

## **A Look at Sunday Night Services (Part 1)**

Before anyone reads further, let me say, I am not labeling any congregation as apostate on this issue. Due to the Coronavirus many congregations dispensed with Sunday evening services in order to protect members from the danger of exposure. After a while congregations decided to permanently stop meeting in the evening. I am not questioning the decisions of individual congregations, as each is autonomous. If a congregation decides it is no longer expedient to meet due to travel distance of members or some other reason that is their right. Some decided to expand their morning services by having two sermons delivered or taking extra time observing the Lord's Supper. Again, I will state that is their decision to make. As long as everything is done orderly and decently, without adding to or taking away from the Word of God, I am for it.

However, there are arguments made that seem puzzling to me. While I have not heard anyone say, Sunday evening services are unscriptural, I wonder if that is what they are implying?

One argument is congregations did not meet on Sunday evenings until World War II and the advent of shift work. Primarily men were working on Sunday mornings, thus congregations met so those men could observe the Lord's Supper. In fact, the congregation my parents worshipped with when they were baptized did not have Sunday PM service or Wednesday Night Bible Classes. It was not till later they started having those services. Why? They deemed it beneficial to meet to worship God, offer the Lord's Supper, and study their Bible more than one time a week. The question is not when this was first done but is it expedient? Keep in mind, for something to be expedient it must be scriptural. An expedient does not add to God's word but is simply an aid in doing what we have scriptural authority to do.

Church buildings, pews, songbooks, and time of services are all expedients. An expedience is also a matter of judgment. Is it more expedient to meet at 9 AM, 10 AM, or 11 AM on Sunday morning? Or to say this another way, expedients are not binding. While I may argue it is expedient for spiritual growth to have more sermons and Bible Classes, I cannot demand a certain number.

If one would say Sunday PM services are unscriptural then I would ask why or how? Is the church only allowed to meet once on Sunday? What if a congregation decided to not have Sunday AM services but Sunday PM services? At Troas the brethren meet until midnight, Acts 20.7. Who's to say what time they started but it is possible

they did not meet until the evening. I know the brethren at Antioch met for a whole year with Paul and Barnabas. "Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." (Acts 11.25-26). We don't know if the congregation met every day or twice on Sunday. If it had mattered, we would have been told. We know the church at Corinth and the congregations in Galatia met on Sunday, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." (1 Corinthians 16.1-2). Did they meet on Sunday? Yes. How many times or the exact time they met we are not told.

It is scriptural for a congregation to meet on Sunday evening if it deems it to be expedient.

Another comment heard is that the congregation has already met on Sunday morning and Sunday evening is not really worship. Worship is bowing down and paying homage to God. This brings to mind the conversation Jesus had with the Samaritan woman by the well. "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4.24). Up to this time, Jerusalem was the place to worship God but afterward it would not be confined to the temple. Can one only worship God once a day? How about our Gospel Meetings, are they worship services or something else? If Sunday PM is not worship tell me what it is? Are we not singing songs of praise to God? Do we not petition our God in prayer and God's word preached? If it is not worship Sunday evening, then why is it worship Sunday morning? I would argue it is worship both times.

I am not labeling congregations with only one service on Sunday as being unscriptural. But those brethren should not label a congregation who continues to have Sunday PM services. (Next Week- Sunday Evening Services and the Lord's Supper) – Dennis Tucker