 1) They preached the word to the lost (1 Thess. 1:8), 2) they edified their fellow saints (Eph. 4:11-13, 1 Cor. 14:26), and 3) they assisted needy saints (Acts 11:27-30). Building and maintaining a “fellowship hall” does not fall into any of those categories.

There is, however, one instance where the scripture speaks of the church coming together to eat a common meal, but Paul rebuked them for it! In 1 Corinthians 11:18-22, Paul states, “For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. Therefore, when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.”

Paul concluded 1 Corinthians 11 by saying, “If anyone is hungry, let him

eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment.” The point was that a social meal was not a part of the church’s work. Some ask, “What about in Acts 2:46, which says they were eating their meals together? Isn’t that an example of the church eating together?”

Acts 2:46 says, “Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart.” Notice these common meals occurred “from house to house.” This was the work of individual Christians rather than the work of the church.

Yet, many still argue that if we do not have social meals and the like provided with the Lord’s money, this makes fellowship difficult or impossible. Sadly, they misunderstand what the word “fellowship” means! The word “fellowship” comes from the Greek word “Koinonia,” which literally means “Communion.” This communion we have with one another is defined best in the words of 1 John 1:7. “If we walk in the Light, as He Himself is in the Light, then we have fellowship one with another.”

Christians are commanded to show hospitality towards their brethren. The apostle Peter made it clear when he said, “Be hospitable to one another without complaint” (1 Pet. 4:9; cf. Rom. 12:13, Heb 13:2).

Romans 14:17 confirms these statements. It says, “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Understand that the “kingdom of God” refers to the church (Mk. 1:15, Dan. 2:44, Lk. 17:20-21).

Another verse that helps explain this truth is Hebrews 13:9, which states, “Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings for it is good for a heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.” It must be understood that physical food holds no spiritual benefit. Thus, it does not provide this “fellowship” that the Bible wants us to have.

Fellowship is not a meal. It’s walking in the light with fellow Christians (1 Jn. 1:7). This means obedience to the Lord! Are you walking with the Lord and with your brethren? When you walk with Him, and I walk with Him, we have true fellowship with Christ and one another.

✍️ Ethan Jennings

God Is Awesome

The word “awesome” is a word that is commonly used in today’s society, and many today often reference this word with someone or something that they feel to be impressive, or extremely good. The Merriam Webster Dictionary simply defines awesome as, “causing feelings of fear and wonder, causing feelings of awe, or extremely good.” Now, although there are many today who are blessed with the talent to perform various acts in ways such as athletic ability, speaking ability, or teaching ability, these people are not awesome. Why? Well because, there is only One who is awesome, and that only One is God! You see, Moses wrote about God being awesome to the children of Israel when he penned, “*For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe*” (Deuteronomy 10:17 NKJV). However, Moses was not the only one in the Scriptures to acknowledge God as being awesome. So, with the thought of God being the One who is awesome pressed upon our thoughts, let’s notice some others who confirmed the fact that God is the One who is awesome.

Nehemiah Knew God Is Awesome.

While Nehemiah was praying to God, he prayed, “*I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments...*” (Nehemiah 1:5). Although, the KJV renders terrible God, instead of awesome God in this verse, it simply means the same thing. Meaning that, God is to be respected and revered. Therefore, we too, like Nehemiah, need to possess love and respect for God and His commandments. For, by doing so, God’s mercy will be upon us.

David Knew God Is Awesome.

David exhorted others to praise God when he wrote, “*Say to God, How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You. All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises*

to Your name” (Psalm 66:3-4). You see, God’s works are truly awesome, for He is the creator of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). However, God is not only the creator of all, but He is also the sustainer, and judge of all (Acts 17:22-31). Therefore, heed the inspired words of David, and praise God for His power and awesome works.

Daniel Knew God Is Awesome.

Daniel prayed a very similar prayer to that of Nehemiah when he prayed, “*O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments...*” (Daniel 9:4). Again, God is the one who is to always be respected and revered. Therefore, my friend, “*Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all*” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Remember, my friend, there is no one or nothing that can even come close to being able to be compared to our awesome God. For, only God is truly awesome, and He is the only one whom all praise and glory belongs. Knowing that, be cautious how you use the term awesome, for as we have learned; only God is awesome!

✍ Brad Phillips

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

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| 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

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