

WHY HAVE GOSPEL MEETINGS?

Are Gospel meeting series still worth the time, money, and effort they require? Many point to the decline in attendance, when compared with such efforts thirty or forty years ago, and some congregations have discontinued them in favor of bringing in some specialist on this or that social problem. It cannot be gainsaid that they do not attract the crowds they did in a previous, slower-paced, less entertainment-oriented world.

However, I firmly believe Gospel meetings are still worthwhile and that many good reasons exist to continue having them.

1. They provide a period of concentrated teaching from God's Word. Even in a four-day meeting, at least six Gospel sermons will be delivered. Those who attend all of them can gain much knowledge and spiritual strength in a brief span.
2. They provide members of the church with an excellent opportunity to bring their friends who are not Christians to hear the Gospel, perhaps for the first time. This should always be one of the purposes of a meeting.
3. They provide a time when non-Christians may be persuaded to attend, which they often cannot be on Sunday. The "I would have to miss my church" excuse is thus removed. Probably thousands who are now members of the Lord's church first heard the Gospel during a Gospel meeting. Many of these were baptized into Christ during such meetings.
4. They provide more opportunities for fellowship with brethren. This applies to the local congregation. Members of a congregation need to get to know one another better than they can by merely seeing each at regular assemblies. Gospel meetings multiply such opportunities. This also applies to brethren in other congregations

who will attend. We can thus meet new brethren and renew our acquaintance and enjoy fellowship with those we have previously met.

5. Most important, Gospel meetings are one proved method of carrying out the command to preach the Gospel to everybody (Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15). Both the world and the church need more, rather than less, Gospel preaching. Churches that have ceased having Gospel meetings are not generally doing more, but less, to preach the Gospel to every creature.

There are other good reasons for having Gospel meetings, but these are more than enough for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Mat. 5:6). Of course, if we choose not to attend, we lose all of the benefits of such a potentially powerful exercise.

—Dub McClish

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