

Church Meetings

July 7, 2024

The word *church* comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which literally means a congregation, gathering or assembly. When even the word itself refers to the gathering of the members, it becomes obvious that there cannot be a church without the gathering of the church. When it comes to church-wide meetings, there are typically two types of meetings - weekly worship meetings and periodic church conferences.

The idea of the Church Conference has long been a part of SBC churches, but we rarely talk about the purpose or biblical foundation for the Church Conference. So today, we will examine some biblical texts that provide the foundation for what we refer to as church conferences, as well as other texts that describe worship gatherings.

EXAMINATION OF BIBLICAL TEXTS

Jerusalem Counsel - Acts 15:1-35

The Jerusalem Counsel was a gathering of the apostles, elders and church at Jerusalem to settle a dispute over the conversion of Gentiles to the gospel. This was, in effect, a Church Conference for the early church, and there is much to learn from it.

1. The apostles and elders (church leadership) were the ones entrusted to solve the argument and provide leadership for the church (Acts 15:6). While it appears the church was gathered with the apostles and elders, it was the apostles and elders who were tasked with discerning the direction of the church, then communicating it with the church.
2. Once a solution was proposed and agreed upon, the apostles and elders worked together with the whole church (Acts 15:22). There should always be a cooperation and unity between those who lead and the body of the church.
3. Teaching and leadership came from the apostles and elders (Acts 15:7, Acts 15:13, Acts 15:23). Both the leadership in finding a solution and the communication of it came from the apostles and elders of the church.

Instructions for Worship Gatherings - 1 Corinthians 14:20-40

Paul gave instruction to the Corinthian Church about the order for worship meetings. Everyone knows the Corinthian Church was in disarray, and Paul used his epistle to teach them organization and order for worship. While there are a several issues addressed, Paul gives two very helpful principles that can be used to guide worship meetings.

1. “Let all things be done for edification” (1 Corinthians 14:26). Worship gatherings should be edifying to the body of Christ. Everything from the music to the prayers, from the preaching to the invitation, should have an edifying effect on those present.
2. “But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner” (1 Corinthians 14:40). The emphasis here is not that every moment of a worship service should be planned, but rather that everyone should conduct themselves in a proper and orderly manner. There should be certain guidelines of what is proper behavior within the worship service.

Missions Reporting - Acts 14:26-28

Barnabas and Paul were sent out by the Church at Antioch; and when they returned, they met with the church to give a reporting of all that they had done. Paul also returned to Antioch after his second missionary journey (Acts 18:22). This is an established precedent for reporting to the church about the missions and ministry efforts of the church.

Weekly Gathering – Acts 20:7, Hebrews 10:25

Acts 20:7 *“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.”*

Hebrews 10:25 *“not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*

Very early in church history, Sunday became the regular and weekly day for worship gatherings. It is a gathering not to be neglected by the believers. Sunday worship is a fundamental part of the Christian Church. Hebrews 10:25 discourages the practice of neglecting the assembling of the church.

APPLICATION TO BEULAH

Sunday Worship

Members in good health should make every effort to regularly participate in Sunday worship gatherings. It is the primary time for edification, instruction, worship, and fellowship of the church. Sunday worship is an essential time for the body of Christ to show itself joined and working together, building up one another in love.

Church Conferences

Conferences play an important role in church life. Though they have dwindled to the point of being more like a business meeting, they serve a much greater purpose in church life. They provide opportunity to report on various missions and ministries, cast vision for future missions and ministries, give report on the health and welfare of the church, enact church discipline, solve complex church problems, and more.

For this reason, the recommendation is that the elders would have charge for planning and leading two Church Conferences every year that serve as celebrations of what God has done and vision casting for what is coming next. These conferences will serve to provide good communication to the congregation about the health of the church, including the ministries and missions of the church.

Additional conferences can be scheduled as needed by the elders or when requested by at least fifteen percent of the congregation. All conferences will be moderated by an elder. They must be communicated ahead of time and a quorum of forty members is required to have a conference.