

# On Counting Heads and Hearts

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I would like to see every one of our classrooms full every Sunday morning. I wish we had to put chairs in the aisles of the auditorium every time we meet. I think everyone who is the least bit interested in the Lord's cause shares in these desires. I believe the Scriptures teach us clearly the importance of worship and study opportunities, whether we hear them or not.

With all of this in mind, it may yet be possible that we sometimes emphasize "church attendance" in the wrong way. In our fever to be sure and count all of the "heads" present and to publish the count and then ponder why the number is large or small, it is easy to forget that God does not merely count "heads." God counts **hearts** (1 Sam. 16:7; Luke 9:47; 16:15). By this, I mean that the important thing to God is the number of hearts that are truly committed to Him. We all know that this is hardly ever the same as the number of heads present.

Remember Gideon's army? He started his march into battle against the mighty forces of Midian with 32,000 troops. Then God started sifting. All of the fearful were sent home and 10,000 were left. God sifted again and only 300 remained. Look at it this way: there were 22,000 cowards, 9,700 careless and only 300 committed. I am not sure that the percentages have improved much since then.

Take a Sunday morning worship crowd of 250. Some sifting takes place by 6:00 p.m. By Wednesday, the sifting is even more obvious. But take that crowd of 250 again and let God do the sifting. How many truly committed hearts will be left? If God sifts even those who are present, what is to be said about the ones who are so uncommitted that they don't even come on Sunday morning?

Let's set our goal on committed hearts and I think we can be reasonably sure that the head count will follow. But even if it doesn't, is there not greater strength in a few committed hearts than in a multitude of the uncommitted? Remember, while we count heads, God counts **hearts**.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, September 9 1982, of which I was editor.]

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