

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

November 28, 2020

**Know that the Lord, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!
For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.**
Psalm 100:3-5

“Remote Worship”?

On one of the few dates Christie and I had before we got married, I picked her up at her high school. It was obvious that she had a lot of friends and was, unlike me, a “social” person. I was standing there waiting for her, not saying a word while she was smiling and waving at her friends who were smiling and shouting out good wishes to her. Meanwhile, I just wanted out of there. Opposites attract, I guess.

Christie is a people person, always has been. Her parents were active in the church and they were the most hospitable people I’ve ever known. There was constant traffic in their home at the peach ranch, so Christie grew up around lots of people. By the time I met her I had settled into a life with a couple of close friends, spent time with a few family members now and then and was attending a church where there was no one my age and no older Christians ever invited me into their homes. I was OK with that.

I would have been perfectly fine with remote assemblies through Zoom had it been available then. And I know that there are Christians who prefer to “attend” remotely these days and I get it. It’s super convenient—you can stay in your jammies, drink coffee and worship God from the comfort of your home. But is that what God wants?

I’ve heard some try to make the case for remote “worship” with arguments that, if true, would mean we could switch to that and do it all the time. But I’m not buying it. I agree that it’s better than nothing but that’s the best I can say about it. “Remote” means “distant, having little connection or relationship with...” And remote meetings do not *remotely* resemble

the assemblies we read about in the Bible. Can you *remotely* “forsake the assembling of yourselves...” (Hebrews 10:25)? Can you *remotely* gather “as one man” (Nehemiah 8:1) or *remotely* “come together” as a church, as it says *seven times* in I Corinthians 11 and 14? Would the 3,000 been baptized on the Day of Pentecost if Peter preached via livestream?

I just can’t wrap my little mind around any of that. To use this approach rarely, in extreme situations, is one thing, but to actually *prefer* it seems to fly in the face of what Christ had in mind when he built his church. The following excerpt, by author Dallas Willard, sums up the value of personal, in-person worship and I think we all would do well to consider it.

In fellowship we engage in common activities of worship, study, prayer, celebration, and service with other disciples. This may involve assembling ourselves together in a large group or meeting with only a few. Personalities united can contain more of God and sustain the force of his greater presence much better than scattered individuals. The fire of God kindles higher as the brands are heaped together and each is warmed by the other’s flame. The members of the body must be in contact if they are to sustain and be sustained by each other. Christian redemption is not devised to be a solitary thing, though each individual of course has a unique and direct relationship with God, and God alone is his or her Lord and Judge. But The Life is one that requires some regular and profound conjunction with others who share it. It is greatly diminished when that is lacking.

—*The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives.*

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